

**Deanship of Graduate Studies
Al-Quds University**



**Translating Political Speeches from English into Arabic:
The Case of Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech before the UN**

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**Translating Political Speeches from English into Arabic:
The Case of Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech before the UN**

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Thesis Approval

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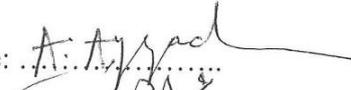
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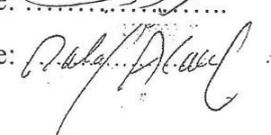
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Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to my family. A special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving parents; this thesis indeed would not be completed without their prayers. I will always appreciate them.

This work is also dedicated to my wife, Nisreen, in whose eyes and smile I see the beauty of this world.

Dedicating this work also goes to those whom I love to the moon and back; my lovely children Lana, Raja and Rama.

Abd al-Rahman Raja Salem Owaida

Declaration

I hereby certify that this thesis, entitled *Translating Political Speeches from English into Arabic: The Case of Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech before the UN*, is submitted for the degree of Master is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this study (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed:

Abd al-Rahman Raja Salem Owaida

Date: 19/12/2018

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Abstract

This thesis investigates aspects of ideology and politics in the translation of political speeches during times of ongoing conflict, particularly the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. It examines Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech, which was delivered in the United Nations General Assembly in its 66th session on 23 September 2011, and its three Arabic translations. This thesis, which takes three different Arabic translations of Benjamin Netanyahu's speech as its corpus is situated within the theoretical framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985) and the Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1992). The thesis begins with introducing the historical, sociopolitical and institutional conditions of the production of the original version of the ST and its three different Arabic translations (target texts), focusing on their underlying functions and principles of audience design. It then moves to examine how these different Arabic translations reflect aspects of ideology and politics at the micro-structural level by comparing the target texts to their source text. The final step is to explain these aspects in terms of their historical, sociopolitical and institutional contexts of these Arabic translations. The overall textual analysis demonstrates that the different translations of political speeches are interpreted differently by different institutions to serve their respective ideologies and political agendas. The analysis also illustrates how these different translations –as products– serve different purposes and functions of the agents involved. These translations, thus, play a major role in circulating narratives and political agendas of the conflict relying on their institutional context and the objectives they meant to serve. These findings emphasize the need to study translations of political speeches in their respective sociopolitical, historical and institutional contexts.

Keywords: Political speeches, translation, ideology, politics, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, United Nation.

ترجمة الخطاب السياسي من اللغة الإنجليزية إلى اللغة العربية: خطاب بنيامين نتنياهو في الأمم المتحدة- أنموذجاً

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ملخص

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في النواحي الأيديولوجية والسياسية في ترجمة الخطابات السياسية التي تلقى أثناء فترة الصراعات الدائرة، لا سيما الصراع الفلسطيني- الإسرائيلي. إذ تبحث في خطاب بنيامين نتياهو الذي ألقاه أمام الجمعية العامة في الأمم المتحدة في جلستها السادسة والستين يوم 23 سبتمبر 2011، وترجماته العربية الثلاث. وتبحث الأطروحة الحالية ثلاث ترجمات عربية مختلفة لخطاب بنيامين نتياهو، وتستند في بحثها لهذه الترجمات على منهجية الإطار النظري لدراسات الترجمة الوصفية (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985)، ومنهجية التحليل النقدي للخطاب بمستوياته الثلاث (Fairclough 1992). إذ تبدأ الأطروحة في البحث في السياق التاريخي، والاجتماعي السياسي، والإطار المؤسسي الذي في ظله أُلقيَ النص الأصلي للخطاب مُعْنَةً في ذلك على الجوانب الأيديولوجية والسياسية المتضمنة لهذه الترجمات وطبيعة الجمهور المُخاطب. ومن ثم تنتقل الأطروحة في بحثها فيما تعكسه الاختلافات بين الترجمات الثلاث من مآلات أيديولوجية وأخرى سياسية من خلال مقارنتها مع النص الأصلي للخطاب، وذلك على المستوى الجزئي. ومن ثم تضع تفسيرات لنواحي هذه الاختلافات مرتكزةً في ذلك على دراسة الظروف التاريخية، والاجتماعية السياسية، والمؤسسية التي صاحبت إنتاج الترجمات العربية للخطاب. ويُظهر تحليل النصوص المُترجمة أن ترجمات الخطب السياسية يمكن أن تخضع لتفسيرات مختلفة، وذلك باختلاف المؤسسات المُترجمة لهذه الخطب سعيًا منها لأن تتساقط الترجمة وتتماشى مع أجندتها الأيديولوجية والسياسية. وفي الختام، توضح الأطروحة كيف تخدم هذه الترجمات المختلفة (بوصفها منتجات) أهدافاً مختلفة ووظائف متعددة حيث أن هذه الترجمات تلعب دوراً رئيساً في التأكيد على روايات وأجندة سياسية حول صراع دائرٍ وفقاً للإطار المؤسسي الذي في ظله يُترجم الخطاب، وكذلك وفقاً للأهداف المبتغاة من الخطاب. كما تؤكد نتائج هذه الأطروحة الحاجة الماسة لإجراء مزيداً من الدراسات لترجمات الخطب السياسية بالاستناد إلى دراسة وتحليل السياقات التاريخية، والاجتماعية السياسية، والمؤسسية المواكبة لها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب السياسية، الترجمة، الأيديولوجيا، السياسة، الصراع الفلسطيني-الإسرائيلي.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Stands for
Critical Discourse analysis	CDA
Descriptive Translation Studies	DTS
I Love Israel Website	ILIW
Israeli Prime Minister Office	IPMO
Literal Translation	LIT
Source Language	SL
Source Text	ST
Target Culture	TC
Translation Studies	TS
Target Text	TT
United Nations	UN
United Nation General Assembly	UNGA

Arabic Transliteration System¹

Romanization	Arabic Character	Romanization	Arabic Character
'	همزة ء	GH	غ
Ā	ا	F	ف
B	ب	Q	ق
T	ت	K	ك
TH	ث	L	ل
J	ج	M	م
<u>H</u>	ح	N	ن
KH	خ	H	هـ
D	د	W, Ū	والتاء المربوطة في نهاية الكلمة و
DH	ذ	Y, Ī	ي
R	ر	A	Short Opener
Z	ز	Ā	Long Opener
S	س	Ā	Maddah
SH	ش	à	Alif Maqsourah
<u>S</u>	ص	U	Short Closer
<u>D</u>	ض	Ū	Long Closer
<u>T</u>	ط	I	Short Breaker
<u>DH</u>	ظ	Ī	Long Breaker
'	ع	Doubling the letter	شدة

¹This Arabic transliteration System table is based on the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Retrieved from: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNG_EGN/docs/11th-unesgn-docs/E_Conf.105_137_CRP.137_14_Romanization%20System%20from%20Arabic%20%20letters%20to%20Latinized%20%20%20letters%202007%20-%20ENGLISH.pdf (last accessed, 4/2/2018)

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Chapter One

Introduction

Language can be used to express power and ideology, inflame our patriotic feelings and express our identity (Bazzi 2009: 5). For, Aristotle, there is a "connection between man's political nature and the power of speech" (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012: 19). Kuhiwczak & Littau (2007: 134) also state that politics and language are closely related. Indeed, the relationship between politics and language is inseparable; simply because "politics cannot be conducted without language" (Chilton & Schäffner 1997: 206). Also, Schäffner (1996: 201) emphasizes that "any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language".

Politics often requires the use of two or more languages (Mardirosz 2014: 65). To put it in another way, most of politicians' words are rendered in other languages than the one in which they were uttered (Schäffner 1997: 206). Hence, translating becomes a must. However, in Modern Translation Studies, leading theorists such as Godard (1990), Schäffner (1996), Hermans (1997), Baker (2006) and Munday (2008) argue that translation is not a purely neutral activity, and is often meant to serve ideological and political agendas. For instance, Schäffner & Bassnett (2010:8) argue that translation processes are determined by institutional policies and ideologies.

During times of ongoing conflict, each party employs translation to serve its narration, and thus attempts to gain support and market political views. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict, for instance, is a case in point. Ayyad (2011: 34) asserts that translation plays a key role in communication in the context of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. Also, Schäffner (1996: 202) makes the points that political speeches could be seen as "a specific subgenre of political texts", which is "a part of and/or the result of politics, they are historically and culturally determined". Accordingly, translation, in this thesis, is regarded as "a form of regulated transformation, as a sociopolitical practice" (Venuti 1995: as cited in Schäffner & Bassnett 2010: 11).

Accordingly, this thesis argues that translations of political texts are ideologically and politically motivated. The vast bulk of literature review shows that translating political speeches, particularly from English into Arabic, is still largely under-researched area in the discipline of Translation Studies (cf. Chapter Two).

In order to uncover the underlying ideological and political considerations, a text is recommended to be analysed in its historical and sociopolitical context. In this context, Schäffner (1996: 201) argues that "linguistic analysis of political discourse cannot ignore the broader societal and political framework in which such discourse is embedded". Moreover, Van Dijk (2010: 24) asserts that the specifics of political discourse analysis have to be examined in terms of the relations between discourse structures and political context structures. Van Dijk (1993: 279) suggests that CDA represents a promising model to analyse the text as it aims to "provide an account of the role of language, language use, discourse or communicative events in the (re)production of dominance and inequality" (cf. Chapter 3.2.2).

The present thesis aims at investigating aspects of ideology and politics in translations of political speeches. It analyses aspects of ideology and politics in the Arabic translations of Benjamin Netanyahu's speech before the UNGA (cf. Chapter 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). Thus, these translations will be analysed both descriptively and comparatively (cf. Chapter Four). It further examines key characteristic features of the speech, discursive function both in the source and target language, and the textual features in the target culture in terms of their respective historical, sociopolitical and institutional contexts. To achieve these goals, the thesis applies the theoretical framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985) and the Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1992) (cf. Chapter 3.2).

Product-Oriented Descriptive Translation Studies approach is interested in examining existing translations (Munday 2008: 10), and CDA enables the analyst to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, and thus it represents a suitable methodology to uncover hidden political and ideological agendas. Yet, investigating the historical determination of these selections is also required to uncover whether the processes of production and reception are socially constrained (Janks 1996: 1).

Applying these two theoretical frameworks enables to unveil the ideological and political aspects underlying in the Arabic translations of Benjamin Netanyahu's speech (cf. Chapter Five). The translations are thus meant to serve different political agendas and narratives. On one hand, the two Israeli translations of the speech prepared by two different Israeli institutions, namely the Israel Prime Minister Office and I Love Israel Website reflect political affiliation and promote ideological and political positions e.g. translating this excerpt of Netanyahu's speech: "*I speak for a hundred generations of Jews who were dispersed throughout the lands*" makes this point (cf. Chapter 4.3.2). On the other hand, the UN's Arabic translation which follows a generally literal translation strategy is, to a large extent, a neutral translation e.g. translating the phrase "*our National life*" (cf. Chapter 4.2.4).

1.1 Purpose of the study

There is an interrelationship between translation and political discourse; they depend on each other (Schäffner 2004: 120). In this context, Ayyad (2011: 35) maintains that "governments, political parties as well as ordinary citizens rely on translation as a source of information which constitutes acts of mediation". Elliott & Boer (2012: 2) also point out that translating sensitive political texts is processed within complex webs of ideology and culture. Consequently, a trend towards producing different translations for the same source text is motivated to fit certain ideological and political views and stances.

The thesis argues that Arabic translations of Benjamin Netanyahu's speech serve ideological and political agendas of the agents' involved. In order to investigate aspects of ideology and politics in the Arabic translations of Benjamin Netanyahu's speech, these translations were investigated in their respective historical, sociopolitical and institutional contexts (cf. Chapter Three). In this regard, Schäffner (1996: 204) notes that "the analysis of political speeches in particular and political discourse in general should relate linguistic structures to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions".

This thesis first examines conditions of text production in their historical, sociopolitical and institutional contexts (cf. Chapter 3.1). It then describes and