Ideology, Media and Conflict in Political Discourse and Its Translation During the Arab Spring: Syria as a Case Study

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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DEDICATION

To the martyrs of the Syrian Revolution; to the thousands of tortured detainees; to the millions of displaced families and refugees, know that your sacrifices have not been in vain.

To the martyrs of the Arab Spring, you will always be remembered.

To my father, and my mother, thank you for everything.

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ABSTRACT

> Translation, although often invisible in the field of politics, is actually an integral part of political activity. Which texts get translated, from and into which languages is itself already a political decision.
>
> (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 13)

Translation has recently shifted its focus from the notions of originality and equivalence to those of power and patronage. This has proven essential, especially in relation to the translation of political discourse. Samuel Butler maintains that every person's production, whether literature, music, pictures, architecture, or anything else, is a portrait of themselves. Translation is no exception. The translator's role is no longer perceived as a transparent means of communication that is expected to relay the exact message of the original producer of the discourse. This thesis will view translation as a rewriting of the original text, recognising the translator as an author who modifies and changes the ST according to his or her ideology, political stand, or general interests. The translator is also foremost a reader who brings his or her own judgments, imposing them upon the text, perhaps reshaping the entire political discourse. Media outlets employ certain strategies and techniques to superimpose the media outlet's agenda and objectives onto translations, promoting certain ideological convictions and political views.

This thesis examines the relationship between a number of issues in relation to ideology, media, political discourse, language, and translation. Illustrative examples are extracted from the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring. It uses Critical Discourse Analysis and narrative theory as a theoretical framework. It also aims to detect political tools and strategies often used in political discourse production and media discourse to analyse the data circulated on the Arab Spring. It seeks to look for the ideological influence of both translator and patronage on the outcome of the translation process. The data used for analysis in this thesis is taken from the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring, in particular the Syrian revolution. The data corpus consists of translated interviews, political articles, and political speeches. Examples of revolutionary discourse produced by protesters are also included, alongside their translations. This is a qualitative study that lists and analyses representative samples of the translated political discourse, drawing conclusions and findings conclusions that apply to most of the data found in the context of the Arab Spring.

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ABBREVIATIONS

SL: Source Language

ST: Source Text

TL: Target Language

TT: Target Text

INTRODUCTION

A Background to the Study

Political communication needs translation that enables political discourse to transcend national borders. Translation contributes to provoking conflict, while at the same time unfolding it. Without translation and interpreting, political discourse may not be communicated and understood among the different parties involved in conflict. Without it, revolutions would not gain momentum; they would not be heard of to gain international support. Translation is part of the institution of war and power struggle. It thus plays a major role in the management of conflict – by all parties, from the revolutionaries and human rights activists to the ruling elites and political regimes. Von Flotow (1997: 35) states, "[A]ttention has increasingly focused on politically aware and sometimes politically engaged translators, who are conscious of their influence" on the discourse and "may seek to impose it overtly." Translation can serve as a political tool used by the translator to implement a certain political agenda (Alvarez and Vidal, 1996).

Politics dominates all aspects of human thought and activities. Translation is one of these activities. The translator's decisions are partially influenced by political agendas, especially when political discourse is concerned. Ideological motives are also essential in determining the outcome of the translation process. Translation and politics are inextricably linked; each one affects the other. This becomes increasingly obvious when the media is involved. The media is often used to communicate a political message to the public, sometimes even persuading the public to follow said message. Before political discourse is presented in media, it goes through an entirely considered process of translation wherein the ideological factor has a huge role to play.

Translation has shifted its focus from the notions of originality and equivalence to factors of power and patronage. This has proven essential, especially in relation to the translation of political discourse. Every person's production, whether it is literature, music, pictures, architecture, or anything else, is always a portrait of the self, and translation is not an exception. The translator is no longer perceived to be responsible for carrying a transparent means of communication, nor are they expected to even convey the original message expressed by the author of the discourse. According to Hatim and Munday (2004: 200), equivalence no longer governs the production and reception of translation. Translation is not merely an innocent transfer of ideas from one language into another. The process of translation

can be ideologically manipulated to influence perceptions and to undermine the target culture. The ideological influence on translation is as old as translation itself. Fawcett (1998: 107) states that "throughout the centuries, individuals and institutions applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effect in translation."

Translations are often chosen and reviewed by agents following ideological, economic, social, or cultural considerations. Certain parameters and guidelines dictated by patrons such as publishers, editors, and state institutions govern the translator's work. Therefore, the entire operation aims to implement the patrons' scheme and to establish their legitimacy over the entire process (Haj Omar, 2011: 23). Therefore, for Lefèvere (1992b: 10), "translation needs to be studied in connection with power and patronage, ideology and poetics with emphasis on the various attempts to ... undermine an existing ideology." This dissertation will view translation as a rewriting of the original text, treating the translator as an author who modifies and changes the ST according to his or her own ideology, political stand or personal interests. The translator is also first and foremost a reader who imposes his or her own judgments upon the text, perhaps reshaping the entire message embedded in it.

This thesis will examine political discourse and its translation at the time of the Arab Spring revolutions. It will assess the role of various factors such as ideology, media and narrativity in shaping the discourse and influencing the translator's decisions when translation is involved. The role of translation has been particularly crucial during these revolutions, as protestors and civil activists needed to pass on their demands to the international community to make their voices heard to gain support and sympathy from the outside world. Thousands of articles on the Arab Spring have been translated and the speeches have been interpreted into many languages. Translation, in fact, has been part of the on-going conflict between the revolutionary powers and ruling authorities.

Each of the competing parties involved in the Arab Spring conflicts has produced its version of the narrative on the conflict. 'Narrative' in this study is to refer to the everyday stories people live. Narrative theory recognises that it is neither race nor colour that governs people's behaviour, but rather the stories they hear and believe about events. These dynamic stories are open to change with any exposure to new experience. The role played by narratives is vital in conflict, as narrativity contributes to the normalisation of the stories it projects over a period of time. Thus, these stories come to "be perceived as self-evident, benign, incontestable and non-controversial" (Baker, 2006: 11), gradually taking control of "our consciousness" and becoming part of the daily "fabric of life" (ibid: 13). During the Syrian conflict, narratives have been promoted and naturalised by translation, enabling these stories to transcend linguistic barriers. Translators and interpreters participated in both circulating and resisting

narratives in a "conflict that starts and ends with constructing or deconstructing an enemy" (ibid). Furthermore, translators contribute to transforming the *who* into *it* as a major strategy to deconstruct the 'other'. This is because "an *other*" is "so foreign and distant that *who* becomes *it*" (Nelson, 2002: 8).

Research Scope and Statement of the Problem

This research aims to analyse the political discourse and relevant translations communicated at the time of the Arab Spring revolutions. It will primarily explore the language of the revolution and the various forms of revolutionary discourse produced by the protestors, as well as how language was utilised to establish and express the demands and standpoints of the revolutionary activists during the Arab Spring. It will then highlight the influence of translators' political affiliations and views on the outcome of the translation process. This study aims to expose the different roles played by the translator, both as a reader and interpreter of the source text, and also as an author (re-writer) of the target text. Thus, the question of ideology acquires special importance in this respect alongside the effect of the translator's previous knowledge and experience on translation.

Strategies and techniques employed by media outlets often contribute to shaping the political discourse at hand. The study will investigate these strategies and techniques and will expose the changes they bring about to political discourse. It will also explore the changes brought about to the translation in line with the publishing media outlet's agenda, ideology, and interests. The concept of narrativity is central to this study, since competing parties adopted different versions of the narratives formed on the events of the Arab Spring. The Arab ruling elites and pro-regime media outlets have narrated the events of the conflict in a certain way, which contradicts the narrative produced by the revolutionaries and civil activists. This study aims to explore the manner in which competing narratives manifested themselves in translation during the Arab Spring revolutions.

The first six chapters of this dissertation will focus on the role played by the following factors in shaping political discourse and its translation: political views, ideology, media, and narrativity. Illustrative examples will be extracted from the political discourse circulating during the Arab Spring that swept Tunisia (Dec 17, 2010), Egypt (Jan 25, 2011), Yemen (Feb 3, 2011), Libya (Feb 17, 2011), and Syria (Mar 15, 2011). The data analysis chapter will be dedicated to the analysis of the translation of political discourse communicated during the Syrian conflict in particular. However, it will be thematically correspondent to the theories introduced in the previous chapters. It will aim to analyse the data corpus collected in the

context of the Syrian revolution. The analysis will be made in light of the theories explained in the previous chapters, such as Criticial Discourse Analysis and narrative theory.

This study proposes that the translation of political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring has been largely influenced by the ideological and political views of the translators and publishing media outlets. It demonstrates the media outlets' employment of various strategies and techniques to modify the messages embedded in the political discourse at hand. The translations are manipulated in line with certain agendas, ideologies, and interests. The study proposes the idea that conflicting parties used media outlets to promote their versions of the narrative of the conflict, through translation, for the purpose of legitimising self-actions, while delegitimising others in the context of the Arab Spring. Chapter Seven then explores the Syrian conflict as a case study.

Research Questions

This research study will attempt to address the following questions:

1- How did various forms of revolutionary discourse contribute to establishing and expressing the demands of the protestors during the Arab Spring?

2- From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, to what extent did translators' political views and affiliations influence their performance in the context of the Arab Spring?

3- To what extent did ideology shape the outcome of the translation process during the Arab Spring? What is the role played by patronage in this respect?

4- What are the strategies and techniques adopted by media outlets to influence, or even manipulate the translation of political discourse communicated during the uprisings?

5- From the perspective of narrative theory, how did competing narratives manifest themselves in translation during the conflicts that resulted from the Arab Spring?

6- How did these issues apply to the Syrian Case in particular?

Significance of the Research

Just as my master's dissertation (Haj Omar, 2011) investigates translation of political discourse at times of conflict, this research study continues personal research in the field of translation of political discourse, particularly in relation to media, ideology, and conflict. This study will attempt to implement relevant theories concerning the relationship between translation and the factors of ideology, politics, media, and narrativity on original data derived from the Arab Spring revolutions and the Syrian conflict. This analytical study is unique in the sense that the data corpus under analysis has not been examined previously by any research work in light of the theories introduced in the first six chapters. The choice of the Arab Spring as the temporal setting of the research is significant as this event marks a political and social quantum leap in the Middle East and North Africa.

The study establishes a link between five different uprisings that occurred subsequently across a geographical area that has shared many common cultural, social, and religious characteristics of nations living under similar political circumstances. The five Arab revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria share many qualities and features. They are thus combined in one illustrative case for this study. They are all, in essence, popular mass uprisings initiated against repressive Arab regimes that had ruled their countries for long periods of time. These revolutions started as peaceful mass uprisings, but the Arab regimes in these countries chose to crack down on the protests through the use of excessive force. Most importantly, these protests captured the attention of international public opinion, headlining the news around the world at the time. This, in turn, increased the activity of translation and news reporting from the region.

Methodology and Data

This thesis uses qualitative research – primarily exploratory – to gain a thorough understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for the decisions taken by translators of political discourse. It offers insights into the decision-making process related to selection, translation, and editing of political items by publishing media outlets. The goal is to therefore uncover trends in thought and standpoints, carrying out an in-depth analysis to reach logical conclusions and findings.

The data corpus used in the first six chapters consists of political articles published by media outlets and their translations. It also includes speeches by, and interviews with, key players during the five revolutions, such as rebel leaders, prominent activists, politicians, Presidents

and state officials and their accompanied translations. This is in addition to different genres of revolutionary discourse produced and communicated by the protestors during the Arab Spring. Examples include, but are not limited to, slogans, chants, songs, and other forms of revolutionary literature that served to sustain and transmit the messages and demands of protesters. The writings inscribed on signs and banners held up by the protestors will be subject to study alongside their translations. The data is in both Arabic and English, in written form or as audio-visual material.

The data corpus studied in the data analysis chapter (Chapter Seven) includes material derived from the political discourse communicated with regard to the Syrian conflict in particular. It consists of news reports, articles, statements, interviews, videos, and banners held up by the protestors as well as their translations. These news items and material are published by a wide range of news websites, newspapers, and TV channels. The source texts are published primarily by international media outlets, such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Independent*, *The Washington Post*, *The Daily Beast*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The American Conservative*, *BBC Arabic*, and *CNN*. Most of these media outlets are not directly involved in the Syrian conflict, but provide reports and press material which have been translated by local media outlets more politically and ideologically enganged in the conflict. The translations conducted by these local media outlets are in general ideologically steered and politically biased to one of the conflicting parties. They are provided by pro-regime outlets, such as *Russia Today*, *al-Manar*, *JB News*, *Sama TV*, and *Syria Now* as well as pro-revolutionary ones such as *Sasa Post* and *Orient News*.

The data corpus in Chapter Seven also includes the work of *Memri*, which is a US media organisation that focuses on subtitling audio-visual items published on the Middle Eastern politics. *Memri* has been accused of being biased to Israel as well as distorting the image of the Arabs and Muslims. Moreover, this chapter will analyse the translations provided by Free Syrian Translators and Jaish al-Islam's Press Office. Both bodies are classified as pro-revolutionary; the former is composed of civil activists and independent translators who support the revolution, whereas the latter represents a prominent anti-Assad Islamist military faction, known as Jaish al-Islam. The data corpus also includes the Kafranbel banners produced and held up in demonstrations by civil activists from the Syrian city of Kafranbel. The criteria adopted for data selection will be elaborated on in Section 7.2 of Chapter Seven, which will also include a full list of the examples and the sources, and will show in what ways these items represent the data produced and circulated on the Syrian revolution, by all parties involved in the conflict.

Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of an introduction followed by eight chapters. The first chapter provides political background that addresses the political situation in the Arab World before and after the Arab Spring. It consists of four main sections. The first examines the status of democracy in the Arab countries before the Arab Spring, investigating many relevant issues. The second analyses the environment that led to the Arab Spring as well as the factors that paved the way for the masses to take to the streets in the Arab World, demanding their rights without fear. The third discusses, in further detail, each revolution and the characteristics that make each one unique and different. The fourth and final section investigates the significance of the Arab Spring, analysing its general features and characteristics, examining its effects on international and regional politics, since the Arab Spring marks the end of post-colonialism and the start of a new era in the modern political history of the Middle East.

The second chapter explores the different linguistic aspects of the Arab uprisings and their contributions to the political transition that has been achieved during and after the Arab Spring. It is divided into various sections, each of which examines a distinctive linguistic aspect or feature of the revolutionary action in the Arab World after 2011. Key concepts, such as taking a stance through language and mass protest-mobilising discourse, are covered alongside the role of the internet in forming the discourse of the Arab Spring. Thereafter, this chapter investigates different genres of revolutionary discourse, such as slogans, chants, and revolutionary humour. An attempt is made to decipher whether these genres were effective in establishing the protestors' demands and aspirations. The discussion on the role of language in the Arab Spring is concluded by looking into the counter-revolutionary discourse adopted by regime supporters as a reaction to the discourse developed by the protestors.

The third chapter examines the relationship between a number of issues pertaining to the subject of this research study: politics, political discourse, language, and translation, using illustrative and representative examples from political discourse communicated during and after the Arab Spring. It makes a clear distinction between key concepts such as text and discourse, and politics and political discourse, listing features and types of political discourse while examining revolutionary discourse that has particular significance for this thesis. It attempts to analyse political discourse on the basis of two methods: first, detecting political tools employed in political discourse; and second, critical discourse analysis. It also establishes a connection between political discourse analysis and translation at both micro and macro levels.

The fourth chapter sheds light on the influence of ideology on the production and structuring of political discourse and its translation. It defines the concept of ideology, and examines its relationship with politics, exploring the outcome of the connection between ideology and language, i.e. ideological discourse. It analyses ideological discourse, explaining van Dijk's ideological discourse structures, using examples from the political discourse of the Arab Spring. This chapter also investigates the relationship between ideology and translation, highlighting the various roles taken by a translator as a text reader and a re-writer, discussing the approaches underlying these roles. It looks into the impact of patronage on the translation process, providing recent examples that demonstrate the influence of ideology on the political discourse communicated in the Middle East and North Africa.

The fifth chapter examines the effect of the media institutions' agendas, goals, and political affiliations on the translation process. It primarily looks into the relationship between the media and politics, delving into different ideological strategies and tools employed in media discourse. It also discusses the impact of decisions made by media outlets on the translation process, considering in detail the stages of news translation and the strategies often employed by news channels and newspapers in press translation. In addition to this, it points out a number of tools often exploited by the media to manipulate the outcome of the translation process, such as framing, hyperbole, and understatement. It then ends by specifically investigating and analysing newsroom translations.

Competing popular narratives produced during the Arab Spring revolutions and subsequent military civil conflicts represent a typical example of discursive dispute at all political, ideological, and social levels. Translation is an integrated part of conflict; it plays a vital role in describing, shaping, and unfolding its events. The sixth chapter introduces narrative theory, explaining the way translation operates in this environment of conflicting narratives. It lists the types of narratives, discussing features of narrativity and the way narrative works. It also explores the concept of framing by examining the different modes of narrative framing in translation. It demonstrates how competing narratives have presented themselves through translation during the conflicts that resulted from the Arab Spring.

The seventh chapter is the data analysis chapter devoted to analysing the translation of political discourse communicated during the Syrian conflict. It investigates the effect of the factors of ideology, politics, and media on translation during the Syrian revolution in particular. It also deals, in some respects, with the translations of the narratives produced and adopted by conflicting parties in the context of the Syrian revolution. The role of framing is significant in this regard. This study assumes that narratives of the Syrian conflict have been framed differently in translation during the process of reporting. This chapter consists of four sections

that correspond thematically to each of the four previous chapters (starting from Chapter Three, and ending with Chapter Six). The first looks into the influence of the translator's political views on the translation. The second investigates the effect of ideology in the translation process and the roles played by the translator as a reader and re-writer of the target text in addition to the influence of patronage. The third examines the influence of media on translation and the various strategies and techniques employed by media outlets to steer the outcome of the translation process. The fourth analyses the data corpus from the perspective of narrative theory, exploring the ways whereby competing narratives have manifested themselves in translation during the Syrian conflict.

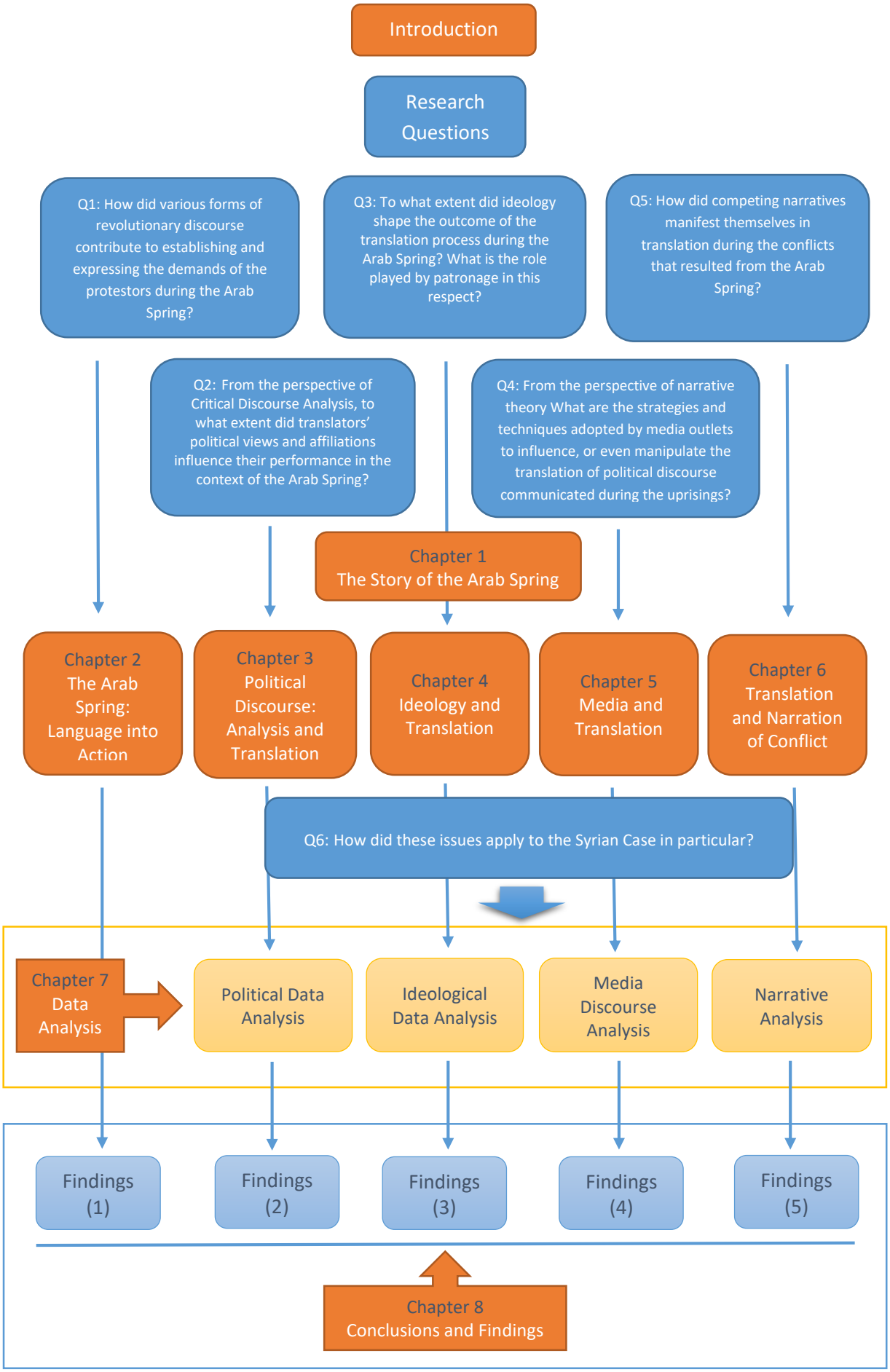
The eighth chapter gives a general summary of this research study, listing the results and findings and explaining their significance in the field of translation studies. It also refers to the limitations of the study, putting forward recommendations for further research.

Significance of the Structure

This research study might follow an unusual structure, analysing the translation of political discourse from four different perspectives: political, ideological, media-related, and narrative. The study also contributes to three fields of knowledge: Political Science (Chapter 1), Linguistics (Chapter 2), and Translation Studies (Chapters 3-7). However, this combination of theories and approaches is necessary, taking into consideration the nature of the data at hand. The Arab Spring is a turning point in the modern history of the Arab World, which the factors of politics, ideology, media and narrativity have contributed to shaping as well as interpreting. Therefore, it is necessary to take the four factors into account to produce a comprehensive and meaningful analysis of the discourse and its translation. Chapter One is meant to provide the historical and political knowledge needed by the reader to comprehend the context of the events, the data, the analysis, and thereafter the significance of the results. It is also intended to constitute a valuable contribution to the studies tackling the Arab Spring in the field of Political Science. Chapter Two is meant to address the linguistic aspects of the Arab Spring, paving the way to investigating the translation of the political discourse communicated during the Arab revolutions in the following chapters. It, thus, attempts to substantially contribute to the study of the linguistic features of these events in the field of Linguistics. This chapter not only presents relevant theories, but also carries out an in-depth analysis, using examples derived from the political discourse of the Arab Spring.

Chapters 3-6 lay the theoretical foundation of the analysis of the translation of political discourse circulating on the Arab Spring, which will be undertaken in Chapter Seven. They

separately discuss the factors of politics, ideology, media and narrativity in relation to translation. These four chapters have two functions. The first is to study the factors related to political discourse, namely politics, ideology, media and narrativity, using representative examples derived from the political discourse circulated during the Arab Spring to help the reader understand the nature of the data at hand. The second is to present the relationship between these factors and translation, paving the way for a detailed analysis of the translation performed in Chapter Seven. Nevertheless, they also include some sections in which translations of political discourse from the aftermath of the Arab Spring are analysed, such as Section 3.4.1, and Section 4.3.4. Chapter Seven is the data analysis chapter, which constitutes by far the largest chapter in this study (24,000 words). It provides a case study of the translation of political discourse circulating on the Syrian conflict in particular. The Syrian conflict is thus regarded as a representative of the Arab Spring. The data is analysed accordingly in light of the theories explained in Chapters3-6. Chapter Seven consists of four sections that correspond thematically to each of the four previous chapters (starting with Chapter Three, and ending with Chapter Six). The following is a chart that illustrates the structure of this thesis:


Introduction
Research Questions
Q1: How did various forms of revolutionary discourse contribute to establishing and expressing the demands of the protestors during the Arab Spring?
Q3: To what extent did ideology shape the outcome of the translation process during the Arab Spring? What is the role played by patronage in this respect?
Q5: How did competing narratives manifest themselves in translation during the conflicts that resulted from the Arab Spring?
Q2: From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, to what extent did translators' political views and affiliations influence their performance in the context of the Arab Spring?
Q4: From the perspective of narrative theory What are the strategies and techniques adopted by media outlets to influence, or even manipulate the translation of political discourse communicated during the uprisings?
Chapter 1 The Story of the Arab Spring
Chapter 2 The Arab Spring: Language into Action
Chapter 3 Political Discourse: Analysis and Translation
Chapter 4 Ideology and Translation
Chapter 5 Media and Translation
Chapter 6 Translation and Narration of Conflict
Q6: How did these issues apply to the Syrian Case in particular?
Chapter 7 Data Analysis
Political Data Analysis
Ideological Data Analysis
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Findings (1)
Findings (2)
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Chapter 8 Conclusions and Findings

CHAPTER ONE

THE STORY OF THE ARAB SPRING

1.1 **Introduction**

In order to meaningfully discuss the subject matter, the popular term 'Arab World' must be clarified and explained. The 'Arab World' consists of the land stretching from the Arabian Gulf in the East to the Atlantic Ocean in the West, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the North to the Indian Ocean and the African Sahara in the South. It encompasses twenty-one countries, holding a population of 350 million people. Until the outbreak of the Arab Spring, many Arab states had been governed by political systems that did not always maintain free electoral processes, or even observe basic human and political rights. They were completely void of freedom of press and the right of peaceful assembly. Some were more autocratic than others, with Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, and Morocco containing some elements of democracy, while the likes of Syria, Libya, and Tunisia were autocratic to the core.

On December 17, 2010, a minor incident triggered what is known now as the Arab Spring. Muhammad Bouazizi, a 26-year-old Tunisian man from the poor state of Sidi Bouzid set himself on fire in a self-mutilating protest against the police who confiscated his produce cart. Nobody in the world expected such a spontaneous individual act to initiate waves of revolutions throughout the Arab World, toppling long-standing regimes.

Protests broke out on the same day in Sidi Bouzid, spreading rapidly to other cities. After one month of peaceful mass protests, Tunisian President Ben Ali, in a historic moment, fled the country under public pressure. 'The Jasmine Revolution' led to the overthrow of the regime in Tunisia. Within a few weeks, millions of Egyptians, Libyans, Yemenis, Syrians and people from other Arab nations were out on the streets in their countries protesting against the dictatorial regimes that had treated them unfairly and brutally oppressed them for decades.

This chapter provides a political background that addresses the political situation in the Arab World before and after the Arab Spring. It consists of four main sections. The first examines the status of democracy in Arab countries before the Arab Spring and investigates many relevant issues such as democracy in Arab thought, Arab civil society, human rights, political opposition and the notion of liberalised autocracy in contrast to full autocracy. Furthermore, it lists a number of potential reasons behind the absence of democracy in the Arab world. It then addresses the connection between the lack of freedom and the Arab-Israeli conflict and

finally ends with the examination of the Islamic heritage of the region, the status of democracy in Islam as a religion and Islamism as a popular political trend in the Arab World.

The second section analyses the environment that led to the Arab Spring as well as the factors that paved the way for the masses to take to the streets in the Arab World, demanding their rights without fear. It also highlights the defining role of the media and social networks coupled with a growing frustration caused by the socio-economic failure and lack of hope in political reform.

The third section discusses in further detail each revolution and the characteristics that make each one unique and different. Five revolutions in five Arab countries are covered: the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, the Egyptian January 25th Revolution centred around Tahrir Square, the Youth Revolution in Yemen, the February 17th Revolution in Libya against Colonel Gaddafi, and the Syrian March 15th Revolution.

The fourth section investigates the significance of the Arab Spring, analyses its general features and characteristics and examines its effects on international and regional politics, as the Arab Spring marks the end of post-colonialism and the start of a new era in modern political history.

1.2 Democracy in the Arab World before the Arab Spring

> [T]he cheapest commodity in our crisis-ridden Arab homeland is its people ... [A man] is killed and nobody asks after him; he is jailed and his government and society forsake him ... He is guilty until proven innocent ... At the same time ... the Arab mass media speak of Arab dignity, strength and of combating injustice, all of which belie reality ... There is no [Arab] excellence without democracy.
>
> *Muhammad al-Rumayhi (1991)*

1.2.1 Democracy in Arab Thought

Since the inception of independent nation-states in the Middle East, Arabs have endured oppression in the form of authoritarianism. Despite this, values like *al-ʿadl* ("justice") and *al-ḥurriyah* ("freedom") have shown their importance in Arab thought and history. Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi, the Tunisian poet, associates *al-ḥurriyah* ("freedom") with *al-ḥayāt* ("life") itself. Similarly, Naguib Mahfouz and Tawfiq al-Hakim, the Egyptian novelists, employed novel writing to promote democratic values and attack political oppression using metaphors and allegories.

Sadiki (2004: 200) notes that the advent of Islam in the seventh century, which remains "a humanist revolution in the first place," is an important Arab historical landmark for the introduction of the values of freedom and justice; Islam was, in essence, "a revolution against *al-jāhiliyyah* (pagan ignorance) and the patriarchal political order in Arabia where a minority of tribal and merchant *a'yān* (notables) had a free hand to exploit and enslave" (ibid). Islam was thus introduced as a humanistic creed that promoted *al-musāwāt* ("equality") as well as *al-ʿadl* ("freedom"), thereby establishing a new era wherein women had the right to live, inherit and learn. "It established *al-shūrā* (consultation) as the basis for decision-making," Sadiki states, "and *al-bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) by populace, a recognition of the right of the ruled" to have a say in choosing the ruler (ibid).

Al-Farabi (870-950) studied democracy as a system established by the Greeks, reading the works of Plato and Aristotle. The same is true of other Muslim intellectuals that received their education in Damascus and Baghdad. Although democracy is not mentioned by name in his works, al-Farabi's notion of *al-madīnatu aj-jamā'iyyah* ("the collective city") indicates that he was familiar with the concept itself (ibid: 209). According to Mahdi (1963: 50), al-Farabi sees *al-madīnatu aj-jamā'iyyah* ("the collective city") as a place where citizens have the right to say and do what they wish; they are equal in the eyes of the law, and no one "has any claim to authority unless he works to enhance their freedom" (ibid). The rulers acquire their authority from those whom they rule; their wishes are to be respected and their will is to be fulfilled.

In the late nineteenth century, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), and other scholars launched an intellectual and political movement known as *ʿAṣr an-Nahḍa* ("Renaissance"), or "the liberal age of Arabic thought" (Hourani, 1962). They raised the question of governance and concentrated on the need for political *iṣlāḥ* ("reform"). Setting the rules for good governance, the rejection of oppression and the call for freedom were the crux of the *Nahḍa* movement (Sadiki, 2004: 202). The *Nahḍāwiyyūn* ("the Renaissance scholars"), however, worked to achieve balance between reform and democracy.

Al-Tahtawi, Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, and al-Kawakibi found themselves between *aṣālah* ("originality", i.e. commitment to deep-rooted fundamental principles), and *tajdīd* ("modernisation"). Due to their commitment to Islamic convictions, they advocated *iṣlāḥ* ("reform") rather than democracy as a European conception; they promoted a model of political change within an Islamic framework (ibid: 218). All three *nahḍāwiyyūn* protested against one-man rule. Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi (1967: 94) argues:

> It is never permissible that the affairs of the kingdom should be given over to a single man with both [its] happiness and [its] difficulties in his hands, even if he be the most perfect of men, the most balanced in intelligence, the widest in knowledge.

Al-Kawakibi believes in justice and liberty as a basis for good governance. Freedom, for him, consists of many dimensions. Man should be free from ignorance, backwardness, materialism, militarism, and *istibdād* ("despotism"). The core of freedom, however, is justice and liberty, which cannot be achieved without undermining and fighting against despotism (al-Kawakibi, 1986: 23-39). A despot, as al-Kawakibi puts it, is the "the absolute ruler and tyrant" (ibid: 31). The despot is thus the source of all inequities and evils. Al-Kawakibi's aversion to despotism, as well as his emphasis on justice and liberty, "mirror[s] a sophisticated vision for a code of human, social, political and civil rights" (Sadiki, 2004: 227). Al-Kawakibi, in particular, and the *Nahḍāwiyyūn*, in general, countenance peaceful change and advocate civil (non-militaristic) resistance to despotism.

1.2.2 Reasons for the Absence of Democracy in the Arab World

Fuller (2005: 41-42) lists seven factors that have hindered the development of genuine democratic systems in the Arab World:

- *Oil*. Oil-producing states in the developing world have poor records in implementing democracy. The authorities in these states resort to distributing oil revenues generously to "the public that can make only limited demands on the paternalistic state in return" (ibid: 41).
- *Income Levels*. Non-oil Arab states are relatively poor countries and have low per capita income, a less than suitable environment for developing democracy.
- *Nature of the Arab State*. The "arbitrary" nature of the modern Arab state and its artificial borders drawn by colonial powers have undermined "the legitimacy and sovereignty of the individual Arab state". This has indeed weakened the legitimacy of the Arab state as a governing institution as well as hindering the development of democracy in the Arab World (ibid).
- *Arab-Israeli Tensions*. The creation of Israel in the heart of the Arab World occured when most Arab countries were struggling for their independence. Subsequent wars, and defeats, at the hands of the newly born Zionist entity helped create "military regimes and security-focused states that [were] … readily exploited by dictators," effectively inhibiting the evolution of the democratic process (ibid: 42).
- *Geography*. The geographical location of the Arab World and oil reserves have made it the focus of the colonial ambitions of the West, aimed at controlling oil and its

pricing. This led to continuous and unpredictable tensions between Arab states and colonial powers, often resulting in Western intervention. These conditions and regional struggles "have not been conductive to democratic development" (ibid).

- *Long-time Western Support for Friendly Tyrants in the Middle East.* This support began in the Cold War; conflicts grew between the socialist camp and the West and continued with the Bush administration's war on terrorism. Western governments chose to "favour the maintenance of 'friendly' authoritarian regimes" and tolerate the brutal acts of "cooperative dictators" who served Western policies on the international scene (ibid). This weakened the parties that believed in democracy in the region.
- *Islamism*. The rise of Islamist movement, namely the Muslim Brotherhood and *Salafist* organisations, as the primary opposition to the Arab autocracy, has discouraged the US from "pressing the democratic agenda" in the Arab World (ibid).

1.2.3 Arab Civil Society and Democratisation

Although the Middle East before the Arab Spring had experienced a significant, though limited, degree of *taᶜaddudiyya* (pluralism), there had been very little *dīmuqrāṭiyya* (democracy). According to Brynen, Korany, and Noble (1998: 268-9), the reform the Arab World witnessed was towards pluralism, rather than liberal democracy. The Egyptian regime allowed a "varied press and vibrant civil society" under various legal constraints, but practised repression and turned a blind eye to electoral irregularities, producing a weak and illegitimate parliament (ibid: 268).

In Jordan, civil society was censored and the monarch enjoyed "a very substantial degree of prerogative and power" (ibid). Elsewhere in the region, the picture was darker. In Algeria, the old guard aborted the democratisation process and a civil war broke out. Syria witnessed a slight political opening with the advent of Bashar Assad; an attempt was made, but reversed one year later, with the government closing all political forums and arresting activists of the Damascus Declaration.

The Arab World was excluded from the third wave of democratisation that swept through Eastern Europe and much of South America in the 1970s and 1980s. The secret lies in the implicit 'ruling bargain' between the state and society in the Arab World. According to this bargain, the governed "accessed certain rights and privileges to the government in return for the provision of most or some of the goods and services they need[ed]" (Kamrava, 2011: 355). Ruling bargains based on preserving national security in the first place enhanced the dominance of non-democratic state institutions over society, guaranteeing the continued

weakness of civil society organisations in the absence of international pressures for democratisation.

Despite facing numerous constraints and restrictions, the last two decades in the Arab World has seen a relatively swift increase in the number of civil society organisations. These non-governmental bodies included private voluntary organisations, community development associations, human rights organisations, political parties, and professional syndicates. The quantitative growth of civil society activities, as argued by Ibrahim (1995: 39), was enhanced by the "growing unmet needs of individuals and local communities by the Arab state" and the "expansion of educated Arab population." The media revolution and the "state fatigue or incompetence in controlling society" created an increasing, although still restricted, margin of freedom that allowed civil society organisations to remain active in some Arab countries (ibid: 40). Political parties had represented an important part of the rapid evolution of Arab civil society organisations for the last two decades before the Arab Spring. This does not imply, however, that they had all been effective. Most of them, in particular the new ones, had been "too small to be significant in the public life of their respective countries" (ibid: 41).

Probably the most effective and independent non-governmental organisations in the Middle East have been professional syndicates; they were essential in leading the mass movement. During the Arab Spring, especially in Tunisia, they were capable of mobilising the masses and organising protests throughout the country. Syndicates are further "organized on the pan-Arab level as federations and are well-linked to their international counterparts" (ibid: 42). This has provided moral protection for them from outside their countries. Furthermore, the authorities cannot easily dissolve professional associations if they choose to challenge the autocratic system of the state since they are located in "the heart of production" (ibid).

The Arab regimes, especially in Syria and Libya, feared the growth of civil organisations and worked to constrain their autonomy. They did this by employing a combination of *exclusionary and inclusionary policies*: exclusion through prohibition of "undesirable groups" and inclusion of other "unthreatening institutions" that would not challenge the dominance of the state-controlled associations and unions (Brynen, Korany, and Noble, 1998: 273).

In other Arab countries such as Egypt, Yemen, and Tunisia, a different model was implemented by the state elites. They were conscious of potential threats brought about by civil organisations, but were reluctant to use direct repressive procedures to deal with this challenge. According to Brynen, Korany, and Noble (1998: 273-4), an array of other policy instruments was utilised, often simultaneously, by the regimes:

- *Legal and regulatory arrangements*. The state can use law that is already designed to meet the state elites' agenda to practise a sort of selective government intervention. The Egyptian authorities employed this instrument to manipulate the parliamentary elections in 2005 and 2010 blunting Islamist successes.
- *State Patronage*. Such patronage aims to co-opt civil associations. This pattern has been particularly common in the Arab monarchies where state resources are overwhelming and royal patronage is dominant (ibid: 274).
- *Divide and Rule Strategies.* This is another frequent tactic used by the state to weaken civil organisations, political parties in particular, by "encouraging their internal fragmentation or by promoting state-supported alternatives" (ibid). In Syria, the Ba'ath-led regime has always fostered and sponsored fragmentations and splits within political parties, even those loyal to the government.
- *Control of Information*. Before the introduction of social media, widespread censorship and government ownership of media outlets had left civil organisations without access to media. This limited the ability of non-governmental organisations to influence public opinion and mobilise support (ibid).
- *Intimidation*. In order to "stunt the growth of autonomous social organisations," the Arab regimes adopted a policy of "intimidating [the] activists" who dared to "demonstrate too great a proclivity" to crossing red lines and questioning sensitive issues in the political situation (ibid).

According to Kamrava (2011: 349), transition from authoritarianism to democracy can be achieved by following one of three patterns: first, "civil society taking a prominent role"; second, democracy "initiated by the state from above"; and third, democracy "resulted from a protected process of give-and-take between competing political groups and actors" belonging to the state elites and/or opposition.

In civil society-driven transition, dictators often find themselves forced to comply with the popular will due to the rapid spiralling of uncontrollable and unpredictable events (ibid). The Arab World gave an unambiguous example in the 2011 Arab Spring, when civil organisations and youth groups, played an important role in leading the democratic transition. Examples of this are the General Labour Union inTunisia, and the *Kifāya* ("Enough") and April 6 Youth movements in Egypt.

1.2.4 The Oppressive State and Human Rights in the Arab World

International law defines human rights as those rights that ensure and guarantee "the protection of individuals and groups against violations by governments of their internationally guaranteed rights, and with the promotion of these rights" (Buergenthal, 1995: 1). Before the Arab Spring, the status of human rights in the Arab World was less than promising. In fact, given such a gloomy record of violations against freedoms, it was foreseeable that a change of some sort would come eventually.

In theory, Egypt was a constitutional democracy with a system of checks against government violations of basic human rights. However, from 1952 until the January 25th Revolution, the country was in a permanent state of emergency. Amnesty International (1998a) in its annual report on Egypt depicts the situation of human rights in the country:

> Hundreds of opponents of a new agricultural law, including prisoners of conscience and possible prisoners of conscience, were detained without charge or trial ... Thousands of suspected members or sympathizers of banned Islamist groups, including possible prisoners of conscience, were held without charge or trial; others were serving sentences imposed after grossly unfair trials before military courts. Torture and ill-treatment of detainees continued to be systematic.

Amnesty International (ibid) concluded that military courts were "the arm of the state to silence political opponents" and these systematically adopted procedures that violated the defendants' rights. Human Rights Watch (1999a), in its world report on Egypt, also observed that political opposition activities in the country were restricted due to the curbs on freedom of association and assembly: "No steps were taken to address the grave human violations … including torture, deaths in detention, extrajudicial executions, and 'disappearances.'"

In Libya, human rights groups were harassed and political parties were banned (Ismael, 2001: 89). Suspected members were prosecuted and civil organisations were banned. The press and electronic media were restricted. In fact, no criticism of the regime was tolerated at all. Amnesty International (1998b) monitors in its annual report on Libya government attempts to "deprive villages or tribes of subsidized food, petrol and public services ... [by] cutting off water and electricity supplies."

Citizens and foreign nationals were regularly detained for political and religious activities. "Over 100 professionals, including engineers and university lecturers, were arrested," the report continues, "and their whereabouts remained undetermined a year later as their detention and arrest remained unacknowledged by the Libyan government" (ibid). Amnesty and Human Rights Watch published reports that political detainees were regularly tortured. Examples of torture include beating, electric shocks, and attacks with aggressive dogs (Ismael, 2001: 90).

Despite the death of former Syrian President Hafez Assad, who was responsible for the massacre of Hamah in 1982, Human Rights Watch (1999b) believed that the violations of human rights continued as before under the rule of his son, Bashar Assad. The state of emergency and exceptional laws "remained in effect and circumscribed basic rights as did special security courts, whose procedures did not meet international fair-trial standards" (ibid). In its annual report on Syria, Amnesty International (2000a) believed that civil society languished as "opposition activists remained outlawed and members of unauthorized political parties were at risk of detention ... [while] the work of human rights groups remained unauthorized." Long-standing repressive actions against Islamist and communist activism continued and torture of detainees remained a constant policy followed in Syrian detention centres (Ismael, 2001: 99).

Under the rule of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisian "human rights defenders and their families were increasingly targeted, as were other activists such as trade unionists and journalists, and government opponents and critics from across the political spectrum ... [and] reports of ill-treatment during secret detention and in prisons continued to be received" (Amnesty International, 2000b). Torture and mistreatment included overcrowding, beating, and other disciplinary procedures. The media and press were strictly censored: "Private and governmental newspapers were virtually indistinguishable in their coverage of government policies. Foreign publications were plentiful on the news stand but did not appear whenever issues contained material deemed unfavorable about Tunisia" (Human Rights Watch, 1999b).

The Yemeni government allowed the activities of human rights organisations. "The freedom of local monitors," however, "was impaired by the restrictions on freedom of expression and a climate of intimidation surrounding criticism of government policy" (Human Rights Watch, 1999c). Freedom of expression, amongst other basic freedoms, was restricted. This was especially the case with regard to sensitive issues such as the security relationship between the Yemeni government and U.S armed forces. Human Rights Watch (ibid) noted that "prisoners and detainees were held in unregulated detention centers operated by tribal leaders or branches of the security forces" (ibid). Concerns were voiced at the ill treatment of political and criminal prisoners, which included flogging and torture in detention centers.

1.2.5 State and Political Opposition in the Arab World

The most dictatorial of regimes in the Arab World had to deal with forms of political opposition. The Arab World was mostly ruled by single-party autocracies until the mid-1970s. The main function of the sole official party was to "foster controlled popular political

participation and to channel the ensuing mass energy into support for various state agendas" (Kamrava, 2011: 331). State repression had always been part of the state's modus operandi to cling to the reins of power. In fact, all Arab governments adopted repression as a strategy to deal with political opposition at the time of decline in ideological popularity (ibid: 335).

Since the 1970s and 1980s, some Arab states have permitted limited activities of handpicked political parties. Some of these parties were new to the political scene and others had a history of political activism. Those with histories had been previously banned and then subsequently re-registered due to political changes. Political opposition was led by an array of secularist, nationalist, pan-Arabist, socialist, communist, and Islamist parties and associations that were divided along two axes: "officially recognized versus clandestine", and "secular versus religious" (ibid: 331).

Despite 'officially' recognising particular parties and allowing a symbolic representation of formal opposition in parliament, the state's popularity had not improved in the eyes of the people. In effect, this led to the marginalisation of the recognised opposition who in turn became obscure, semi-official "elite clubs" (ibid: 332). Kamrava (2011: 332-3) cites the reasons for the lack of meaningful popular support for officially recognised political parties in the Arab World:

- To secure recognition from the authorities, parties had to modify their political discourse and tone down their ideologies. Legal status necessitated implicit cooperation with the autocratic system and recognition of the legitimacy of the existing regime.
- Due to their social composition and/or ideological disposition, these parties were seen as elite clubs where like-minded elites meet and discuss politics. This resulted in the lack of a meaningful relationship with voters.
- Because of the absence of a tradition of organisational evolution and a genuine institutional depth, many parties suffered from personalisation and squabbles over leadership leading to splits and a lack of internal cohesion.

Following the decline in popularity of the officially recognised opposition, clandestine organisations gained more credibility and increased in both numbers and activism. The political opposition became more radicalised, and Islamism emerged as the major political opposition trend among the Arab middle class. This coincided with the decline of secular ideologies, partly due to oppression at the hands of the state. The same was the case for left-wing parties. The likes of the Nasserist party in Egypt, and others, had even lost popularity among the masses (ibid: 342).

The growth of Islamism was preceded by the "rise of a new breed of Muslim intellectuals," creating a "modern but not secularist alternative" to both the secular intellectuals and the traditional religious scholars. Previously, religious scholars who "cooperated with the state" had become mouthpieces of the authorities (ibid: 338). This Islamist generation included thinkers such as Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Tunisian thinker Rashid al-Ghannouchi, the Sudanese political figure Hasan al-Turabi, and many others. In fact, many of these Muslim figures became politically active; some of them even founded Islamist parties and organisations, which were of course severely repressed by the Arab state later on. Although these parties were composed primarily as Islamist political parties, they varied in the "degree to which Islam informe[d] the ideologies of their overall platforms and in the precise role that they ascribe[d] to Islam in relation to political and socioeconomic questions" (ibid: 339).

1.2.6 Full versus Liberalised Autocracy

Before the uprisings, two types of autocracies ruled the Arab World: full autocracies and liberalised autocracies. Full autocracies and dictatorships, notably in Syria, Libya, and Tunisia, did not tolerate competitive politics. Any dissent would result in a prison sentence, or even execution. In contrast, liberalised autocracies in Egypt, Yemen, and Morocco for instance, provided a form of "virtual democracy" (Brumberg, 2005: 16). They allowed civil organisations to operate and adopted an electoral system that enabled opposition politicians to compete and enter parliament. The state elites in liberalised autocracies, however, did not develop genuine representative institutions or even effective party systems. The head of state had supreme authority and the state retained the upper hand as "it controlle[d] security establishment, dominate[d] the media, and role[d] out economic rewards to their favourite clients" (ibid).

The full autocracies survived for so long by following two strategies: providing jobs and offering economic benefits in return for political support; and the use of intimidation and excessive force to silence, exclude, and repress all threatening forces outside the ruling circle (ibid: 17). As for the liberalised autocracies, they relied on four mechanisms: partial national reconciliation, partial reform of civil society laws and organisations, partial reform of economy, partial reform of parliaments and electoral systems. Change, for full autocracies, meant self-destruction and a threat to national security, while liberalised autocracies adopted a policy of state-controlled political change as a necessary tool for survival. That being said,

they, like full autocracies, used "money and intimidation to both co-opt and repress opponents" (ibid).

Brumberg (2005: 17) explains why leaders of Arab full autocracies dreaded reform. First, due to the state's direct or indirect control over economy, "the slightest opening might deprive the most powerful members of the ruling establishment of their earned booty." Second, having failed to develop genuine representative parliaments, the leaders of full autocracies were not able to create effective alternatives to repression and despotism. Third, although ruling elites in full autocracies always claimed the constant loyalty of the people, they were often "controlled by tribal or clan bosses who hail[ed] from ethno-religious minorities, such as Alawites in Syria" (ibid).

By oppressing the majority, the state planted the seeds of enmity between the differing classes; the ruling minority were resented and the ultimate aim of the majority was revenge. That is why Syria's Bashar Assad first promised reform, but then swiftly retreated. A regime that massacred tens of thousands of Sunni Muslims in 1982 alone could hardly take the political risk to lead change and implement democracy. Full autocracies in the Arab World were "trapped by an either-me-or-you logic," making "reform seem like suicide" (ibid).

Liberalised autocracies in the Arab World also had security establishments whose survival partially relied on the state's control over economy. However, unlike full autocracies that adopted a totally controlling and exclusionary policy, liberalised autocracies were built on an edifice of partial inclusion. They followed "development strategies that necessitate[d] the inclusion of competing economic forces" (ibid: 18). They tended to make different alliances in order to avoid becoming bound to one particular group. They therefore reached out to private businessmen, workers, bureaucrats, and professionals (ibid).

In contrast to full autocracies that linked their political future to only a few economic establishments, liberalised autocracies were able to give way to various categories of merchants and economic groups. This was because they could afford, in part, to let go of the regime's control over the economy "without losing all the economic benefits that accrued from autocracy" (ibid). They were therefore able to initiate partial market reforms. Full autocracies on the other hand, such as in Syria and Libya, had almost zero economic reform. In order to secure survival, liberalised autocracies had to "pursue a divide-and-rule strategy by which they play[ed] one group off against another" (ibid).

1.2.7 Democratisation and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Some argue that the Arab-Israeli conflict has prevented Arab governments from developing authentic democratic systems. However, for decades the Arab regimes inhibited political plurality and democratic change, manipulated elections, and restricted freedoms of speech, opinion, and assembly. All this was done to ensure that the governments in place were not challenged; the fear of challenge was not from Israel, but rather from the Arab people (Carothers and Ottaway, 2007: 16).

When the Tunisian regime banned women from wearing headscarves, it did so in order to resist Islamist expansion and promote secularism in society, not out of fear that giving women the right to wear whatever they chose to wear would undermine national security. Similarly, fear of losing power, not of fear a "Zionist plot", was what actually led Egyptian state elites to manipulate the parliamentary election in 2005 (ibid). The Zionist threat had always been a "convenient excuse" to curb democratic reform (ibid).

Failure to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, however, prevented the West, in particular the United States, "from gaining credibility as an advocate of democracy" in the Arab World (ibid). Unconditional Western support for Israel and the American indifference to the inhumane Israeli mistreatment of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories exposed Western hypocrisy in the eyes of the Arab people.

The US pressure for democracy was not authentic, and remained confined to offering advice and instructions on how to develop a better democratic system. The United States needed the Arab oil and avoided provoking its allied Arab governments, who assisted in the war against terror while maintaining a good relationship with Israel. The Arab governments did not take the American demands for democracy seriously, as they were aware that "access to oil", "assistance on counterterrorism", and the security of Israel were Washington's priorities in the Middle East (ibid: 17). This resulted in ordinary people in the Arab World losing trust in the American efforts to stimulate democracy in the region, leading to an unprecedented level of anti-American resentment among the Arabs.

1.2.8 Islam, Islamism, and Democracy

Some argue that democracy and Islam are not compatible. This proposition, though, is derived solely from a special focus on the thoughts of radical Islamists who believe that "in Islam sovereignty comes from God, whereas in democracy it comes from human beings," and that "human beings cannot pass legislation that infringes on the moral principles of Islam and its

traditions (Fuller, 2005: 39). In short, human beings cannot "make law" (ibid). Rather than asking whether Islam is compatible with democracy, the more appropriate question is to be: Is any heavenly religion compatible with democracy? All heavenly religions lack democratic foundations and are dogmatic when it comes to what the *Truth* is (ibid).

In their defence, modernist Islamists note that while all sovereignty is derived from God, God does not impose a certain form of state on people. Human beings are granted reason to choose the public policy that suits them, and to then formulate their state according to their understanding of how the teachings of Islam translate into practice. This is a process that is always open to interpretation (ibid: 40).

To be able to understand the phenomenon of Islamism in the Arab World, it is necessary first to understand what the term *Islamist* refers to. Fuller (2005: 38) defines an 'Islamist' as "anyone who believes that Koran and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet's life, actions, and word) contain important principles about Muslim governance and society, and who tries to implement these principles in some way." Islamists, however, vary in theory and practice. The definition given by Fuller may involve a wide range of Islamists that include both radical and moderate, traditional and modern, democratic and anti-democratic, *Salafist* (fundamentalist) and *Ikhwanite* (members of the Muslim Brotherhood) (ibid).

In the early twentieth century, democracy was viewed as a Western concept that is alien to Islamic thought. Initially, it was promoted by a limited group of Westerners who were criticised of lacking credibility and acceptability among ordinary people. Democracy, therefore, was seen as a "colonial" importation that threatened Muslim values and heritage (ibid: 43). Political thought in Islam, however, has always appreciated justice and considered it a precondition for good and stable governance. Islamists in the twentieth century were the first to criticise the idea that oppression is preferable to anarchy – a principle that dates back to the Mongol invasion of Muslim lands. They started to ask rulers to be just and fight corruption. They believed that the "tyrannical state should be resisted" and that if a ruler was unjust, he would lose legitimacy to rule and should be overthrown, even by force (ibid: 44). In fact, Islamists have developed a parallel order to Western democracy – a system that includes some democratic values including checks and balances, establishing an intellectual mechanism to expel unjust and illegitimate rulers.

Islamist acceptance of democratic values has been enforced by the realisation that Islamists themselves would benefit from the consolidation of democracy and human rights. After all, they are, like other political forces, "victims of arbitrary authoritarian rule and extralegal punishment by the state" (ibid). The Muslim World in the twentieth century was ruled by autocratic regimes that formulated a certain model for political life – a model aimed at

weakening and marginalising alternative political positions. Such a model included methods like holding presidential referendums instead of elections, dishonest elections, arbitrary banning of Islamic parties, frequent detention of leading Islamist politicians on the eve of elections, media censorship, and "government denial of airtime to opposition elements on government-controlled" channels (ibid: 46). For Islamists to be part of the political game, they had to abide by the rules designed by the oppressive state. Some radical movements, however, rejected the methods imposed by the state and resorted to armed struggle against oppression.

Many Islamist movements demonstrated a willingness to establish political parties in order to participate in the political process where permitted. Although they have always remained in opposition, Islamist parties since the 1940s have participated in parliamentary elections. They have formed coalitions with secular, pan-Arabist and left-wing parties, and have taken part in several governments in some Muslim countries such as Sudan, Jordan, and Yemen (Khanfar, 2011).

The oldest and most influential of all Islamist movements and parties is the Muslim Brotherhood. They have been cited as leading "the way with the establishment of political parties in most Arab countries, under a variety of different names" (Fuller, 2004: 49). In Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Yemen, and other Arab countries, the Muslim Brotherhood has shown interest in working with other parties. In order to reach their goals, they have shown interest in working with communist and socialist parties, regardless of disparity in ideology.

Another important experience has been the political activity of the Turkish Justice and Development party (AKP) which has won every parliamentary election since 2002 onwards, managing to form the government. The AKP has been a source of inspiration for Islamic parties in the Arab World, leading a successful model based on three characteristics: "a general Islamic frame of reference; a multi-party democracy; and significant economic growth" (Khanfar, 2011). Although they remained restricted, these participations by different Islamic parties have enriched the political experience of Islamists. They have had a profound impact on the flexibility of Islamism and its ability to play politics.

Fuller (2005: 52) observed key developments within Islamist political thought in the Arab World:

- Understanding the relevance of democracy and the benefits available to Islamists when they call for a democratic system
- Readiness of many Islamist parties to cooperate with other parties to achieve "common goals", regardless of ideological considerations.

- Growing awareness of political, social and economic realities as well as the realisation that Islamic slogans alone will not suffice in finding "concrete answers to concrete questions"
- Greater intellectual, theoretical and ideological development within Islamist thought itself
- An increased pragmatism and realism due to accumulation of experience
- Renunciation of violence by the majority of Islamist parties

Political Islam faced relentless pressure from dictatorships in the Arab World, resulting in profound bitterness felt by Islamist activists who were suppressed, imprisoned, and tortured. Despite this, some of those activists actually became members of parliament, ministers, and even presidents (as in the case of former Egyptian President Muhammad Morsi). Shortly after a promising, yet temporary, democratic transition was achieved in some countries of the Arab Spring, namely Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, Islamist parties made their way to parliament and government. With 42 female members, an-Nahda, the most prominent Tunisian Islamist party, represented a progressive model for women's participation in the National Constituent Assembly. Its leaders reassured Tunisian citizens that the party "will not interfere in their personal lives and that it will respect their right to choose" (ibid).

For any political process to have a meaningful impact in the Arab World, many argue that Islam should be included. Excluding Islamists will not lead to a fair and sustainable political process. The reality is that Islamism is widely popular among the Arab people. This was evidenced in the results of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly election shortly after the revolution. An-Nahda won 41% of the seats in 2011, and then won the parliamentary elections of 2011 and 2014. Islamists even won the Egyptian parliamentary and presidential elections in 2012. The region has suffered as a result of excluding Islamists and denying their right to participate in the public sphere.

Although Islamist participation in governance has given "rise to a number of challenges" on both domestic and external levels, Islamists have shown willingness to make concessions (ibid). Arab societies need the participation of all political powers, regardless of their electoral weight. It is the "interplay" between Islamists and others that can "guarantee the maturation of the Arab democratic transition ... and stability that has been missing for decades" (ibid). Nevertheless, the Islamist participation in the democratic process unfortunately experienced a setback following what was labelled by many political forces in Egypt and the world as a military coup against the first freely elected President Muhammad Morsi. The coup was led by the then Minister of Defence Abdul Fattah al-Sisi. Even the outbreak of a new civil war in Libya was a result of the deep-rooted conflict between the Islamists and secularist powers.

1.3 Towards an Arab Spring

Although an Arab spring seemed unattainable in the early 2000s, it became inescapable ten years later. A number of factors influenced the peoples' awareness in the region and changed popular attitudes: lack of political reform, socio-economic decline, and the media revolution.

1.3.1 Lack of Political Reform

While most of the Arab leaders before the Arab Spring came to power by promising democratic initiatives, they eventually fell back on the instruments of full or liberalised autocracies. For decades, they failed to develop genuine democratic systems. Their security forces and intelligence agencies widely and extensively violated human rights. Civil organisations were systematically undermined through inclusive and/or exclusive strategies. Although in some Arab countries, civil and Islamist organisations were allowed to play an active role in the political process, any participation remained under the control of the state. The Arab autocrats found themselves dealing with the negative consequences of partial political reform. Ideological confusion, weak legitimacy, increased civil conflict, and "transitions to nowhere" all developed as a result (Brumberg, 2005: 29).

These Arab dictators, however, sustained their rule by manipulating different groups and adopting ever-changing ideologies. They played different roles: rich businessmen, liberal thinkers, army officers, tribal sheikhs, and imams (religious leaders). This confusion resulted in an "ideological mishmash" that had "no single direction" (ibid). In fact, all they sought was blind and absolute obedience by all the society's components. They "demanded that all groups – secular, liberal, Islamist, leftist, or ethnic – accept the king or the president's ultimate authority" (ibid).

Mubarak's regime in Egypt permitted the activism of Islamist *Salafists* and *Sufis*. At the same time, it paved the way for the control of businessmen by a number of pieces of legislation that facilitated their activities. The Alawite-dominated Assad regime in Syria has aligned itself strategically and politically with the Shiite Islamic Republic of Iran, despite previously boasting its secular Arab nationalist ideology. At the same time, it has paradoxically favoured loyal Sufi Sunni scholars in Damascus and Aleppo.

The Arab regimes repeatedly worked to nurture civil conflict within society. They generated weak parliaments that lacked political maturity and rarely represented the electorate. These institutions were thus not able to fairly represent existing ideologies and political forces, including Islamists. Instead, they followed the autocrats' choices. The only way to solve the

dilemma was to "have a real democracy – one that would force the population to choose between competing identities," or compel rulers to "offer a new vision of national unity" (ibid: 30). The Arab autocrats, however, chose to hold onto the life raft of partial inclusion, or even worse, full exclusion. This was preferred over taking a bold move towards full democratisation. They failed to adopt a power-sharing pattern that would bring a measure of stability. As a result, they often de-liberalised political life by "using the many tools of repression at their disposal" (ibid). These choices, of course, only widened the gap between regime and opposition, further undermining the legitimacy of the Arab autocracies and paving the way for an Arab Spring.

Lack of political reform led to "transitions to nowhere", as argued by Brumberg (2005: 30). The Arab regimes went through an "unstable cycle of opening and closing, liberalization and deliberalization" (ibid). The bumpy progress of this cycle depended on the amount of external or domestic threats they received. Whenever their national security was under threat, they retreated and gave up all reform initiatives they had previously made. Bashar Assad's advent in Syria was initially promising; he opened the door to political forums and allowed political opposition activists to hold assemblies and make statements in what was called *Rabīᶜ Dimašq* ("Damascus Spring") which, according to Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2015), was "characterized by the establishment of informal political forums that were held to encourage the open discussion of political and civil society issues and reforms."

These "salons" or *muntadayāt* ("forums") "along with the formation of the Committees for the Revival of Civil Society in Syria demonstrated the popular demand for political and judicial reform" (ibid). However, once his rule was threatened following the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, Bashar Assad ended the Damascus Spring and arrested its members. This constituted a major setback for political and economic reform and a revival of the father's repressive policies.

In fact, the Arab regimes did not show a willingness to cooperate with the opposition to form a genuinely democratic system based on a common set of experiences and aspirations. The Arab regimes were snared in "*marḥala intiqāliyya mustamirra* (endless transition)" that eventually robbed the young Arab generation of all hope of a new era of reconciliation, openness, and real reform (Brumberg, 2005: 31).

1.3.2 Socio-Economic Decline

For three decades before the Arab Spring, the Arab World distinguished itself by remaining largely authoritarian, spurning the global trend towards democracy. At the same time, it had languished in economic stagnation and lassitude. While global economies increasingly adopted the logic of "market-driven reform" and "export-oriented growth", the Arab economies before the revolutions seemed unenthusiastic about enacting genuine reform. They excluded themselves from the benefits and advantages of economic globalisation, falling behind other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, and East Asia with regard to economic growth (ibid: 131).

Economic decline and recession have plagued the Arab World since the mid-1980s. The Arab economy has turned into a "global loser", falling behind other economies that were previously classified as less developed in growth rates (ibid: 132). In most Arab countries, overall growth rates have stagnated and gross national products have hardly coped with population growth. Unemployment has continued to climb. The governments have failed to create enough jobs to cope with demographic demand. This has resulted in the unemployment rate exceeding 25 per cent region-wide (ibid). Investment levels have dramatically declined. Fiscally strapped economies have gradually returned to relying on the public sector, and private investments have not been sufficient to compensate for the shortfall.

Capital flight has become a ceaseless chronic disease. Not feeling secure, Arabs held an estimated "$100-500 billion in savings abroad". Governments have been unsuccessful in attracting foreign capital to invest in the region (ibid). Productivity levels have decreased. Lacking in motivation, Arab products and labour have become less competitive in the global market. This has resulted in "rising international indebtedness" and increasing debt overhang (ibid). Poverty has constituted a challenge. By the end of the twentieth century, above 30 per cent of the Arab population was estimated to live below the poverty line, despite the reputation of the Arab World for extensive family and state-sponsored social solidarity. In short, the Arab World before the uprisings was a "region of deteriorating living standards and persistent economic anemia" (ibid).

The Arab regimes tried to carry out partial reforms that often exacted long-term costs. They opened the door to the private sector to make investments. They, however, left "public sector industries largely intact," thus creating a "dualistic economy" whose arguably incompetent public sector employees and bureaucracies have continued to cost the state millions of dollars (ibid: 28). Bureaucrats were left in charge and the subsequent hike in administrative and

financial corruption hindered the private sector from investing more in productive forms of trade and industry.

The Arab autocrats established and/or supported new private businesses that became the real money-makers. These businesses made quick profits from the real-estate sector, telecommunications industry, "import (or smuggling) of luxury and consumer goods, and currency speculation" (ibid). In most cases, they partially or completely owned these businesses. In fact, partial economic reform in the absence of democratisation cannot ensure transparency or even lead to economic development. The cronies of the Arab ruling elites denigrated capitalism.

Such explicit profit making only fed the general public's resentment, thus stoking the flames of revolution against repression and injustice. This provides an insight to the story behind a slogan that was inscribed on many banners held up by the Egyptian protests in al-Tahrir Square during the January 25th Revolution: *ᶜayš* ("bread"), *ḥurriyah* ("freedom"), *ᶜadālah 'ijtimāᶜiyyah* ("social justice").

The overwhelming feeling of social injustice was nurtured by nepotism in the case of Mubarak in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia. The fact that they had ruled for so long was a catalyst for the protests. Mubarak's plans to follow in the footsteps of Syria and have his son Gamal become his successor was especially vexing. Social injustice, unemployment, and underemployment created masses of young, mostly educated, people prepared for action, moved by general frustration. The motivation behind the revolution had never been too clear or foreseeable. The initial act of self-mutilation in Tunisia was perhaps triggered by economic reasons, but the development into a popular uprising with political demands was an underlying social issue. The outcome of the Palestinian question, and the American invasion of Iraq, along with many other disappointments, swelled "the wave of dismay" and turned it into a strong "agent of change" (Pappé, 2005: 309).

1.3.3 The Media Revolution

Since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, it has been obvious that electronic media and its repeated innovations have been the sphere where Arab political activists, journalists, and even ordinary people could interact and express their views and opinions. Radio and television, however, were strictly controlled by government censorship. They were monitored carefully to not touch upon political and social sensitivities. With the "relative stabilisation" of the regimes in the region, these media outlets were permitted to

expand and allowed "satire and comedy in their programmes as well as more open debates on current issues" (Pappé, 2005: 295).

In spite of widening the margins for more creativity, as well as the privatisation and capitalisation of channel ownership, government monopolies and state supervision over the news industry continued. While the Arab governments regarded the seizure of media outlets as a means to confront external and domestic security challenges and a necessity to protect national security, the opposition considered the media as "a tool in the hands of oppressive regimes" (ibid).

The introduction of satellite TV in the 1990s was a quantum leap in the media industry that changed the face of the Arab World. By the end of the twentieth century, telecommunication technology invaded cities as well as the countryside in the Arab World; satellite dishes covered building rooftops, even entering local households in rural areas. Official media outlets were subject to strict state control as the state seemed unable to cope with a rapidly globalising Arab World. The media were restricted in their news coverage, presenting mostly official ceremonies and news bulletins that solely reflected government views (ibid: 296). In 1996, *al-Jazeera* was launched in Qatar as the first twenty-four-hour news station. It hosted "forum debates on democracy and broadcast[s] from everywhere in the Arab World" (ibid: 297). Civil society and human rights organisations in the Middle East now had a platform. In his article published on the *Guardian* website on April 3, 2012, Ali Hashem (2012) says:

> In the Arab countries, where people are used to listening on a daily basis to speeches by their leaders or members of ruling families, the new channel introduced counter-fire talk shows and documentaries from hotspots with an emphasis on controversial issues. For the first time, people saw opposition figures from around the Arab world saying in Arabic what they had only dared to say before on western channels in English or French. Over the past 16 years al-Jazeera has emerged as the most credible news source in the region.

Satellite TV has proved to be an essential factor in "the political struggles within, and against, the ruling elites," becoming very important to promote everyone's agenda (Pappé, 2005: 297). Israel, the Palestinian factions, Gaddafi and his enemies, Assad and his opponents, Egypt, Iran, Hezbollah, the Gulf States, and many others established and funded TV stations, employing these institutions for their own purposes.

Over time, most Arab regimes stopped banning satellite dishes, giving up on their attempts to control what is received and viewed. Satellite TV challenged censorship procedures imposed by the Arab regimes over printed press, highlighted the lack of genuine political life, and provided a platform for human rights and civil society activists. It contributed to the success of the Arab Spring, perhaps not as the sole factor, but as a medium to mobilise the masses and guarantee that their demands were heard. Satellite television "transcends territorial and more

important[ly] ... jurisdictional boundaries and produces unexpected interpretations of reality that clash fiercely and directly with that dictated from above" (ibid: 298). The appearance of English-speaking Arab TV stations, such as *al-Jazeera International*, "brought to the World a new authentic voice" and moved the Arab World to the heart of international attention, especially at the time of the Arab Spring (ibid: 299).

The introduction of the internet constituted an even bigger threat to oppressive state authorities in the Arab World. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, most Arab countries joined cyberspace. Although it was introduced as a "state-controlled service" (ibid), the internet has nonetheless created new meanings and possibilities. Although it had full control over the internet, the state could not ban it due to its inescapable necessity. The internet can be used to criticise the Arab regimes, but can equally be used to enhance business in the country, or to even create propaganda in favour of the regime (ibid: 302). Assad's regime in Syria abstained from banning the internet with the outbreak of the Syrian revolution and instead chose to use it to launch a counter cyber war against anti-regime activists on Facebook and Twitter.

Online activism facilitated mass communication, paving the way for the Arab Spring revolutions that toppled dictators. It is true that unions and opposition groups used other methods, such as text messaging and satellite news stations to coordinate and express their demands during the Arab Spring, but "it is on the internet that a generation of activists has been credited with enabling the movement to take off" (Lewis, 2011). This activism managed to overcome the strict control of oppressive authorities that, even before the uprisings, were known for their online censorship.

The Facebook generation decided to show the world how easy it is to topple a dictator; "young online dissidents" nimbly moved from the "real" to the "virtual" world where their blogs and Facebook updates, notes, and even tweets offered a self-expression (Eltahawy, 2011). Social media websites enabled activities to reach ordinary people and form coordinating groups, organising the protests that were seen on the streets of Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria. Such widespread mass-communication enabled demonstrators from different backgrounds to gather and protest. Social media activism led to the formation of 'youth' organisations that jumped on the initial protests. In fact, these movements were confined to a particular stratum of the population who were disproportionately better educated and wealthier. They did not constitute the majority of Arab society, but represented the aspirations of the Arab people.

A flow of protest videos, tweets, and revolutionary statements found its way onto the internet in different languages. Their role was to pass and share information, and spread the word: when and where it was happening. Once a demonstration took place, they would report it live on Twitter and Facebook through posts, photos, and videos. Most international news outlets had

no actual presence in the Arab countries during the revolutions. “Media posted online” by web activists were “some of the only material that has slipped through the blackout” (Ryan, 2011). The battle for freedom in the Arab Spring took place not only on the streets, but also on internet forums, blogs, Facebook pages, and Twitter feeds. The authorities carried out *phishing* operations, which included “stealing users’ passwords to spy on them and eradicate online criticism” (ibid). However, the Arab Internet activists “found an ally in [the online activist groups] Anonymous, whose international activists have turned their attention to overthrowing ... regimes of web censorship” (ibid).

As mentioned previously, recent information and communication technologies did indeed play a role in enabling Arab revolutions to succeed. They did not, however, cause them. It may be true that the WikiLeaks electronic revelations about the corruption of Arab regimes and leaders “did contribute something to the pot of misery boiling over,” but it is absurd to talk of a “WikiLeaks revolution” or even a “Twitter revolution” (Ash, 2011). The internet is merely a weapon for the oppressed. In fact, young Arab activists, motivated by feeling of oppression and injustice, used these weapons dynamically and more effectively than the Arab dictators.

1.4 The People Demands the Overthrow of the Regime

> From before I was born, we Arabs have been caught between two forces that, seemingly, cannot be defeated: our ruthless dictators, who oppress and humiliate us, and the cynical western powers, who would rather see us ruled by criminals loyal to them than have democratically elected leaders accountable to us. We have been sliding towards the dark conclusion that we will forever remain trapped between two beasts. The men and women of Tunisia took us back from the brink of the precipice.
>
> *Hisham Matar, Libyan novelist (2011)*

1.4.1 Tunisia: The Jasmine Revolution

Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali had ruled Tunisia for 23 years before he stepped down in January 2011 amid an unprecedented popular uprising. He came to power in November 1987 after he toppled Habib Bourguiba, “the father of Tunisian independence” (Al-Jazeera English, Jan 2011). Ben Ali’s non-violent coup was widely “hailed” by the Tunisians (ibid). Upon becoming president, he promised a gradual democratic transition. He was elected unopposed for his first two presidential terms – in 1989 and 1994, though their legitimacy is widely questioned. The first multi-party presidential election in 1999 lacked credibility as Ben Ali won with a huge majority of 99.44%. Thereafter, he changed the constitution on two occasions,

enabling himself to continue running for election. He won in his fifth presidential poll in 2009 with 90% of the votes (BBC, June 2011).

Although Tunisia experienced steady economic growth under Ben Ali's rule, unemployment levels among young people remained high, and large groups of Tunisians in the rural areas remained poor. There was general hidden discontent against the unmistakably perceived corruption surrounding the ruling family. Towards the end of 2010, WikiLeaks published secret US diplomatic correspondence that revealed some aspects of this corruption. Like many Arab dictators, Ben Ali's photos had a constant presence in Tunisia, "with giant posters of the president visible in public spaces across the country" (ibid).

Ben Ali's regime did not tolerate any form of political protest. Human rights organisations repeatedly accused his government of arbitrary detention and mistreatment of political activists. Nobody dared to talk about politics and everyone was suspected. The internet was censored, and any page with political opposition content was indicated as *page not found* (Ben Hassine, 2011). Western governments, which regarded Ben Ali as an enormous bulmark in the face of Islamism, turned a blind eye to frequent reports of human rights abuses carried out by Tunisian security agencies. In the absence of any substantial opposition, it was speculated that he intended to pass on power to one of his family members (BBC, June 2011).

In January 2011, Ben Ali encountered an unprecedented mass uprising. Resentment over unemployment finally caught up with him and put an end to his 23-year iron-fisted reign. Muhammad Bouazizi, a young Tunisian graduate, set himself on fire when an officer prevented him from selling goods without a permit. The incident mobilised the masses, and protests that bagan in Sidi Bouzid spiralled throughout the country. Professional syndicates, labour unions, and opposition parties took part in mobilising as well as organising the masses. In the absence of the media, a generation of young activists on the internet took the responsibility to enable the movement to take off. Thousands of photos and videos for protests spread across the internet, along with tweets and Facebook status updates posted online by Tunisian web activists, creating public opinion against the regime (Lewis, 2011).

> And for the first time, we see the opportunity to rebel, to take revenge on the 'royal' family who has taken everything, to overturn the established order that has accompanied our youth. An educated youth, which is tired and ready to sacrifice all the symbols of the former autocratic Tunisia with a new revolution: the Jasmine revolution – the true one.
>
> *Ben Hassine (2011)*

The violent response of the regime – with the police firing live bullets at protestors – increased anger and generated further demonstrations. "Large numbers of unemployed graduates, frustration with lack of freedoms, the excesses of the ruling class and anger at police brutality"

all came together to spark an irresistible wave of mass anger (BBC, Jan 2011). WikiLeaks' revelations on Ben Ali's corruption certainly aggravated the crisis. Initially, Ben Ali supported the security forces' reaction, claiming that they were protecting public institutions against a "small number of terrorists" (ibid). All universities and schools were closed in an attempt to prevent the youth from taking part in the action.

The President changed tactics as his long standing regime started to collapse in front of an astonished world. He started to offer concessions. On January 12, 2011, Ben Ali sacked his interior minister and released all those arrested during the crisis. He also gave orders to investigate corruption. He then promised to reduce food prices, allow media freedom, and "deepen democracy and to revitalise pluralism" (ibid). In his final speech, he vowed not to run for the next presidential election in 2014, announced the dismissal of the government, and called for a new parliamentary election. After he finished reading his speech, the dictator "fled to Saudi Arabia with his family – France reportedly rejected a request for his plane to land there" (ibid).

About 300 people died during the *Jasmine Revolution*, which led to the overthrow of Ben Ali's regime. In June 2012, Ben Ali was sentenced in absentia to life in jail for the killing of demonstrators. In October 2011, the first free democratic parliamentary elections were held with the participation of about 80 parties, most of which were newly registered. Upon winning the election, an-Nahda's deputy leader, Hamadi Jebali, became prime minister and led a coalition government along with two other secular parties (BBC, Dec 2013). Having started the Arab Spring, Tunisia "has now led the region by holding a clean election with an enthusiastic turnout and highly encouraging results" (Steele, 2011). The democratic process then continued as stable and solid as it started with another parliamentary election held in 2014.

1.4.2 Egypt: The January 25th Revolution

Hosni Mubarak was the president of Egypt for 30 years until he was forced to step down in February 2011 following a mass uprising. It was not expected that the little-known vice-president who became president after al-Sadat's assassination in 1981would hold on to the presidency for so long. Islamist militants assassinated Anwar al-Sadat at a military march-past in Cairo. Mubarak, who was sat next to him, survived. On October 14, 1981, eight days after the incident, Muhammad Hosni Mubarak was sworn in as the new president of Egypt. Mubarak kept Egypt under emergency law, giving the authorities full powers of detention,

effectively curbing basic freedoms. Since 1981, he had won three elections unopposed, but for his fourth poll in 2005 – after pressure from the US – he amended the system to allow rival candidates. The election, however, was manipulated in favour of Mubarak and his party, the National Democratic Party (NDP). He was accused of suppressing opposition groups, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood (BBC, May 2015).

Mubarak's regime did not observe civil liberties or tolerate any potential challenge to its absolute rule. Thousands of political activists were detained - some of them without trial. It was easy "to get arrested and tortured simply by calling the dictator names" *(*Rockwell, 2011). The press was censored, opposition parties were oppressed, and corruption ran rampant in state institutions. Mubarak's will to power was limitless: he chose state officials, ministers, and assistants solely on the basis of loyalty, rather than competence. Elections were run for show only and opposition candidates ended up prosecuted for fabricated crimes. Democracy in Egypt was merely a mask for one-party rule. Mubarak's main justification for keeping martial law running was an excuse "all-too-familiar to Americans: the war on terror" (ibid). There were speculations that Mubarak would pass power to his son Gamal. Although Gamal insisted that he was not looking to become president, he had been moving steadily to the top of the ruling party (NDP), presenting himself as an advocate of economic and political reform – a presentation that contradicted his reportedly corrupt behaviour.

Egypt's revolution broke out on January 25, 2011 when tens of thousands of demonstrators marched and occupied *Mīdān at-Taḥrīr* (Tahrir Square) in the heart of Cairo to protest Mubarak's regime. Parallel demonstrations were held in Ismailiya, Alexandria, Suez, and other major cities. January 28 was dubbed "the *Friday of Rage"* as clashes escalated. Police used live bullets to stop the angry protesters. A curfew was imposed, the army was deployed and the internet was completely blocked by the government. In a televised speech on February 1, Mubarak declared he decided not to stand for re-election in September. Nevertheless, the second week of the revolution witnessed running battles in Cairo between the protestors and pro-regime groups of *balṭajiyya* (government-paid thugs). The army ordered the protestors to evacuate *Mīdān at-Taḥrīr* but protestors refused to leave, and instead set up camp and erected barricades. On February 4, the *Friday of Departure*, hundreds of thousands protested in Cairo, along with simultaneous demonstrators in Alexandria and elsewhere (BBC, Dec 2013).

> I found myself in the midst of thousands of young Egyptians, whose only point of similarity was their dazzling bravery and their determination to do one thing – change the regime. Most of them are university students who find themselves with no hope for the future. They are unable to find work, and hence unable to marry. And they are motivated by an untameable anger and a profound sense of injustice.
>
> *Alaa al-Aswany, Egyptian writer (2011)*

The demonstrations in Cairo grew during the third week, and on February 10, Mubarak appeared on state television, stating that he was "handing over powers to his vice-president, but would remain as president" (BBC, May 2015). The following evening, after the demonstrators marched on to the Presidential Palace, Vice-President Omar Suleiman made a brief statement saying Mubarak was handing over power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) who would run the country.

Much of the anger in Egypt was caused by poverty, high prices, social exclusion, corruption, and personal enrichment among the ruling elite. These factors, coupled with the rise in joblessness amongst the young people, laid the foundations of the protests. The digital revolution and the internet were key factors in facilitating the revolution. Young Egyptians were connected to the world through social media networks and were introduced to the patterns of freedom that the rest of the world enjoyed. The revolution was being broadcast live around the world via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and satellite news stations such as *al-Jazeera* and the *BBC* (BBC, Dec 2013). The *Kifāya* movement and the April 6 Youth movement along with other key opposition groups and civil organisations took part in mobilising as well as organising the protests.

After Mubarak stepped down on February 11, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) ran the country. At least 846 people were killed during the revolution. By May 24, judicial officials declared that Mubarak, along with his two sons, Alaa and Gamal, "would stand trial over the deaths of protesters" (BBC, May 2015). On June 2, he was convicted and jailed for life for complicity in the murder of the demonstrators who participated in the revolution. A promising initial transition to civilian governance began with parliamentary election that resulted in 73% of seats won mainly by Islamists. The elected parliament, however, was dissolved on June 14 when the Constitutional Court decided, "The vote in a third of seats had been unconstitutional" (BBC, Jan 2016). On June 25, the Muslim Brotherhood's Muhammad Morsi won the presidential election and became Egypt's first freely elected president. On July 1, the SCAF formally handed over power to the new president, who cancelled most of the resolutions made by the SCAF, and reduced its power.

Despite the above, influential Egyptian armed forces took advantage of a wave of protests that took place on June 30, 2013. Protests were organised mainly by anti-Islamist activists and secular parties. A coup led by the then Minister of Defence, Gen. Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, eventually overthrew elected President Morsi. A temporary transitional president was appointed while the army and security forces launched a bloody crackdown against 'pro-legitimacy' protestors in *Mīdān Rābᶜa al-ᶜAdawiyya* ("the Rabaa al-Adawiya Square") and *Mīdān an-Nahḍa* ("the An-Nahda Square"). Thousands were left dead or injured. Sadly, the

democratic transition has been reversed since. According to international reports, since Gen. al-Sisi was elected as President, severe restrictions have been imposed on public freedoms and key Egyptian parties have had their activities blocked. The crackdown has targeted Islamist parties such as the Freedom and Justice Party as well as civil activists and revolutionary youth activists such as April 6 Youth Movement. Mubarak and his sons were subsequently released along with dozens of former officials.

1.4.3 Yemen: The Youth Revolution

Modern Yemen is largely linked to Ali Abdullah Saleh. He began his career in the army where he fought for the republicans in North Yemen's civil war. He remained in the military until 1978 and then entered the political sphere. Saleh took over following the assassination of the then president, and never subsequently relinquished the presidency. Initially, it was not expected he would remain in office for long. The CIA estimated that he would not last for six months in the post. But he survived, "consolidating power within the ruling General People's Congress (GPC)" and "buying the support of the country's fractious tribes" (Carlstrom, 2011). He was re-elected twice, in 1982, and in 1988.

Saleh presided over the unification of North Yemen with the Communist South. Frustrated by economic marginalisation by the North-dominated government, the south decided to secede in May 1994 and a civil war broke out. The secession lasted for only two months before the north prevailed over the Southern army, putting Saleh once again in the leadership of a unified Yemen. After the 9/11 attacks, Saleh strove to be a close ally to the United States; he allowed US aircrafts to target al-Qaeda on Yemeni soil. Yemen, in return, received tens of millions of dollars in American aid.

Over three decades at the helm of Yemen, Saleh had used every possible legal loophole to protect his reign, promising to give up politics hoping to prolong his rule. He managed to stay in power by "creating confusion, crisis and sometimes fear among those who might challenge him" (BBC, Sep 2011). Saleh always presented himself as the only person "who could hold together a united Yemen" (Carlstrom, 2011). In February 2011, in the early days of the revolution, he criticised the opposition for taking part in a conspiracy against the country – an accusation that he had repeated on many occasions during his decades in power. Critics accused his regime of corruption and mismanagement. By the end of his reign, Yemen had become one of the poorest countries in the world, with growing unemployment and constant inflation. Billions of dollars in oil revenues have been stolen, misappropriated, or wasted. 40%

of the Yemeni population lived below the poverty line, even before the recent post-revolution civil war (ibid).

Saleh's failures as president fuelled a mass uprising that first erupted in the capital, Sanaa, in January 2011. The uprising followed the collapse of Ben Ali's regime in Tunisia. Thousands of people flowed into *Sāḥat at-Taḥrīr* (the Change Square) in the heart of Sanaa, protesting against government corruption, unemployment, and woeful economic deterioration. The wave of protests spread, bringing hundreds of thousands of people into the streets of most Yemeni cities calling for Saleh to step down. In a country known for its regional and tribal diversity, men and women from all walks of life and from all regions of Yemen, old and young, secularists and Islamists, civil activists and tribesmen, northerners and southerners, all expressed unity and started to speak without fear, "coming together in a campaign to get rid of the man who has ruled them for three decades" (ibid).

> This is a regime that carried out 33 years of rule through blood and corruption. We have brought it to its knees through our determination to remain in the squares for months if necessary, and through the steadfastness of our young people who have confronted the bullets of the regime with bared chests. With politicians and members of the army standing beside us, our success will go even further.
>
> *Tawakkol Karman, Yemeni activist and Nobel Prize holder (2011)*

Saleh, however, tried to suppress these protests. He sent his security forces and snipers who were accompanied by mercenaries and thugs with sticks and knives. They cracked down on the protests and crushed the Change Square set-in. Activists accused security forces of deliberately targeting and killing demonstrators. Tens of people were shot dead (Bilal, 2011). Cracking down too hard is often counter-productive; this was found to be the case, as the number of demonstrators only increased. The president quickly stated that he would not stand for re-election in 2013 and he had no intention of passing power on to his son. Saleh tried to negotiate with the demonstrators, offering first to form a unity government, then offering to step down by the end of the year, "handing power to a civilian government" (Carlstrom, 2011). Opposition groups rejected Saleh's offer and affirmed that he just aimed to buy time.

An army division led by General Ali Mohsin, along with militants loyal to the powerful al-Ahmar family, declared support for the revolution. Heavy fighting took place in Sanaa, Ta'iz, and Aden, between pro- and anti-Saleh fractions, leaving hundreds of people dead. In late April 2011, the General People's Congress (GPC) party led by Saleh agreed to a Gulf Cooperation Council-brokered deal to transfer power in return for immunity from prosecution, but the president refused to sign (BBC, Oct 2015).

On June 3, 2011, Saleh was severely wounded by an attack on the presidential compound in the capital city. He had to travel to Saudi Arabia and then to the United States, to seek medical treatment. Yemenis thought that the attack would result in Saleh finally resigning, but in September he returned to Yemen amid a new wave of violence. In October 2011, the UN Security Council urged Saleh to sign the GCC-brokered deal. On November 23, Saleh agreed to sign the deal. Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, the then Vice-President, assumed presidential powers until February 25, 2012. He was sworn in as the President of Yemen after a presidential election in which he was the only candidate. Saleh officially ceded power two days later (ibid).

President Hadi was meant to serve a two-year term and supervise new parliamentary and presidential elections in 2014. The deal ended three decades of Saleh's rule and marked another victory for the Arab Spring that swept the Arab World. Upon taking up the presidency, Hadi had to deal with widespread poverty and malnutrition, a secessionist movement in the south and al-Qaeda militants who exploited the unrest to temporarily seize control of many southern areas. Many Yemenis were not content that Saleh, his family, and his assistants had not been prosecuted for the deaths of hundreds of protestors during the revolution (ibid). Yemen's struggle for change was internationally recognised when Yemeni civil activist Tawakkol Karman won the Nobel Peace Prize. Karman, who had led demonstrations calling for freedom in Sanaa, for years, "dedicated her victory in October to the 'youth of the Arab Spring' and the 'memories of the martyrs'" (Bilal, 2011).

Despite the progress made, Yemen recently experienced a new civil war when Houthi rebels attempted to overthrow the legitimate government of President Hadi. The rebels were reportedly funded and armed by Iran and were supported by Yemeni forces loyal to former president Saleh. They have since occupied many Yemeni provinces, including the capital Sanaa. The international community condemned the Houthi illegitimate actions while a military coalition has been formed, mainly led by Saudi Arabia. The coalition has launched military operations including air raids against the Houthi troops and Saleh's forces. The anti-Houthi resistance on ground claims to aim to liberate Yemen and restore democracy and legitimacy in the country.

1.4.4 Libya: The February 17th Revolution

From 1969 until 2011, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi had ruled Libya. The Arab nationalist Gamal Abdul Nasser was Gaddafi's inspiration throughout his youth. Despite being a young soldier, he planned to topple Libya's monarchy. In September 1969, Gaddafi returned from

the UK, where he had received military training, to Libya to lead a coup against King Idris (BBC, Nov 2011). During his 42-year reign, he invented a personalised system of government, supported radical groups around the world, and led North Africa's most "totalitarian, arbitrary, and brutal regime" (Kafala, 2011). In the beginning, his legitimacy relied on his anti-colonialist ideology, and then on keeping the country in perpetual revolution. In 1977, Gaddafi declared the Libyan *Jamāhīriyya* (state of the masses). In theory, it "empowered ordinary citizens through local 'people's committees'"; in practice, however, it "centralised much of Libya's decision-making in the hands of a few select officials" (Al-Jazeera English, May 2012). His political philosophy was set out in his Green Book. The worst period for Libyans was the 1980s, when Gaddafi imposed his social theories on his people.

As part of his 'cultural revolution', Gaddafi prohibited political activism and burned 'unsound' publications. Gaddafi was a political manipulator, provoking different tribes against each other to ensure full control over the population. His regime was characterised by patronage and strict censorship of a police state. Political parties were forbidden and his opponents were imprisoned and tortured or even assassinated. He also sent intelligence agents to murder dissidents based abroad. Freedoms of speech and assembly were entirely restricted and there were countless examples of violent repression (Kafala, 2011). Human rights organisations and opposition groups were "harassed and banned", and their activists were "prosecuted by the government" (Ismael, 2001: 90). In July 1996, political detainees led a riot in the Abu Salim Prison in an attempt to improve the treatment they received from the prison guards. The riot was squashed and ended with a massacre. 1,200 inmates and guards were killed "when the prison was stormed by security forces" (ibid: 91).

> For a city with a single main hospital and one university, Tripoli was well-equipped when it came to prisons. There was the infamous Abu Salim prison, where 1,200 inmates were killed in 1996; the military police prison; the criminal investigation prison. In the last days of the revolution, farms and company offices were converted into prisons and every military or security unit ran its own detention centre.
>
> *Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, Guardian correspondent (2011)*

With a population of only six million people and annual oil revenues of 32 billion dollars in 2010 alone, Libya's potential was massive. Most Libyans, however, did not enjoy this wealth and the economic condition in the country was worse than that in far poorer countries. Unemployment was estimated to be over 30% and jobs outside the public sector were few. Indeed, Gaddafi's major crime was wasting Libya's fortune on foreign ventures. In the last years of his rule, Libya emerged from a decade of international isolation and sanctions that resulted from the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland in December 1988. Due to its vast energy reserves and poor infrastructure, the country became the target of

Western investments and a centre of political attention of the US and the EU (Kafala, 2011). Two of Gaddafi's sons seemed to be nominated for succession: Saif al-Islam, the elder son, who presented himself as a defender of media freedom and human rights, and al-Mu'tasim, who played a central role in the intelligence sector.

Inspired by the wave of protests throughout the Middle East, Libyans launched their revolution in February 2011 with a protest calling for human rights in the eastern city of Benghazi. The families of the Abu Salim prison massacre victims initiated the protests which spread rapidly. Coinciding with the fifth anniversary of a major anti-Gaddafi protest in Benghazi, February 17 was the official *Day of Revolt*. On this day in 2011, thousands of protesters marched on the streets. Gaddafi's forces responded by firing live ammunition at the protest. More than a dozen protestors were shot dead. The protest in Benghazi developed and spread to other eastern towns before eventually reaching Tripoli. Major demonstrations were reported in Benghazi, Ajdabiya, Misrata, and Zintan, among others. Gaddafi then released large numbers of convicted prisoners, paying them to crush the demonstrators. Protests continued to escalate after February 17, and there were widespread reports that "Gaddafi had hired mercenaries," mainly Africans from sub-Saharan countries, "to supplement his security forces and suppress the demonstrations" (Al-Jazeera English, Aug 2011).

The revolt soon evolved into an armed conflict between Gaddafi's forces and poorly armed rebels centred in the city of Benghazi. The rebels in the East formed the National Transitional Council (NTC), which led the revolt, and was immediately recognised by many Arab and Western governments as Libya's legitimate ruling body. In March 2011, the UN Security Council passed a resolution that permitted the use of all means necessary – except troops on the ground – to protect civilians in Libya (BBC, Sep 2014).

> The civilian population, which is demanding nothing more than the right to choose their own destiny, is in mortal danger (BBC, Oct 2011).
>
> *French President Nicolas Sarkozy*

NATO soon launched a military operation against Gaddafi's regime. The campaign was solely confined to air attacks, primarily aimed at imposing a no-fly zone. It was later expanded to include bombing military targets on the ground. After six months of fighting, rebel forces managed to take the capital, Tripoli, in August 2011, after clearing vast territories in the west. After four decades in power, the leader was finally ousted. Gaddafi and his family were forced to escape the capital. On October 31, 2011, Gaddafi was captured and killed while trying to flee his hometown, Sirte. Eight months of heavy fighting for freedom have come to an end. Three weeks later, Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, was captured while also trying to flee the

country. He now "faces trial in Libya for financial corruption, murder and rape" (BBC, Sep 2014).

> [T]he Libyan 'Brother Leader of the Revolution' Muammar Gaddafi would have sold the Mediterranean to the Americans and their European allies, if only he could have done, in order to stay in power. His trouble was that they were no longer buying – at least not from him.
>
> (Dabashi, 2012: 208)

Almost 50 thousand people were killed and many more injured during the revolution. Three days after the death of Gaddafi, the NTC officially proclaimed the liberalisation of Libya. Although Libya has suffered from instability since the fall of Gaddafi's regime, the first free national elections for a new parliament were held relatively peacefully in a democratic atmosphere in July 2012 (BBC, Sep 2014).

The situation has changed, though, since the beginning of 2014. A civil conflict broke out between three rival factions seeking to rule Libya: the first group is the government of the Council of Deputies (also known as the *Tobruk Government* for being based in the Eastern city of Tobruk), which was elected in 2014, and is loyal to the Libyan National Army commanded by Khalifa Haftar. The second group is the rival Islamist government of the new General National Congress based in the capital Tripoli, dominated mainly by Islamists and backed by *Libya's Dawn Troops* and the *Islamist Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries*. The third group is the Islamic State (IS), which mainly controls the central city of Sirte (Stephan, 2014).

1.4.5 Syria: The March 15th Revolution

The Ba'ath party was founded in Damascus in 1947 as a pan-Arabist secular party that was opposed to colonisation and imperialism. It seized power in Syria in March 1963. In 1970, the then Ba'ath government Minister of Defence Hafez Assad took over in a coup. He had ruled for three decades before his son, Bashar, inherited a regime led by the pan-Arabist Ba'ath party. The *Alawites* – a fringe Shiite sect that constitutes about 10% of the population of a Muslim country with a Sunni majority – has dominated his regime.

Upon the death of his brother Basil, who was initially "groomed for the presidency" in 1994, Bashar Assad had to return to Damascus from London where he was studying medicine. Bashar Assad "inherited power" in July 2000, a month after the death of his father Hafez Assad (Al-Jazeera English, Oct 2011). He became the new secretary-general of the Ba'ath

party in June 2000. The parliament amended the constitution to reduce the minimum age limit for the president to 34 instead of 40, allowing the junior Assad to run for presidency. After a rigged presidential referendum, he was elected president, with more than 97% of the vote, and took office on July 11, 2000 (ibid).

Under the rule of the senior Assad, thousands of political opposition members and civil activists were detained under emergency laws, which were implemented in 1963. According to the state of emergency, citizens were denied "the right to form associations, organisations or political parties in order to express or defend their opinions" (ibid). Almost 40,000 people were reportedly killed when the armed forces, commanded by the brother Rifaat Assad, attacked the city of Hama in 1982 to crush an uprising led by the Muslim Brotherhood.

> The Alawi clans around Asad, which dominate the security forces and have been transformed into a privileged political elite, have a special stake in the survival of the regime, and the massive 1982 repression at Hama shows the lengths to which they will go to defend it.
>
> (Hinnebusch, 1998: 116)

Bashar was viewed as a moderniser and his arrival was greeted with optimism. He promised to observe basic freedoms and achieve economic openness. But the "package of reforms he began, known as the 'Damascus Spring,' proved short-lived" (Al-Jazeera English, Oct 2011), as members of the political opposition were detained and all forms of political opposition were banned. Power remained concentrated in the hands of the Assad family and other Alawites. His policies became more authoritarian and his rule more autocratic. Although Bashar had released some hundreds of prisoners upon becoming president, thousands more remained in prison. The secret police continued to detain opposition members and human rights activists, censor the internet and arrest dissident bloggers. Under Bashar's reign, "[c]ritics are imprisoned, domestic media are tightly controlled, and economic policies often benefit the elite" (BBC, June 2012). According to Human Rights Watch, Syria's "human rights record is 'among the worst in the world'" (ibid), as "exceptional laws ... remained in effect and circumscribed basic rights as did special security courts, whose procedures did not meet international fair-trial standards" (Ismael, 2001: 98).

Assad insisted that his regime was immune to the uprisings that swept the Arab World and toppled the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011. However, in the southern city of Daraa an uprising against Assad began. In mid-March 2011, locals gathered to demand the release of 14 school children who had been detained and tortured for writing a well-known slogan of the mass revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, 'The people demands the downfall of the regime' on the school walls. The protesters also called for democracy, reforms, and greater

freedom. “The peaceful show of dissent was, however, too much” for the brutal regime to take and when the crowds marched through the city after Friday prayers on March 18, security forces fired live ammunition, killing four people (BBC, Apr 2012).

Within weeks, the protest spread throughout the country. Major protests were reported in Lattakia, Jableh, Baniyas, Damascus, Homs, Duma, Idlib, Der Ezzor, amongst other Syrian cities. The city of Hama witnessed the biggest protest with half a million demonstrators. The security forces responded violently. The uprising seemed to get out of control. Assad deployed the army to crush the emboldened protesters. Hundreds of people were killed as the army besieged major cities and tanks shelled residential areas. The security forces stormed homes, rounding up those believed to have attended demonstrations. The government blamed “armed gangs and terrorists” for the unrest and said it was facing an international conspiracy (ibid). The protestors’ main goal had become the overthrow of Bashar Assad’s regime and the ruling Ba’ath party elite.

Due to successive regime crackdowns, thousands of army officers and soldiers deserted from the Syrian army, eventually establishing the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Although it began peacefully, the revolution became increasingly militarised. Assad’s forces, eventually backed by Hezbollah and other Iranian and Iraqi Shiite militias, were on one side and the FSA, founded by Colonel Riad al-Asa’ad, alongside numerous Islamist factions were on the other side. Over time, the FSA and the Islamist factions grew in number and seized control of some pockets of territory in the North, East, and South of the country. On November 12, 2011, the Arab League suspended Syria from its ranks, and began to impose sanctions. After weeks of arduous negotiations with the Arab League, Assad finally agreed to allow an Arab observer mission to enter the country. The monitors, however, failed to stop the violence, and its work was subsequently suspended in January 2012 (BBC, Mar 2015).

> In November I returned to Homs after a two month absence. “The days of rocks are over,” said a friend of mine who used to throw rocks at security forces in demonstrations. “A new phase has begun of the Free Syrian Army defending demonstrations, and there are less demonstrations because security forces shoot more.”
>
> I last visited the city in January. Armed men surrounded Khaldiyeh neighbourhood to protect its nightly demonstration. When I attended a rally in Bab Dreib area, snipers positioned in a neighbouring Alawite area shot in our direction just to scare the protesters (Al-Jazeera English, Feb 2012).
>
> *Nir Rosen, journalist*

For months, major cities like Hama, Homs, and Der Ezzor came under intense bombardment, leaving thousands of civilians killed. Kofi Annan was appointed envoy to Syria in March 2012 by the UN and the Arab League and put forward a six-point peace plan. A ceasefire and a UN

observer mission were planned, but ultimately failed to end the bloody crackdown carried out by the regime. The mission also suspended its activity. The battles between the regime's army and the armed opposition continued, and reached the capital, Damascus, as well as the biggest city in Syria, Aleppo. Meanwhile, armed pro-Assad plain-clothed thugs known as *šabbīḥa* carried out massacres and mass executions. On May 25, "reports emerged of the deadliest massacre in the crisis to date" (BBC, Mar 2015). UN observers confirmed, "108 people, most of them women and children, were shot or stabbed in the village of Taldou in the Houla region" (ibid). A few weeks later, another massacre in the village of Qubair left 78 people dead.

Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia called on Assad to step down. The US and the EU imposed unilateral sanctions on him and members of the ruling elite. The UN Security Council has failed so far to pass a resolution condemning the Syrian regime or imposing sanctions on it due to the use of vetoes by Russia and China. In June 2012, a meeting of major powers in Geneva "called for a 'transitional government,'" but again "Russia and China have blocked attempts by Western countries at the UN to put pressure on Mr Assad to leave" (ibid). Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah have largely backed Assad and supplied him with militants fighting on the ground.

The conflict, so far, has reportedly left more than half a million dead and millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and throughout Europe, with most cities and villages partially or completely devastated. The situation has become more complicated with the emergence of Islamic State (IS), an extremist organisation fighting against both the opposition forces and Assad's troops. IS developed to be a major player, now controlling half of Syria's terrority. Observers accuse Assad of contributing to the creation of Islamic State in order to establish legitimacy and gain Western support under the pretext of fighting against terror. With a regime determined to hold on to power, and a revolution that showed no sign of easing, resolution seemed unattainable.

1.5 Thinking the Arab Spring

Once the Arab nations dared to challenge their autocrats, marching in millions on the streets, it was obvious that the brutal Arab regimes had "lost their deterrence, their hegemony and their capacity to instil fear or command loyalty," as Marwan Bishara (2011) puts it. The Arab uprisings in different Arab countries were, in fact, emotionally connected and had common aspects. A sign lifted by the Egyptian protestors in Tahrir Square addressing the Tunisian people offered the clearest expression of this unity: "*antum as-sābiqūn, wa naḥnu al-lāḥiqūn*

(you are the first, and we are to follow) (Dabashi, 2012: 29). No "one-size-fits-all template," however, can be applied to all Arab uprisings.

The Arab World does not tend to act as one homogenous body; it is a rich combination of diverse components with different characteristics. In Tunisia, for example, the military backed the revolution against the ruling elites. In Egypt, the army played a vital role in toppling Mubarak's regime in response to the revolution; however, General Sisi, the then Minister of Defence, later led a coup against the first freely elected President Muhammad Morsi. In Syria and Libya, the army remained largely loyal to the regime (Gardner, 2011). Pro-regime thugs, Special Forces and Republican Guards in Libya, Yemen and Syria demonstrated greater loyalty to the regime. The dictators in these countries were largely in control of their national armies (Dabashi, 2012: 203).

Nevertheless, the Arab Spring uprisings did share key characteristics. They have known no 'sole hero' or 'revolutionary leader.' In fact, the young generation were the "anonymous heroes of these revolutions" (ibid: 239). Although their ultimate goal was political, these uprisings had a social basis and economic motivation. They started peacefully and demonstrated a nonviolent nature. They were "post-ideological"; they happened in the aftermath of the exhaustion of ideologies and cannot be classified accordingly as Islamist, socialist, or nationalist (ibid: 238). Islamists and socialists took part in these mass movements and in some cases attempted to impose their own agenda. However, the uprisings remained as social movements that were not appropriated by any particular ideology.

It is true that the Arab Spring is not ideological, and that it has brought together different groups united by the demand for the overthrowing of autocracies. Islamism, however, has been part of the scene, and proved to be a key player in the politics of the Middle East. After the Arab Spring, Islamist parties and movements, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, have realised that they have a unique opportunity to enter the political arena. They speak "the language of democracy and national unity" and their faith in democracy has been put to test (Hardy, 2011). However, the military coup in Egypt led by Gen. Sisi has constituted a setback for this unique experience in Egypt at least. One can argue that of all the countries in question, only Tunisia has made a successful democratic transition. However, nothing remains guaranteed.

The Arab Spring reshaped the international political map and started a new era beyond the post-colonial configuration. The old categorisation of 'Islam and the West' had disappeared for a while. However, the militarisation of the Libyan and Syrian revolutions led eventually to the rise of Islamic State (IS) along with various Islamist militant groups in Syria and Libya.

At the opposite end, pro-regime militias, mainly Shiite Islamists in Syria, Iraq, and even Yemen have been formed with the full support of Iran. The political and military conflict following the Arab Spring seems to be multi-faced; it is a conflict between revolutionary powers and the supporters of old regimes backed by military elites. It is also a confrontation between the Sunni and Shiite ideologies; the West and the Sunni Jihadists; the Arabs and the Iranians; and the secularist powers and Islamist groups.

The Arab revolutions enjoy a "self-cleansing mechanism" that provides a protection from entering a "closed-circuit" of "corruption-revolt-corruption" (Dabashi, 2012: 239). The genius of these revolutions, according to Azmi Bishara, lies in their continuation and in the realisation that the action goes beyond a *Friday of Anger*, and that there is no turning back (ibid: 95). The significance of these uprisings is that they are not replacing one tyrant with another, one fake democracy with another. The Facebook generation has been able to understand that the disposing of Ben Ali, Mubarak or Saleh and the building of a democratic system are "two very different things" (Rosenberg, 2011). As long as the Tahrir and Change squares across the Arab World remain open for revolt, the revolution remains open-ended. The idea of "total, sudden, and final revolution" has disappeared, and a new pattern of transition emerged: *at-tawra mustamirra* (the revolution is ongoing) – a "proposition suggested in a leading slogan of the Arab Spring" (Dabashi, 2012: 246).

The civil conflicts experienced by most of the Arab Spring countries following the uprisings are in fact the legacy of the autocratic regimes that had ruled these countries for tens of years. These regimes undermined the civil peace of the Arab societies, taking advantage of the ethnic and religious diversity to create ethnic and sectarian conflicts. Conflicts were manufactured to keep the various minorities and groups under the control of the state, which had represented itself as the protector of each of those groups against the others. Once the Arab regimes had collapsed, these conflicts came to the surface once again. This highlights the significance of the concept of the permanent revolution, aimed not only at toppling the old regimes, but also overcoming all the challenges and solving the civil conflicts. The old regimes had created, nurtured, and sponsored these conflicts, but the people must work together to put an end to them.

It is important to emphasise that the Western powers, especially the United States, have not been driving the Arab Spring; rather they have merely reacted to the events. In effect, the Obama administration has been slow to realise the limits of the action. In Yemen, for instance, the Americans initially supported Saleh, but then observing the anger and steadfastness of the Yemenis, they abandoned their ally. Even in Libya, where they intervened militarily to topple Gaddafi's regime, the West seems unable to determine the outcome (Hardy, 2011).

These uprisings exposed the hypocrisy of the Arab ruling regimes that had always pretended to be resistant to Israel and Western imperialism. The reality was that they had been the greatest guarantee for the security of Israel for decades. They offered "no 'resistance' to domination; they [were] ... the condition of this domination" (Dabashi, 2012: 204). They accused the revolutionary powers of taking part in a conspiracy against their own countries while they were the ones who opened the door for international intervention by abusing and murdering their people.

The Arab Spring was an uprising launched by millions of citizens who identified themselves as Arabs who rose up not only against oppressive dictators but also against the foreign interests that kept these autocrats in power against the popular will. "The winds of the Arab Spring have travelled way beyond the Arab World" and had a regional and international influence that has extended into the Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa. The sense of dissatisfaction was similarly overwhelming due to socio-economic and political factors (ibid: 133-4).

The counter-revolutionary forces, ranging from local elites, the US, Israel, Iran, Hezbollah, and what is left of the Arab autocracies tried from the very beginning to protect their interests from the consequences of the Arab Spring. This odd combination has come together to curb this wave of democratisation because in one way or another they are all threatened. Hassan Nasrallah and Benjamin Netanyahu both supported some uprisings, yet turned a blind eye to others. They both suffered from "one fundamental ailment", which is the failure to adopt a principled position regarding all democratic revolutions (ibid: 111).

The United States was troubled by the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen because they meant losing its allies in the region. The US administration had concerns about the Arab Spring turning into an Islamic uprising. The "custodians of fear and intimidation" in Iran quickly declared that the Arab Spring was an extension to the Islamic revolution in Iran. In effect, the Iranian regime "has spent thirty years repressing its own people" in the name of Islam and "manufacturing an image of legitimacy" for itself. The Arab Spring has presented a model of change that is not welcome in Tehran (ibid: 40). Since the outbreak of the Islamic revolution, Iran has been "the sole beneficiary of the politics of despair that has shaped the region, with the pains of Palestine the epicentre of that opportunism" (ibid: 134). The collapse of the Arab autocracies may pave the way for the Arabs to build democratic systems and to express their resistance to Western and Israeli interests at the same time. Iran can no longer use 'the resistance of Israel and the Western powers' as a pretext for repression and dictatorship, especially after signing the nuclear deal with the West. The oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates have also played their role in the counter-

revolution, funding and supporting military coups and counter-revolutionary movements, especially in Egypt and Libya.

Because the Arab Spring is genuine, bright, and sound, rising from the aspirations of repressed people, it has been able to "expose the otherwise hidden hypocrisies of old forces – left or right, pro- or anti-American" (ibid: 101). Hassan Nasrallah defended the Syrian regime, describing the Syrian revolution and the sacrifices of the Syrian people as a conspiracy by the US. He promised that Assad would make reforms and pleaded for time. He sounded eerily similar to the Shah of Iran "before his demise early in 1979: desperate, confused, and baffled by the unfolding drama, worriedly out of touch with what was happening around him" (ibid: 102).

1.6 Conclusion

The Arab Spring that swept the Arab World starting from January 2011 did not spare any Arab country though the intensity of revolution differed from one country to another. Each one of these post-ideological uprisings had special significance. The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia was the first call for freedom in the Arab World. The Egyptian revolution was against domestic dictatorship as well as foreign domination. The NATO intervention in Libya did not guarantee the loyalty of the new Libya to the West, and the outcome remained obscure with Libya turning into a collapsed state with two rival governments and hundreds of warring militias. Any future change in Syria would affect the geopolitics of the Middle East, especially with the involvement of Iran, Hezbollah and IS in the conflict (ibid: 24). The Youth Revolution in Yemen had important consequences for the Gulf States. The military coup led by the Houthis against the legitimate government of President Hadi caused a military counter operation launched by ten Arab armies with a stated goal to support the legitimate government and undermine Iranian influence in Yemen represented by the Houthis.

This chapter has attempted to draw a clear picture of the Arab World before and during the Arab Spring. It has addressed the issues of democratisation, civil activism, the status of human rights, political opposition, and Islam and Islamism. It has looked into the main factors that paved the way for the Arab Spring, starting from the lack of political reform and socio-economic decline, ending with the media and social network revolution. This chapter has also investigated each Arab revolution separately, providing reasons behind the action, highlighting the course of the revolt as well as the outcome. Five Arab revolutions have been covered: the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, the January 25th Revolution in Egypt, the Youth

Revolution in Yemen, the February 17th Revolution in Libya, and the March 15th Revolution in Syria. The chapter ended with the analysis of the Arab Spring regarding its nature, characteristics, and regional and international consequences.

The next chapter will look into the linguistic features and characteristics of the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ARAB SPRING: LANGUAGE INTO ACTION

2.1 Introduction

A wide array of factors led to the formation of the Arab Spring, primarily ideology, politics, and media. However, it is vital to shed light on the often-overlooked role of language in shaping the Arab Spring. This chapter aims to explore the different linguistic aspects of the Arab uprisings and their contributions to the political transition that has been achieved during and after the Arab Spring. The chapter is divided into various sections, each of which examines a distinctive linguistic aspect or feature of the revolutionary action in the Arab World after 2011. Key concepts, such as taking a stance through language, and mass protest mobilising discourse, are covered along with the role of the internet in forming the discourse of the Arab Spring. Thereafter, the chapter investigates different genres of revolutionary discourse such as slogans, chants, and revolutionary humour. An attempt is made to decipher whether these genres were effective in establishing the protestors' demands and aspirations. The discussion on the role of language in the Arab Spring will be concluded by looking into the counter-revolutionary discourse adopted by pro-regime forces as a reaction to the discourse developed by the protestors.

2.2 Speaking as Stance-Taking at Time of Revolution

The use of language during the Arab Spring has reflected a process of stance taking in which protestors and civil and political activists have expressed their political opinions and attitudes towards the Arab revolutions as well as the Arab authoritarian regimes and their repressive policies. Jaffe (2007: 56) refers to *stance* as a "'contextualizing cue' that informs interlocutors of the nature of the role the speaker aims to project in relation to the form and content of his or her utterance." DuBois (2007: 220) seems to offer a more comprehensive definition of 'stance' as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects, and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimensions of the sociocultural field."

Accordingly, the notion of *stance* has social as well as linguistic implications and thus has to be viewed from a communicative perspective within a public environment; it is seen as "the

mediating path between linguistic forms and social identities," as Ochs (1992) notes. Views must be presented in public in order to be perceived as *stance-taking* since stance-taking does not just simply imply holding an opinion on a certain issue; rather, it indicates employing this opinion to make alignments or misalignments with others.

In the context of the Arab Spring, stance takers have utilised language as a tool to express their viewpoints. Attitudes on substantial political and human-rights issues are covered in order to achieve political transformation. In their conflict with pro-regime media outlets, the Arab revolutionaries acted as stance takers by using language to establish their identity as advocates for freedom. At the same time, they sought to impose an opposite identity on the anti-revolutionary forces, Bassiouney (2012: 109) asserts.

The banner shown in *Figure 1* (Associated Press, 2011) gives an example of this double-faced process. The statement on the banner, which says *yasquṭ ᶜUmar Sulaymān, rajul Isrā'īl* ("down with Omar Suleiman, Israel's man"), reflects two stances. The first stance is a representation of the protestors' deep contempt of the role played by Omar Suleiman as Vice-President and former Head of Intelligence Services. The other is imposed by the protestors on Suleiman, accusing him of maintaining a stance in support of Israel, a historical enemy of the Egyptians.

Figure 1 *Image of Egyptian protestors holding up a banner that says "down with Omar Suleiman, Israel's man" in a protest during the January 25th Revolution*

As part of this process of stance taking, activists have employed linguistic and structural resources in their revolutionary discourse, using Modern Standard Arabic, local dialects, and foreign languages (Bassiouney, 2012: 109). The banner held by citizens from the Syrian city of Kafranbel illustrated in *Figure 2* provides an example. "De Mistura! Your initiatives can be considered only when they imply kicking Assad out of Syria," the writing on the banner says (Kafranbel Banners, 7 Mar 2015). This statement represents a stance taken by revolutionary activists from the city of Kafranbel against the UN and Arab League envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura's initiative to institute a cease-fire in the Northern city of Aleppo.

Recognising the importance of addressing the world in a foreign language, activists have used English, which is the political lingua franca of today's world, to declare their stance on de Mistura's initiative. They make clear that they firmly reject the plan unless it clearly involves the resignation and expulsion of Assad.

Figure 2 *Image of a banner held by revolutionary activists from the Syrian city of Kafranbel*

Bassiouney (2012: 109) examines the language of the Arab Spring, viewing it as an indicator of political identity shaped by the different stances of political forces in the media war during the revolutions. He points to *code-switching* as a mechanism used by various actors to support their claims and thus contribute to establishing their political and ideological identities. DuBois (2007: 163) identifies three features of stance-taking: "In taking a stance, the stance-taker 1) evaluates an object; 2) positions a subject (self and others); and 3) aligns with other subjects." Speech participants and discourse producers adopt positions mainly through evaluating other individuals' and groups' stances.

Bassiouney (2012: 109) explains these features describing them as achievements of stance taking as a linguistic act. Through *evaluation*, speakers or stance-takers determine the value of a linguistic code that expresses a certain political position or stance. After evaluation, a speaker tends to *delineate* their political stance, making claims supported by information and argument, reflecting a great degree of certainty and confidence. The third and final phase of stance taking is *alignment* by which a speaker judges other stances comparing them to his/her own, classifying them as either supportive or opposed. Bassiouney describes alignment as an act aimed at "standardizing or normalizing the relation between stances" (ibid).

Suleiman (2012: 349) associates speaking with action. In “the Arabic grammatical tradition,” speaking is also considered as “action” (ibid). During the Arab Spring, the demand for freedom and political change expressed by the Arab people through slogans, chants, and other forms of revolutionary linguistic expression, represented in itself an action that led to an actual change in the political reality in the Arab World. Bassiouney (2012: 122) affirms that “literally, by speaking up, Egyptians have already taken action.” Poets, singers, actors/actresses, journalists, footballers, and athletes expressed their opinions freely and firmly, demanding political change in support of the protestors in the streets. After participating in an anti-regime demonstration in al-Midan area in central Damascus in April 2011, Syrian actor Fares al-Hilo (Zaman Alwasl, Jul 2011) stated:

التظاهرة كانت كعرس، وكأني أسمع صوتي لأول مرة.

> [The demonstration was like a wedding party; it was as if I was listening to my voice for the first time in my life.][1]

Al-Hilo found out that he actually had a voice that can be heard. Articulating his speech constituted an action. In conjunction with millions of other voices, it contributed to making the most substantial change in the Arab region since the Second World War. Stance taking during the Arab Spring is also manifested through revolutionary poems aimed at establishing national identity. It has created a solid revolutionary position that rejects any compromises that lead to relinquishing the objectives of the revolution. The following is an excerpt from a poem entitled *Maᶜlīš Darᶜā* (“It is going to be fine, Daraa”) by Basem Amr, a local poet from the Southern Syrian city of Daraa, which witnessed the outbreak of the Syrian revolution:

معليش درعا معليش
لبى صوتك كل من سمعه
قامت كل المدن تجيش
لـ أهل درعا.. الفزعة.. الفزعة
معليش درعا معليش
قامت سوريا مجتمعة
...
معليش درعا معليش
قامت سوريا مجتمعة
ولا يفرح.. رجعة ما فيش
ما في رجعة.. ما في رجعة
جاي تصلّح؟ وَك بعد إيش..؟ وَك بعد إيش..؟
وَك ما عندنا شي ترَقْعَه.

> [It is going to be fine, Daraa; it is going to be fine.
> All those who heard your call have responded.
> All cities have been mobilised,
> For the sake of the people of Daraa, *fazah* (“call for support”); *fazah,*
> It is going to be fine, Daraa; it is going to be fine.
> All of Syria has risen up.
> …

[1] All back-translations are enclosed in square brackets and are produced by the researcher unless stated otherwise.

It is going to be fine, Daraa; it is going to be fine.
All of Syria has risen up.
He [Assad] should not be happy; there will be no return.
There will be no return; no return.
Are you [Assad] coming to make conciliation? After what? After what?
We have nothing for you to amend.]

(Amer, 2011)

The poem is written in a local Southern Syrian dialect, which is spoken in some parts of Southern Syria. It also focuses on the sufferings of the province of Daraa. Nevertheless, the poet emphasises the unity of Syria and reinstates Syrian identity, demonstrating a spirit of solidarity against the regime's brutality. Besides, the poet seems to adopt a hardline and uncompromising stance against Assad and his regime. Placing heavy emphasis on phrases such as "after what?" and "no return" reaffirms this stance. This poem can also serve as a representative example of the discourse that mobilises the masses. This will be the primary topic of following section.

2.3 Mass Protest Mobilising Discourse

One of the main features of the revolutionary discourse produced by the protestors of the Arab Spring is the use of words, phrases, and expressions to mobilise the people. Civil and political activists who led the protests often employed *illocution*, which is defined according to Oxford Dictionary as "an act of speaking or writing which in itself effects or constitutes the intended action" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). The goal was to engage various social classes, segments, and sects in the revolutionary action.

The Social Democratic Forum in their "Tahrir Documents" assert that the Egyptian working class's participation in the revolution was prominent and essential. In fact, it "led the Egyptians' struggle" against Mubarak's regime though "sit-ins, strikes" and "demonstrations" (The Social Democratic Forum, 2011). The working class's involvement in the revolutionary action was not new, dating back to the El-Mahalla incidents. Thousands of people, most of whom were workers at the Ghazl El-Mahalla factories, demonstrated against the regime's policy on workers' rights. They chanted slogans with social demands, such as *'ūl yā bāšā, 'ūl yā bīh, ir-riġīf bi rubᶜ jnīh* ("Oh pasha, Oh bey, a [bread] loaf costs a quarter of a pound") (Egyptian Trade Unionist and Labor Observer, 2008). In fact, the main slogan of the Egyptian Revolution *ᶜīš, ḥurriyya, ᶜadāla 'ijtimāᶜiyya* ("bread, freedom, social justice") represents the involvement of the working class in the revolution. It symbolises the desire to approach millions of low-income Egyptian workers who had not yet joined the protests, trying to involve them in the revolutionary action.

Bassiouney (2009) states that "diglossic switching as part of code switching" can be "used to create an effect on the audience." Protests employed *code-switching* by using a combination of formal (standard) and informal local dialectical expressions in their chants in order to appeal to wider segments of society. An example of this technique, which was used in almost all the Arab Spring revolutions, is a slogan chanted by the Yemeni protestors: *bukrah aj-jumᶜah baᶜd al-ᶜaṣr, at-taxzīnah waṣṭ al-qaṣr* ("tomorrow afternoon, *at-taxzīnah* will occur inside the palace"). The mention of the term *at-taxzīnah*, here, is highly significant as it refers to chewing *qāt* (a social custom that is popular among Yemenis and dates back hundreds of years). The slogan is apparently intended to encourage Yemenis to continue with their struggle, looking forward to 'chewing qāt' inside the presidential palace in a reference to the long-waited collapse of the Yemeni regime.

Participation in pre-revolution protests had been restricted to a limited group of political activists. Upon the outbreak of the January 25th Revolution, the Egyptian protestors chanted slogans appealing to their family members and other ordinary people to join them on the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian cities: *yā ahālīnā inḍammū līnā* ("Oh our families, do join us"). Pleas were also made from the protestors of cities with intense revolutionary action to inhabitants of other areas to join the uprising and start revolting against the regime.

The people of the Eastern part of Libya, where the revolution started, chanted slogans calling for the people of Tripoli and other Western cities to rise up: *Ṭrāblus yā ḥurra, lizzi bū šafšūfa barra* ("Oh free Tripoli, expel *bu shafshufa* [a reference to Gaddafi]"); *yā šabāb az-Zāwiya nabū layla ḍāwiya, yā šabāb al-ᶜaṣma nabū layla ḥāsma* ("Oh the young people of al-Zawiyah [a Western Libyan city], we want a bright night, oh the people of the Capital (Tripoli), we want a crucial night"). In Syria too, the people of Hama, a central city where a half million protestors demonstrated against the Assad regime, chanted slogans appealing to the people of Damascus to follow them: *yā šabāb aš-Šām, yā šabāb aš-Šām, ᶜannā bi Ḥamāh saqaṭ an-niẓām* ("Oh the young people of Sham [Damascus], oh the young people of Sham [Damascus], here in Hamah, the regime has fallen").

The protestors were aware of the importance of the relationship between the people and the armed forces. That is why they wanted to gain the support of the army, or at least attempted to neutralise it. This was manifested in the slogans and chants of the Egyptian protestors: *aš-šaᶜb wa aj-jīš ʻīd waḥda* ("the people and the army are one hand [i.e. united]"). Also in Yemen, the protestors chanted for the unity between the people on the one hand, and the army and police on the other hand: *iḥna wa aš-šurṭah wa aj-jīš, yajmaᶜnā raġīf al-ᶜīš* ("we, the police and the army share the loaf of bread [i.e. we are all partners]").

Although some of the Arab Spring revolutions have sadly developed into what mey be seen as civil conflicts, the slogans chanted by the protestors, whether in Syria, Libya, or Yemen, have reflected a great deal of responsibility and tendency to appeal to minorities and all religious and racial groups with a discourse that is both tolerant and unifying. This was the case in Syria with the famous slogan *wāḥid, wāḥid, wāḥid, aš-šaᶜb as-Sūrī wāḥid* ("one, one, one, the Syria people is one [i.e. united]") as well as in Yemen: *lā šamāl wa lā janūb, wiḥdatnā wiḥdat qulūb* ("no north, no south, our unity is a unity of hearts"). The aim was to encourage various religious, racial, and regional groups to join the revolution.

This sense of unity was most manifested when a particular city suffered a deadly attack by the security forces, which was more frequent in Libya and Syria. The slogans reflected this sense of sympathy, whether in Libya where the protestors of the western part appealed to the city of Benghazi: *bi ar-rūḥ, bi ad-dam, nafdīkī yā Binġāzī* ("we would sacrifice soul and blood to Benghazi"), or in Syria where many cities chanted the slogan *labbaykī yā darᶜā* ("here we are for you, Daraa").

The overwhelming feeling of unity was not only shared by the people within the one country, but also brought together protestors from various Arab countries, creating a massive revolution across the Arab World. This was represented through slogans and chants, in support of the revolutions in other countries, encouraging them to continue with their action until their demands were met. The Yemenis chanted for Benghazi in Libya: *yā Binġāzī ʻalf salām, ṯawrah, ṯawrah ᶜala aẓ-ẓullām* ("Oh Benghazi, we salute you a thousand times, a revolution, a revolution against the oppressors"). The Egyptians also expressed solidarity with Libya, supporting its struggle against Gaddafi: *yā Qaḏḏāfī ġūr, ġūr, xallī Lībya tšūf an-nūr* ("Oh Gaddafi, get lost, get lost, allow Libya to see the light").

In fact, without social media and a dynamic online environment, it may not have been possible for such a mass protest mobilising discourse to be communicated. It may have been impossible to reach and thus mobilise large segments of the Arab people. The online discourse communicated on the internet, and social media networks in particular, will be examined in the following section.

2.4 Online Discourse

The Arab Spring has apparently marked a major transformation in collective action across the Middle East and North Africa. These major changes in mass movement and revolutionary action in the Arab World are substantially associated with the rapid and effective development

of information and communication technologies in the Arab region. With regards to civil activism and political mobility, other devices also proved to be instrumental in expressing political demands of democratic transformation and reform. Ben Moussa (2013: 58) asserts, “Social media … have only been effective because they operated in synergy and complementarity with a huge array of media, from placards, leaflets and graffiti to digital cameras and 3G mobile phones.”

Garrett (2006: 204) argues that the link between technology and social movement is manifested through three sorts of mechanisms: “reduction of participation costs, promotion of collective identity, and creation of community.” Stein (2009: 757) also identifies six functions of the internet and social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter in the context of mass movement and revolutionary action: providing information; assisting action and mobilisation; promoting interaction and dialogue; making lateral linkages; serving as an outlet for creative expression; and promoting fundraising and resource generation. This section aims to examine the revolutionary discourse communicated through social media networks during the Arab Spring in light of these six functions.

During the Arab Spring, conventional media outlets could not always keep pace with all the events developing in various cities and towns. Activists took responsibility for providing information and reporting news on different events occurring in different places across the country by using their accounts and pages on social media networks. The following is an example of this function carried out by social media activism (Syrian Revolution Network, 2012):

Figure 3 *A post by Syrian Revolution 2011 Facebook page shared on September 20, 2012*

عاجل – الرقة

مظاهرة ضخمة جداً في مدينة الرقة نصرة لعين عيسى الجريحة وتل أبيض الأبية الأعداد بالآلاف وجيش العصابة يطلق النار على المتظاهرين ...

[Breaking news – al-Raqqa

A massive demonstration in the city of al-Raqqa, supporting Ayn Issa and Tell Abyad; the numbers are in thousands and the thug army [a reference to Assad's forces] are shooting the protestors.]

Such reporting has often been aimed at encouraging protestors to support their fellows in other cities and areas. The aim is to start new waves of protest as well as exposing the crimes committed by the state security forces against demonstrators. In fact, on many occasions many of these pages have proven to be reliable sources of information on the rapidly developing revolution.

Political activists also encountered difficulties in organising demonstrations due to the repressive measures adopted by the Arab regimes. As a result, they resorted to creating accounts and pages on Facebook and Twitter in order to assist the revolutionary action, organise protests, and mobilise the masses. The following is a 'post' shared by the well-known revolutionary Egyptian Facebook page *Kullunā Xālid Saᶜīd* ("We are All Khaled Said"), urging the Egyptians to participate in the demonstrations that would be held on the 'Friday of Martyrs', as illustrated in *Figure 4* (*Kullunā Xālid Saᶜīd*, 2011):

عاوزين مصر كلها تشارك في جمعة الشهداء .. ده يوم عشان أهل كل شهيد من اللي ماتوا يعرفوا إن دم ولادهم مراحش هدر .. يا ريت كل واحد يدخل على الصفحة بتاعة الدعوة وينشرها لكل المصريين اللي يعرفهم دلوقتي حالاً.

[We want all Egypt to participate in the Friday of Martyrs. This day aims to prove to each family of the martyrs who died that their sons' blood was not shed in vain. We wish everybody to check the invitation page and share it with all the Egyptians they know immediately.]

Figure 4 *A post by the Kullunā Xālid Saᶜīd Facebook page shared on February 9, 2011, during the Egyptian Revolution*

Facebook, along with other social media networks, has also provided a platform to promote interaction and dialogue between activists and internet users. Many of the Facebook pages concerned with the Arab Spring revolutions allowed users to give their opinions on various issues related to the revolutionary action. One of these pages is '*Axbār aṯ-Ṯawra al-Yamaniyya – Šabāb aṣ-Ṣumūd "Sāḥat at-Taġyīr" al-Yaman* ("The news of the Yemeni Revolution News – The Steadfastness Youth 'The Change Square' Yemen"), which, as illustrated in *Figure 5*, asked its subscribers on September 25, 2011 about their opinions following a speech given by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh *('Axbār aṯ-Ṯawra al-Yamaniyya*, 2011):

ما رأيك بخطاب علي صالح؟ وهل ستتغير الأوضاع في اليمن بعد أن التزم صالح بالمبادرة الخليجية؟!!!!

[What is your opinion on Ali Saleh's speech? And will the situation in Yemen change after Saleh demonstrated commitment to the Gulf Initiative?]

Figure 5 *A post by the 'Axbār aṯ-Ṯawra al-Yamaniyya – Šabāb aṣ-Ṣumūd "Sāḥat at-Taġyīr" al-Yaman Facebook Page, shared on September 25, 2011 during the Yemeni Revolution*

Alongside its previous functions, social media websites served as literal linkers that were used by protest organisers to get in touch and coordinate their own activities with those of other groups. This was done to organise big demonstrations, exchange views and take up similar stances on current political events during the revolution. This was mainly achieved through creating Facebook groups and pages for what the Syrians call *tansīqiyāt aṯ-ṯawra* ("revolution coordinators"). They combined political and civil activists coordinating at both local and national levels.

Online activists also used the internet and social media as an outlet for creative expression. Famous as well as young, nameless poets posted numerous poems, verses, and short stories on Facebook, praising and glorifying the revolution, condemning the repression of the regime. An example of Facebook pages concerned with the literary aspect of the Arab Spring is *al-Aᶜmāl al-Fanniyya li aṯ-Ṯawra as-Sūriyya* ("the artworks of the Syrian Revolution"), which is regularly updated with the most recent artworks. They post poems, sketches, video clips, songs, and chants that tackle revolution-related issues and are produced by pro-revolutionary activists and groups (*Al-Aᶜmāl al-Fanniyya li aṯ-Ṯawra as-Sūriyya*, 2015).

Charity organisations have often used social media accounts for fundraising purposes in order to support legitimate causes. Many examples of this usage can be located in the context of the Arab Spring and the Syrian revolution in particular. Many charity bodies were established to relieve the sufferings resulting from the brutal repression carried out by the Syrian army and its allied Iranian and Iraqi militias. Charity organisations dealing with the Syrian crisis such as Humam Appeal International, Syria Relief, Khayr Charity Foundation, and *Farīq Mulham at-Taṭawwuᶜī* ("Mulham Volunteer Team") all have used Facebook and Twitter accounts to raise money to support the Syrians in various ways and raise awareness of the Syrian cause.

2.5 The History of Prominent Slogans of the Arab Revolutions

The protestors' demands during the Arab Spring can be summarised in one slogan: *irḥal* ("leave"). Tunisian protestors first chanted it in early January 2011, demanding the resignation and departure of the then President Ben Ali (Marzouki, 2011). Michel (2013: 29) points out a significant fact on the development of the slogan defining the key demand of the Arab Spring. He argues that the slogan *irḥal* was originally articulated in colloquial French, as "dégage" (ibid). The is manifested in *Figure 6* (Menzel Bourguiba ex-Ferryville, 2011). The slogan was only rendered into Arabic by protestors when the Tunisian revolution started to capture the attention of the Arab media, and more importantly the Arab people. This seemingly aimed to gain the solidarity and sympathy of the wider population of the region, and emphasise the Arab identity of the Tunisians, exporting the revolutionary action to the rest of the Arab World.

Figure 6 *Image of a Tunisian protestor during the Tunisian Revolution*

On a different note, Arab blogger Suby Raman (2012) insists that the well-known slogan *aš-šaᶜb yurīd isqāṭ an-niẓām* ("the people demand the overthrow of the regime") is, "[w]ithout a doubt, the central slogan of the Arab Spring." Its significance, according to Raman (ibid), lies

in the fact that "in its language it speaks to a broader Arab polity, and not local demands." Michel (2013: 29) asserts that, in effect, this chant "has been developed and re-appropriated in MSA and local dialects across the Middle East and North Africa" to suit different contexts and serve the various demands of the protestors across the Arab World. In Syria, following a brutal crackdown launched by the Syrian regime on peaceful protestors, the slogan was altered to *aš-šaᶜb yurīd ḥimāya duwaliyya* ("the people demand international protection"), as illustrated in the banner help up by a Syrian protestor in *Figure 7*.

In Iraq where the Sunni population was subjected to discriminatory sectarian policies followed by the Shia-dominated government led by the then Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the people of six predominantly Sunni provinces in the North and West of Iraq started a popular uprising late in 2012 against the government, chanting: *aš-šaᶜb yurīd isqāṭ al-Mālikī* ("the people demand the overthrow of al-Maliki"). Finally, in Lebanon, which is governed through a sectarian quota system, the chant was modified during a wave of protests starting from February 27, 2011, to fulfill the Lebanese people's aspirations to overcome the sectarian divisions in the country: *aš-šaᶜb yurīd isqāṭ an-niẓām aṭ-ṭā'ifī* ("the people demand the overthrow of the sectarian system").

Figure 7 *A banner help up by a Syrian protestor in the northern city of al-Bab: aš-šaᶜb yurīd ḥimāya duwaliyya ("the people demand international protection")*

Some of the popular slogans during the Arab Spring were in fact originally part of the pro-regime discourse and were then re-allocated by protestors using different wording to serve their agenda. They were used to articulate their demands whilst simultaneously mocking and undermining the discourse and propaganda of the political elites that supported the ruling regimes in the region. The slogan that dominated the Syrian revolution from the very beginning *Allah, Sūriyya, ḥurriyyih, ū-bass* ("Allah [God], Syria, freedom, only") was in fact the revolutionaries' response to a phrase that had always been chanted by Assad's supporters: *Allah, Sūriyya, Baššār, ū-bass* ("Allah [God], Syria, Bashar, only"). Similarly, the protestors

chose to demonstrate their contempt for a slogan adopted by Assad's supporters during his electoral campaign, namely *minḥibbak* ("we love you"). A counter-slogan was thus coined: *mā minḥibbak, mā minḥibbak, irḥal ᶜannā inta ū-ḥizbak* ("we do not love you; we do not love you; leave us alongside your party [a reference to the ruling al-Ba'ath Party]").

Gaddafi, though his infamous expression, *zanqā zanqā dār dār* ("lane, lane, house, house"), urged his supporters to pursue the revolutionaries from one "lane" to another, and from one "house" to another in order to crush the revolution. In response, the protestors chanted: *zanqā zanqā dār dār, yā Qaḏḏāfī jibt al-ᶜār* ("lane, lane, house, house; oh Gaddafi, you have brought disgrace along"), and *zanqā zanqā dār dār, al-Qaḏḏāfī yabī xanqā* ("lane, lane, house, house; Gaddafi needs to be hanged"). The use of Gaddafi's infamous expression was not limited to the Libyans. Syrians also quoted Gaddafi, promising their autocrat Bashar Assad a similar fate: *zanqā zanqā dār dār, badnā nšīlak yā Bašār* ("lane, lane, house, house; we will topple you, Bashar"). Moreover, the revolutionary slogan *bi-ar-rūḥ bi-ad-dam* ***nanfīka*** *yā ᶜAlī* ("with soul, with blood, we **expel** you, Ali") was coined by the Yemeni protestors by changing only one word in a phrase used to demonstrate loyalty to the then Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, namely *bi-ar-rūḥ bi-ad-dam* ***nafdīka*** *yā ᶜAlī* ("with soul, with blood, we **sacrifice** for you, Ali"), thus reversing the entire meaning of the statement.

Although the Egyptians chanted the common slogans shared with other Arab Spring revolutions, they proved to be creative and coined their own in light of the conditions associated with the Egyptian revolution. The Egyptian protestors, for instance, were frustrated by the reports circulated on Mubarak's fortune estimated at 70 billion Egyptian Pounds. They thus created a slogan questioning their president about the source of his enormous wealth, since he served only as a pilot before he came to power: *Mubārak yā ṭayyār, jibt mnīn sabᶜīn milyār* ("pilot Mubarak, from where did you earn seventy billion"). Inspired by the success of the Tunisian revolution and exile of Tunisian President Ben Ali, the Egyptians urged Mubarak to follow Ben Ali and flee to the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia: *Bin ᶜAlī bīnādīk, findu' jadda mistannīk* ("Bin Ali is calling you, Jeddah Hotel is awaiting you").

2.6 Chanting as Action

The slogans chanted by protestors during the Arab Spring uprisings were intended to establish specific social and political demands. The poetics of these slogans, which often constituted couplets with a musical rhythm, are in fact as significant as their content. Colla (2011) points out the criticality of the "prosody of the revolt" in the Arab Spring; the language of the Arab Spring, represented by these couplet-slogans, express the spirit of revolt as well as reflect the

goals of the revolutionaries across the Arab World. In the streets and squares of Cairo, Sanaa, Tunis, Damascus, Hama, Ramadi, and Benghazi, the messages of the protestors were carried from their mouths and lexicons into action.

Colla adds that protestors chanted couplet-slogans that were "loud" and "sharp" at the same time (ibid). This poetry was not merely "an ornament" to the revolution, but rather a genuine "soundtrack" that composed a "significant part of the *action itself*" (ibid). Poets and chanters therefore acted as action makers who shaped the new political and social realisation of the Arab World. Colla (ibid) emphasises the illocutionary nature of the chants of the revolutions, arguing that they go beyond complaints and aspirations, carrying messages that serve to fulfill the protestors' social and political objectives. They are articulated in an artistic form reflecting the spirit of the uprising.

The impact of couplet chanting during the Arab Spring does not only stem from the semantic value of the slogans and songs. Chants in the Arab Spring are often colloquial rather than classical or standard in register. They are thus easier to catch, remember and sing (ibid). Some slogans do not rhyme, but Colla maintains, "They can be sung and shouted by thousands of people in a unified, clear cadence," which reveals why they succeeded in exerting the desired effect upon participants as well as listeners (ibid).

Moreover, these chants were typically sung collectively, creating a tangible "sense of community that had not existed before" (ibid). They often mocked and criticised "feared public figures" such as presidents and prominent security and army officers, leaving an "immediate impact that cannot be explained in terms of language, for learning to laugh at one's oppressor is a key part of unlearning fear" (ibid). Therefore, Colla concludes, it seems difficult to tell "whether the crowd sustained the words, or the words the crowd" (ibid).

In June 2011, a few months after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution, hundreds of thousands of protestors gathered in al-Asi Square in the central city of Hama almost every day. Syrian activist Ibrahim Qashoush led the protests, chanting slogans demanding the overthrow of the Syrian regime. Qashoush was not a "pop superstar," according to a report by *The Telegrpah*, but he wrote and sang "the stand-out song of the Syrian uprising" (The Telegraph, July 2011). On an evening in late June, "Qashoush's voice had soared over one of the crowds as some of the biggest protests yet in the Arab world came to the boil," the report continues (ibid). Thousands of protestors chanted and echoed Qashoush's invective song, satirising Assad and his regime. "But the singer paid the price for his fleeting fame … on Monday, according to a video that has circulated the country online, his body was found floating in the River Orontes in his home-town, Hama. His throat had been cut; in the footage, his head lolls horribly," the report concludes (ibid). The following is an excerpt of Qashoush's (2011) prominent song:

ويلا ارحل يا بشار؛ ويلا ارحل يا بشار.
ويا بشار مانك منا.
خود ماهر وارحل عنا.
وهي شرعيتك سقطت عنا.
ويلا ارحل يا بشار؛ ويلا ارحل يا بشار.
يا بشار ويا كذاب،
تضرب أنت وهالخطاب.
الحرية صارت على الباب.
ويلا ارحل يا بشار؛ ويلا ارحل يا بشار.
ويا ماهر ويا جبان،
ويا عميل الأمريكان،
الشعب السوري ما بينهان.
ويلا ارحل يا بشار؛ ويلا ارحل يا بشار.
وبدنا نشيلو لبشار وبهمتنا القوية.
سوريا بدا حرية؛ سوريا بدا حرية.
وبلا ماهر وبلا بشار وهالعصابة الهمجية.
سوريا بدا حرية؛ سوريا بدا حرية.

[Time to leave, Oh Bashar! Time to leave, oh Bashar!
Oh Bashar, you are not one of us.
Take Maher [Bashar's brother] and leave us.
Here, your legitimacy has ended.
Time to leave, oh Bashar! Time to leave, oh Bashar!
Oh Bashar, you are a liar.
To hell with you and your speech.
Freedom is now at the door.
Time to leave, oh Bashar! Time to leave, oh Bashar!
Maher, you are a coward.
You are the Americans' agent.
The Syrian people cannot be humiliated.
Time to leave, oh Bashar! Time to leave, oh Bashar!
We will remove Bashar with our strong will.
Syria wants freedom! Syria wants freedom!
Without Maher, and without Bashar and this savage gang.
Syria wants freedom! Syria wants freedom!]

As noted from the extract, the song is written in Syrian Colloquial Arabic, which makes it easier for Syrian protestors to understand, sing and recall. It also follows the couplet-pattern pointed by Colla, has a musical rhythm, and consists of sections composed of three lines ending with the same syllable. Each section is followed by a fixed line *yallā irḥal yā Baššār, yallā irḥal yā Baššār* ("time to leave, oh Bashar! Time to leave, oh Bashar!"), which is meant to be chanted by the protestors while the rest of the song is to be sung by the singer leading the demonstration. Qashoush's song establishes the prominent demand of the Syrian revolution, namely ousting Assad and his clique. It ruthlessly satirises Bashar Assad and his brother Maher, who is believed to be the actual commander of the Syrian army. The last section of the excerpt is significant as it asserts the Syrian people's determination to dispose of Assad and acquire full freedom.

2.7 Revolutionary Humour

One of the approaches that explore the mechanism of humour is incongruity theory, which places emphasis upon the object of humour, perceiving it as a reaction to an incongruity. The end result is ambiguity and inconsistency. Incongruity theory attaches importance to the factor of surprise, conceiving humour as a conflict "between what is expected and what actually occurs". Ambiguity is created in the form of utterances or statements with double meanings, often used purposely to misguide the audience, followed shortly by a "punchline" (Hassan, 2013: 552).

Hassan points out three elements that often exist in a humorous discourse: first, a conflict between what the audience expect from a joke and what the joke actually attempts to say; second, a linguistic ambiguity with two dimensions of meaning, namely semantic and/or pragmatic meaning; and third, a punchline that concludes the joke and resolves the conflict (ibid). Hassan also draws a clear distinction between two types of humour: "While jokes are context-free and neutral forms of humor, irony is a context-bound and aggressive form of humor" (ibid).

Semantic theory of humour is another approach, concerned with the semantic aspect of humour. According to Raskin (1985: 58) a joke is much more semantically effective in an environment where both humour producers and audience share not only a set of convictions about the mechanism through which language operates, but also a similar, even identical sense of humour. This cognitive approach to humour, which is referred to by Raskin as "a mechanical symbol-manipulation device" (ibid), which correlates with the principle of linguistic competence suggested by Chomsky, since it focuses on the significance of an ideal relationship between humour producers and receivers (Chomsky, 1965: 3). Jokes are typically open to two possible interpretations, thus creating a degree of incongruity. They need to be surprising, original and rule breaking in order to exert the desired impact. Hay (2001: 67) adds that humour is only effective when it can be recognised, understood, and thus appreciated.

Mulkay (1988) identifies two modes of speech: the serious mode and humorous mode. In the serious mode, speech participants conceive the world from the same perspective and thus assume that others also share this view of the world. In this respect, participants sharply distinguish between what is real and what is not. Anything that contradicts this distinction is conceived as problematic and thus regarded as a "failure in communication" (Hassan, 2013: 554). In the humorous mode, contradictions are not considered as problems since the resulting incongruity is intentional and serves a specific goal (Mulkay, 1988: 30). People resort to humour when they face a reality that contradicts what they expect.

In the political domain, humour is employed by activists, political actors or even regular citizens to highlight political changes or to foresee and demand further changes (Hassan, 2013: 554). According to Sorensen (2008: 171) "humour changes the situation because however serious the message is, it has a hint of 'Don't take me seriously,' and 'I am not dangerous.'" During the Arab Spring, the protestors used humour to influence the rest of the nation by making political jokes that would make people laugh whilst simultaneously urging them to reflect upon their demands regarding the future of their country. In fact, humour can cause amusement due to lack of congruity, but may also turn things upside down and exert serious changes. Brigham (2005) maintains that through absurdity, new insights can be reached and vital discoveries about the surrounding reality can be made.

Hobbes states that humour is typically perceived as a sort of mockery that takes the form of attacking others verbally; this usually aims to draw moral support from the audience who laugh at the jokes, thus maintaining power and status (cited in Ross, 1998: 53). Superiority theory views humour as a sort of attack within a conflict over power among groups in a given society (Hassan, 2013: 554), typically utilised by regular citizens to criticise political and economic elites. Ross (1998: 59) suggests that humour often targets men of authority, and influential individuals and institutions. In this context, it is employed by the victim to fight back and resist the oppressor, using language as their weapons against power, status, and money. The statement shown on the banner carried by an Egyptian protestor during the January 25th Revolution in *Figure 8* reflects the humour employed by the Egyptians to mock Mubarak (Ghaleb, 2015). The sign fairly translates into English as "Hitler committed suicide – you can do it". Dark humour is employed to urge Mubarak to kill himself as an exit from his critical situation following the outbreak of the revolution.

Figure 8 *A banner held up by an Egyptian protestor in Tahrir Square during the January 25th Revolution*

In protests held in democratic countries, demonstrators have considerable freedom to express their demands without fear. By contrast, the protestors of the Arab Spring were subject to ruthless repression and, in fact, had only words to face the regime's brutality. However, they developed creative methods to overcome their fear; humour liberated them from the fear that had developed inside for many years of suppression: "fear of the sacred, of prohibitions, of the past, of power" (Bakhtin, 1984: 94). According to Relief theory, which seeks to provide explanations for the role of laughter in fighting brutality, humour is a result of an inner conflict within an individual.

Sigmund Freud and Herbert Spencer viewed humour expressed by a victim as a relieving mechanism that discharges inner power resulting from the "arrested feelings" generated by suppression. It is transformed into a verbal act carried out by "the muscular system" in the absence of any other possible outlets (Spencer, 1860/1987: 108-109). Freud (1960) believed that jokes could be used as an "aggressive" method to break down and cross social and political barriers to violate rigid taboos in a society. The humour contained in the revolutionary discourse produced and communicated by the protestors during the Arab Spring targeted the Arab autocrats and their regimes. Freud states that "by making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him" (Freud, 1960: 103). The protestors aimed to humiliate the Arab dictators by means of humour. The banner shown in *Figure 9* is an apt example:

Figure 9 *An Egyptian protestor during the January 25th Revolution*

اتبرع ولو بجنيه نشتريله كيس دم (مبارك).

[Donate one Egyptian pound to buy him (Mubarak) a blood bag.]

The Egyptians demonstrated for three weeks asking for the overthrow of the regime without the slightest indication that Mubarak would yield to their legitimate demands. The Egyptian

protestor shown in *Figure 9* implies that Mubarak is in urgent need of blood, a reference in the Arab culture to thick-headed, cold-blooded people who are slow and lack emotion.

When freedom of expression and political opinion is prohibited under repressive regimes, political humour is adopted as a defence mechanism against people in power who practise authority and silence and suppress the nation. A single joke told by a protestor, Larsen (180: 105) argues, turns to a "rebellion" against dictatorship, aimed at reclaiming public freedoms. Raskin (1985: 222–246) differentiates between two types of political jokes: denigration jokes and exposure jokes. The former aims to denigrate a certain politician or political party, representing them as corrupt, repressive, hated or unpopular. An example of this type is the banner shown in *Figure 10*, which portrays Syrian autocrat Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin having an affair, pointing out that their relationship will only lead to the end of the Syrian regime (Kafranbel Banners, Dec 2012). The latter, on the other hand, seeks to expose the shortcomings and disadvantages of a certain politician or political regime by speaking out against the injustices they cause. They highlight arrests, lack of public freedoms, and collective punishment policy. The banner held up by Syrian protestors in *Figure 11*, for instance, criticises the UN mission in Syria and exposes its inability and failure to protect Syrian civilians from getting killed by the Assad regime (Kafranbel Banners, May 2012).

Figure 10 *Protestors from the Syrian city of Kafranbel carrying a banner that portrays the relationship between the Syrian regime and Russia*

Figure 11 *Protestors from the Syrian city of Kafranbel holding a banner with a picture suggesting that UN envoys in Syria are careless about civilian lives*

Dascal (1985: 96) stresses the significance of indirectness of humour and "the existence of socio-pragmatic devices that make it possible." He points out three levels of meaning: first, sentence meaning, i.e. comprehending what the speaker says; second, utterance meaning, i.e. understanding what the speaker's words mean in a given context; and third, speaker's meaning, which refers to the speaker's intention behind making a certain statement in that particular context (1985: 98). For Dascal (1985), the speaker's intended meaning is regarded as direct when it matches the utterance meaning. However, it is seen as indirect when it differs from the utterance meaning. In this case, the audience should rely on the cues found in the context to be able to form a pragmatic interpretation of the speaker's words.

This indirectness is often found in humorous discourse; a joke teller tends to implicitly refer to the intended meaning behind their words, as Dascal asserts (ibid); if the joke is made explicit, and thus the meaning direct, the speaker may be subject to undesired social or political pressure. In this case, the speaker's words will be subject to the audience's interpretation rather than the speaker's: "The listener construes that interpretation in the course of hearing the joke, and expects the rest of the story will confirm … [their] interpretation. The comic effect arises when an alternative, non-favoured and therefore non-expected interpretation is revealed, at the punch line, as the correct one" (ibid: 97).

To conclude, the humour produced by the protestors during the Arab Spring represented an act of resistance to the power exerted by the Arab autocrats. This sort of resistance, though verbal by nature and subject to cultural and social considerations, was as effective as physical resistance. When the Arab people realised that the conventional legal and political channels could not restore public freedoms or achieve the desired political change they resorted to protest through humour as one of the revolutionary tools. They utilised humour to claim and

demand democracy; they occupied the streets and made fun of those whom they had feared for years.

2.8 Counter-Revolutionary Discourse

The revolutionary discourse produced and communicated by protestors and activists during the Arab Spring was faced by a counter-revolutionary rhetoric adopted primarily by the ruling regimes and their intelligence services. This was widely circulated by official media outlets run by government. In some cases, businessmen who benefited from corruption and thus remained fiercely loyal to the regime, as in the case of Egypt, spread pro-regime propaganda. That being said, ordinary citizens who were misled by the narrative of the regime played their part too.

In Syria, *al-mu'ayyidīn* ("Assad's loyalists") adopted the official political discourse of the Syrian regime. They aimed to defame the revolution, demonise the protestors and delegitimise the revolutionary action. The revolutionaries were described as *mundassīn* ("infiltrators") who belonged to foreign countries or were funded and supported by international and regional intelligence services to create domestic conflicts in the country. They were called *ᶜarāᶜīr* ("Aroor-ists"), i.e. followers of Sheikh Adnan al-Aroor, a Saudi-based Syrian Salafist cleric who supported the Syrian revolution from the very beginning. The loyalists described the Syrian revolution as *fawra*, a sudden irrational uprising that would soon fade away, and *ṯawra ṭa'ifiyya* ("a sectarian revolution") conducted by the Sunni majority, targeting minorities. The following is an extract from a song composed and performed by the pro-revolutionary music band, *Firqat al-Mundassīn As-Suriyyīn al-Fanniyya* ("Syrian Infiltrators Music Band"). The song mocks the regime's counter-revolutionary discourse (*Firqat al-Mundassīn As-Suriyyīn*, 2011):

قالوا عنا مندسّين؛
قالوا عنا مخربين؛
قالوا عنا مسلحين؛
قالوا عنا سلفيين؛
قالوا عنا وياما قالوا..
ونسيو يقولوا.. سوريين.

[They have said we are infiltrators.
They have said we are vandals.
They have said we are gunmen.
They have said we are Salafists.
They have said that about us; they have always said that.
Yet they have forgotten to say we are Syrians.]

On many occasions, pro-regime media outlets used derogatory language to attack dissenting voices as well as anyone who dared to criticise the Syrian regime. In an interview aired on

Addounia TV, on June 29, 2011, Ali al-Shuaibi, a pro-regime political analyst and commentator, launched a scathing attack on the Arab media channels covering the news related to the Syrian revolution, accusing their owners and reporters of being 'homosexuals' (al-Shuaibi, 2011):

أنا أعرف الحقيقة، أعرف أن من يملك هذه القناة لوطي، كمن يتحدث بهذه القناة.

> [I know the truth; I know that the owner of that channel [al-Arabiya TV] is a sodomite (homosexual), just like all the people talking on this channel.]

Former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, in an interview broadcast on *al-Jazeera TV* on January 1, 2013, also described the slogans chanted by the Iraqi protestors in the Western governorate of al-Anbar as *natinah* ("rotten"), asserting that the uprising in Iraq is just a *fuqāᶜah* ("a bubble") that would soon burst. He warned the demonstrators that the cabinet might decide to use force to put an end to the demonstrations (al-Maliki, Jan 2013):

نتنة الشعارات التي ترفع ... هذه فقاعة ستنتهي ... ونحن نقول لهم إنتهوا قبل أن تُنهوا بإرادة الحكومة.

> [Rotten are the slogans that are used … This is a bubble and it will end … We say to them: Finish before you are finished by the government's will.]

The Arab regimes seemed to adopt the same helpless counter-discourse. They employed groundless accusations and false allegations to attack the protestors in an attempt to defend their legitimacy. In his first speech after the outbreak of the Libyan Revolution, Gaddafi (Feb 2011) claimed that the protestors in his country were actually *jurḏān* ("rats") acting under the influence of drugs which were given to them by foreign countries. Gaddafi affirmed that he was a global leader who had the support of millions around the world, including *Allah* ("God"), who granted him victory against super-powers in previous events. Those millions, he continued, would march and cross the deserts from inside and outside Libya to "purify" the country and dispose of his opponents (ibid).

In fact, the factor that made the counter-revolutionary discourse weak, shallow, and irrational is that it did not really address the essence of the problem in the Arab countries, namely the absence of free democratic life and repression of public freedoms. The discourse did not focus on political issues or the status of public liberties, or even provide solutions to the economic problems suffered by citizens. Instead, it used derogatory language, sexual insinuations, and unfounded accusations of foreign support.

Opposition parties, civil activists and protestors broke down the barrier of fear and demonstrated in the streets, calling for a better future in which they could have a decent life. In many cases, the counter-revolutionaries tried to legitimise the existence of the regime through the claim that it was the defender of minorities' rights against extremists or that it was facing an international conspiracy made and led by the West and Israel. The discourse

represented a state of denial, reflecting the absence of a genuine willingness on the part of the regimes to make meaningful changes to the political and economic situation, improve the living conditions of the people, or fight corruption.

2.9 Conclusion

The Arab Spring showed that language can make change; words can sometimes replace weapons and protestors can act like soldiers in the field of political conflict on the path to democratic transition. The role of language in the Arab uprisings took different forms and was implemented in different ways. The internet was essential in shaping and communicating the revolutionary discourse produced by the protestors. The protestors proved to be highly creative in expressing their demands verbally through various genres of discourse, such as chants, slogans, banners and political jokes to criticise the Arab dictators. The following chapter aims to examine the relationship between language and politics as well as the influence of the political views of translators and patrons on the translation process, from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis.

CHAPTER THRHEE

POLITICAL DISCOURSE: ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION

3.1 Introduction

As discussed, the various forms of revolutionary language used during the Arab Spring led to crucial change at political, social, and linguistic levels. It is now essential to examine the relationship between a number of issues pertaining to the subject of this research study, namely politics, political discourse, language, and translation. This chapter discusses these concepts in detail using illustrative and representative examples from political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring and its aftermath.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first investigates political discourse, differentiating between text and discourse, and politics and political discourse. It lists features and types of political discourse, concluding with discussions on revolutionary discourse, which has particular significance for this thesis. The second section attempts to analyse political discourse on the basis of two methods: first, detecting political tools employed in political discourse; and second, critical discourse analysis. The third section establishes a connection between political discourse analysis and translation at both micro and macro levels. The theories introduced and discussed in this chapter will be used to analyse the data derived from the Syrian revolution in Section 7.3 of Chapter Seven.

3.2 Political Discourse

This section makes a clear distinction between different concepts, namely text, discourse, politics, and political discourse. It also explores features and strategies of political discourse and examines its genres and types. The section concludes with introducing and studying ‘revolutionary discourse’, listing various examples from the Arab politics since the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

3.2.1 Text and Discourse

Discourse is a broad term that has a variety of definitions. It carries a wide range of meanings in various fields (Titscher et al., 2000: 42). In concrete terms, 'discourse' can refer to a particular concept in Linguistics, yet indicates a different notion in Sociology or Philosophy. In Linguistics, the term *discourse* is quite vague and does not seem to have a clear usage. Some linguists, such as van Dijk (1997a, 1997b), define discourse as a single spoken event, or several related utterances or texts communicated in one area of activity. Others perceive discourse from an ideological and political perspective. The discourse of socialism, for example, is not restricted to one single communicative interaction but rather indicates a list of connected concepts, beliefs, and ideologies (Trosborg, 1997: 4). On the other hand, a *text*, for Fairclough (2003: 24), is a single instance of language, while a group of texts that are employed in a specific situation to serve specific agenda are referred to as *genre*.

Hatim and Mason (1990: 71) offer a simple definition of *discourse* as a mode of talking and thinking, whereas Fairclough (1989: 24) seems to give a more sophisticated and detailed definition of the term as "the whole process of interaction of which a text is just a part." For his part, van Dijk sees "discourse" as "data that is liable for empiric analysis" (cited in Titscher et al, 2000: 44). Therefore, this term can be used to indicate the entire process of social interaction, while *text* constitutes only a component of this process. A discourse adopted by a particular political party thus includes all statements, press releases, and speeches produced by the party and its officials. A single statement issued by the party, on the other hand, is considered as a text.

Bell (1991: 163) makes a clear distinction between *text* and *discourse*. On the one hand, he views "text" as "the formal product of selections of options from the theme systems of the grammar;" a unit that has the semantic sense of proposition through sentences that are coherently and cohesively connected (ibid). On the other hand, he defines "discourse" as a "communicative event that draws on the meaning potential of the language" (ibid). Along with other methods of communication, it carries "communicative value of speech act by means of utterances" that are coherently and cohesively connected (ibid).

Governments, political parties, opposition forces, institutions, and even individuals use discourse in this sense to express themselves and convince audiences by means of language. Discourse is used for emphasising power and demonstrating knowledge, as well as resistance and critique. As part of their adopted discourse, a speaker conveys their intended message through texts that represent their ideology. Adopting a particular linguistic form is unlikely to be a live process for the speaker; they, however, reproduce a previously learned discourse by

using new texts. Texts are carefully chosen systemised syntactic forms whose "content-structure" represents and serves the ideology and agenda of the speaker in the context of a previously approved discourse (Dellinger, 1995).

From a semantic perspective, a text can constitute a specific unity of meaning, usually consisting of a number of sentences. Each sentence is considered a linguistic unity and so are morphemes, lexemes, syntagma, etc. However, all the unities that share and make one complete and cohesive meaning constitute what is called a text. M.A.K. Halliday (1987: 136) defines 'text' as a semantic unit that contains a group of textual elements that are mutually cohesive. They serve "as a whole as the relevant environment for the operation of the theme and information system" (ibid). According to Halliday, these textual elements define the "channels and modes" through which a message or meaning is conveyed. In other words, it can be said that the textual elements of a given text determine its nature and type (ibid).

In this study, the term *discourse* will refer to a set of verbal and written events produced and communicated in the context of a specific area of social science. It will indicate the whole process of interaction, of which a text is just one part.

3.2.2 Politics and Political Discourse

Having defined both *text* and *discourse*, illustrating the differences between the two concepts in terms of implication and usage, it is important to draw a significant distinction between another pair of terms in relation to the subject of this thesis: *politics* and *political discourse*.

Chilton (2004: 3) argues that politics can be seen in two ways. It can be a clash over power, between people who work to keep and enhance their authority and people who work to defend themselves against it. Alternatively, it can be a form of "cooperation" among institutions in a specific society to solve troubles that are manifested as a result of conflict over interests, money, authority, etc. Bassnett and Schäffner (2010: 2) agree with Chilton's definition, further stating that studies related to politics have often established a link between politics and power. Politics is viewed as a struggle to gain power and impose a specific political, economic, or social agenda. For Beard (2000), politics refers to individuals as well as institutions and their efforts to take the lead in society, rather than merely activities carried out through political parties.

Hudson (1978: 2) views politics from a passive and philosophical perspective, defining it as "the science and the art of government; the science" that deals with the "form, organization, and administration of a state or part of one, and with the regulation of its relation with other

states." This is in addition to political principles, values, practices, convictions, and opinions of a party or individual. Roberts (1971) argues that the term 'politics' can describe both an activity and the study of that particular activity. Politics, as an activity, is a process that takes place in a social context that may exceed the national level. It aims to solve challenges and problems in the public domain by using political authority. It usually involves activities carried out by various groups that share their concerns on public issues related to society. Some of these groups are of a specifically political nature, such as political parties.

Connolly (1983: 12-13) identifies a list of elements that are associated with politics:

- Policies powered by the authority of law
- Actions performed as a response to a specific decision
- Factors that make individuals involved in a process, preferring one available option to others
- Decisions that affect the interests of a certain group of the population, whether a majority or minority – if the consequences resulting from a decision are intended to, or already are, anticipated by decision makers, the action made is considered to be more political than if they are not. If the consequences affect a smaller number of people for a shorter time, then the action is said to have a less political nature.

Burkhardt (1996) makes a distinction between "communicating about politics," (referring to a conversation or random chat among ordinary people about a political issue or incident), political discourse communicated in media outlets, and "political communication" (i.e. discourse occurring in political institutions such as political parties, parliaments, and governments) (cited in Bassnett and Schäffner, 2010: 2-3). Burkhardt (1996) then makes a clear distinction between two genres of discourse occurring within political institutions: one that is originally produced by, and directed at, politicians and policy-makers, and another that is structured to demonstrate, explain, and justify political actions that are already carried out by policy-makers and directed at the general audience and public opinion (ibid).

In order to understand the two notions of politics and political discourse, it is useful to define the relevant terms. The term *political system* is widely used by actors and theorists in the domain of politics and political discourse. Political systems are often based on one or more of the following political ideologies: communism, socialism, dictatorship, liberalism, democracy, fascism, or social democracy. Most nations are governed by one of these political systems. By definition, a political system may refer to "the organization and distribution of power and the principles of decision making" (ibid: 16). Having defined political system, it is essential to highlight a closely connected notion: *political ideology*. While a political system

represents the social and economic framework whereby power is exercised, a political ideology represents the socio-cognitive basis and intellectual grounds of this system. It is the basic beliefs, values, and dogmas that "underlie and organize the shared social representations of groups and their members" (ibid). In this sense, socialism, for instance, is the political ideology that provides the intellectual and dogmatic foundation of a socialist political system.

Van Dijk (1997c: 17) also differentiates between three closely related, yet distinct, political notions: *political institution*, *political organisation*, and *political group*. While a political institution aims to analyse and organise political life, participants, and events (e.g. cabinet, Parliament, ministries, etc.), a political organisation aims to effectively structure political action (e.g. political parties, action groups, lobbies, etc.). However, a political group typically involves activists who work outside political organisations. It may be formed by a number of political activists and is usually a less formal, cohesive, and constant entity aimed at achieving a political objective or expressing an oppositional view, such as protestors, dissidents, coalitions, etc.

Political relations and *political process* are two central terms used to describe politics and political discourse or any relevant notions. *Political process* is the umbrella term that underlies a complex history of political actions and activities. Aspects of political process involve ruling, legislation, opposition, and policy making. However, the notion that expresses relationships between different structural units in the domain of politics is referred to as *political relations*. Van Dijk (1997c: 17) maintains that political relations typically "define how the State relates to its citizens, or how certain political groups are positioned relative to others."

Van Dijk (1997c: 18) describes political discourse as a "prominent" way to perform politics. In addition to parliamentary debates, constitutional terms, laws, government and state regulations, and other institutional forms of 'text and talk', political discourse may involve propaganda campaigns, political manifestos, political speeches, news broadcasts, newspaper articles, and public political debates (ibid). Van Dijk (ibid) identifies political discourse through its actors or authors, namely, politicians. In fact, most research studies conducted on political discourse focus on the text and talk of professional actors in the field of politics and political institutions. These include presidents, ministers, high-ranking government officials, members of Parliament, and leaders of political parties, whether within the arena of internal politics or at the international level (ibid: 12).

Van Dijk (ibid: 13) defines *politicians* as individuals who receive a salary for performing their political duties, and those elected or appointed to play central roles in the state. Although they are seen as creators and communicators of political discourse and other forms of political performance, politicians are not the sole agents in the political field. Many other participants

can take part in political activities in society, such as voters, citizens, demonstrators, and other public groups and social classes that take part in events occurring in the public sphere and political arena (ibid).

Thus, it is not only government officials, ministers, leaders of political parties and other politicians and decision-makers who can take part in the political process. Political activity also includes people such as members of action groups and lobbies, human rights activists, and dissidents, along with their organisations and institutions. The political participation of such activists is often manifested through either making or commenting on political discourse (ibid). Hence, accurate definitions of both *politics* and *political discourse* should involve the performance of such participants in the political process.

An additional method of identifying the nature of politics and thus political discourse is through the examination of political activities related to political text and talk. This is more accurate than simply focusing on the agents involved in the political process and production of political discourse. In other words, politicians are not always necessarily involved in political discourse; this also applies to other participants in the process, such as voters, or even members of lobbies and activist movements. However, these individuals and institutions are effectively involved in shaping the political discourse only when performing as political actors. Therefore, they contribute politically only when participating in events of a political nature, such as ruling, legislating, demonstrating, voting, debating, participating in opposition activities, and so on and so forth (ibid: 14). Accordingly, they are not classified as participants in political discourse when they carry out non-political activities related to other aspects of personal or public life. Similarly, van Dijk (ibid: 13) notes that any definition of political discourse should exclude the actions of politicians that are not of a political nature. At the same time, the discourse of all other non-political groups, organisations, or individuals should be included, as long as they tackle political issues.

Chilton and Schäffner (1997) describe political discourse as "a complex form of human activity" that depends on the fact that politics cannot be performed without language. People employ language to communicate ideas to one another in order to share knowledge on different topics. People belong to different social classes and each social class or community has its own values and beliefs that are represented by a unique usage of language. Language is closely linked with culture, which is in turn associated with the game of politics in any given society (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002: 8).

Language can therefore be seen as a *political act* that discloses people's ideas and ideologies (Joseph, 2004: 348). It reflects social structure and gives a background to geographical and social classifications and political affiliations. This might be represented by linguistic

characteristics such as accent, dialect, and lexical and syntactic expressions. Nevertheless, language itself is neutral and does not have a political or social orientation, but the way it is used by speakers usually identifies certain ideas or beliefs.

Chilton and Schäffner (1997: 206) associate politics with language, claiming that the former cannot be practised without the latter. Greek philosophers considered the art of rhetoric and verbal persuasion as a political activity that is to be employed in political practice. Chilton and Schäffner's proposition that politics cannot be isolated from language was initially established by Thomas Hobbes, the founder of modern political science in the 17th century, and then developed by scholars like Orwell (1946), Wittgenstein (1953), and Searle (1969), who demonstrated that language itself has the power of action.

In his article, 'Politics and the English Language,' George Orwell established a strong correlation between politics and language in terms of human behaviour:

> People dislike one thing and want to express solidarity with another, but they are not interested in the detail of what they are saying. You can shirk it by simply throwing your mind open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. They will construct your sentences for you, even think your thoughts for you to a certain extent and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself. It is at this point that the special connection between politics and the debasement of language becomes clear.
>
> (Orwell, 1946: 160)

Chilton (2004: 14) also links politics with language by describing language as war with words. Politicians always find themselves in a struggle with language. Whether the challenge lies in the choice of words or the choice of language, language has always proved instrumental in performing politics: from the very basic level of phrasing and wording to major issues of national language policy (ibid). Whether the aim of politics is the struggle over power, or cooperation to maintain peace and solve problems within society, ruling elites and opposition forces utilise language to achieve their goals and impose their agenda. Therefore, the study of language and politics aims at comprehending the role played by linguistic communication in social units' mechanism of action. It also aims to analyse how social units influence, model, form, and delineate features of language itself (Joseph, 2004: 347).

3.2.3 Features and Strategies of Political Discourse

In order to develop a meaningful understanding of political discourse, three notions should be examined: *space*, *time*, and *modality*. These three notions are said to constitute the corner-stone of human conceptualisation of the universe. Through them, people view and judge

objects, individuals and events around them. In other words, human beings tend to rely in their assessment of all events, people, behaviours, places, and phenomena that they come across on their closeness or remoteness to them. In this respect, the "Self" evaluates the "Other" according to their judgement of the distance between the two (Chilton, 2004).

Space represents the most essential factor among the three as it contributes to the other two factors. The notion of space has two aspects: *material* and *metaphorical*. The material dimension can be manifested through the proposition that one of the main political concerns is the allocation and control of valuable resources, whether through cooperation or struggle (Chilton, 2004: 58). Disputes over natural resources such as oil and gas have triggered many wars throughout history; the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, the 1991 Second Gulf War, and the 2003 American Invasion of Iraq are three examples.

The strategic significance of the natural resources of the Gulf area has caused the aforementioned wars that have had extremely important geopolitical consequences for the region. However, intangible proximities can be much more significant than the physical ones. For example, to the Arab Kuwaitis, Qataris, and Saudis, Algeria may be closer than a neighbouring country like Iran due to sharing the same language, religion, and culture. This cultural closeness manifested itself in the example of the World Cup 2014 held in Brazil when many Saudis and Qataris supported the Algerian team and neglected the Iranian presence in the competition.

Secondly, the notion of *time* is closely associated with the concept of "historical periodisation" (ibid: 56). In the context of political discourse, deictic terms such as *yesterday*, *tomorrow*, *before the war*, etc., work as an "anchoring point" according to which other events are evaluated and measured (ibid). While *now* or *today* mark the heart of the perception of the timeline, where the Self is located, *others* are considered *close* or *remote* depending on their distance from the centre – namely the Self (ibid: 58). This notion is manifested in political discourse through expressions such as *the change is close*, or *the glorious past of the nation is still present*. The latter expression, for example, illustrates the ideology of many Islamist parties and groups in the Arab World. In the context of the Syrian revolution, this concept explains political views/anticipations expressed mainly by opposition forces and anti-Assad regional and international powers. Examples include: *The days of Assad are numbered*, and *the collapse of the Assad regime has become very close.*

Chilton (2004: 59) links the notion of *modality* with the concept of reality and morality, or what he calls "discourse ontologies." Human beings' views about the surrounding environment seem to range between certainty and doubt, possibility and necessity, vagueness and intelligibility. Fairclough (2003: 165) associates modality with binaries such as

"permission and obligation," employing them in the field of politics by urging the ruling elites to be faithful to the people and "commit themselves to truth claims" regarding the conceptualisation of these binaries (ibid: 167).

Chilton's employment of the three notions of space, time and modality in the study of political discourse has proved extremely instrumental. It provides an explanation of the perspective whereby people tend to conceptualise and examine the surrounding environment, considering the Self as the centre of the universe. Meanwhile, more importance is attached to those events and things that are closer to the self. Politicians and other participants in political discourse can employ this concept. They can easily manipulate the discourse they adopt to persuade the audience of the policies and political decisions they take, making these views sound familiar to the public to avoid potential oppositional voices. Politicians can utilise these notions to create techniques and strategies to mislead and manipulate public opinion to guarantee general support in their quest to gain legitimacy. Meanwhile, those manipulated remain unaware of this lingua-political scheme.

Political actors can take advantage of four strategic functions suggested by Chilton and Schäffner (1997): *coercion*, *resistance*, *dissimulation*, and *legitimation/delegitimation*. Research studies conducted on political discourse have shown that politicians tend to employ these functions in order to make their discourse more appealing and convincing to ordinary people.

The first function of political text and talk, highlighted by analysts, is *coercion*. Coercion literally means forcing people to comply with imposed orders, leaving them with no option but to obey and cooperate. Politicians, especially those in power, such as ministers, presidents, and government officials, often use speech acts in a coercive manner to give the impression to the public that they have to accept the content of the discourse (ibid: 212). Ruling elites in some countries also use restrictive methods to limit access to information from international media outlets, conducting a sort of censorship and control over the press, the internet and media outlets run by the opposition. This is common in China, for instance, and in the Arab Spring countries where the state imposed strict censorship on the press. In such countries, the state closely control information exchanged through the internet, even blocking news websites and activists' blogs, leaving the people with no choice but to listen to the official rhetoric communicated through media outlets owned and run by the state.

In response to coercive procedures by regimes and governments, opposition forces and political activists make use of a function called *resistance and protest*. It is defined by Chilton and Schäffner (2007: 212) as a counter-strategy where opposition forces express their oppositional attitudes to government policies, and actions. This strategy manifests itself

through the use of appeals, petitions, graffiti drawings, and posters. In some cases, opposition forces mobilise the masses and organise protests and demonstrations by inventing slogans and carrying banners that express their demands and reflect their political opinions (ibid). This strategy was notably followed by the Arab activists, who used the internet and social media networks to incite the public to take part in demonstrations aimed at toppling the ruling regimes in the Arab Spring countries.

Dissimulation is another strategy adopted by politicians and governments to control the flow of information. The aim is to deprive the public of certain sources of information that may constitute a threat to the politicians concerned. This strategy also involves denial, hiding evidence, secrecy, and lying in order to mislead public opinion and deceive the people (ibid: 213). The ruling regimes in the Arab Spring countries often sought to deny potential corruption allegations against high-ranking officials in the state, blocking information on the fortunes enjoyed by the narrow circle surrounding a president. False reports would be made for fake military victories, achievements, and reform moves carried out by the government.

Competition between political parties often leads to mutual endeavours of *(de)legitimation* in order to legitimise their own actions and policies, whilst undermining the legitimacy of rival powers and movements. Politicians use the tactic of legitimation, employing manipulative techniques to emphasise the needs and values of society (ibid). The Assad regime in Syria, for instance, has sought to legitimise its existence by claiming to be a secular political system and a protector of minorities in the face of extreme Islamists. The plan has always been to gain international support and legitimacy. On the other hand, delegitimation is used as a counter-strategy, aimed at offering a negative presentation of rival movements to deprive them of public support (ibid). Former Egyptian President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak, for instance, accused the revolutionary activists during the January 25th Revolution of serving the agenda of the Muslims Brotherhood movement. Similarly, the Syrian regime claimed that the protestors that called for the overthrow of the regime, starting from March 2011, were in fact a group of *mundassīn* ("infiltrators") serving foreign agenda.

Kharma (1997: 274) lists two features of the discourse adopted by politicians as well as other actors involved in political activities. First, political discourse is often rich in "clichés" that serve the function of euphemism, and metaphors (ibid). Politicians tend to use soft expressions when referring to hot topics that might cause diplomatic crises and political embarrassment if talked about openly or mentioned by name. Second, political discourse can be made deliberately ambiguous, opening the door for multiple interpretations. This ambiguity is not arbitrary; rather it is intended to shuffle the cards or send different messages to different parties. These two features suggested by Kharma apply specifically to politicians' speeches.

By contrast, other types of political discourse, such as agreements, treaties and other political texts communicated at the level of international relations require a high degree of clarity and accuracy to avoid misinterpretations that may lead to international conflicts and disputes.

3.2.4 Genres and Types of Political Discourse

Having examined features of political discourse as suggested by Kharma (1997), the question of political discourse typology arises. In fact, in order to investigate this issue, it is important first to look into text types in general. Texts can be viewed from various angles and thus can be classified into different types depending on the reader's perspective. Based on the *subject* of a text, texts may fall into the following categories: political, economic, social, religious, business, literary, legal, legislative, research-related, administrative, educational, journalistic, scientific, and so on (Slype et al, 1984: 36). However, these categories may overlap, so a single text may fall into more than one of the categories indicated above. As such, a literary text might be tackling social issues, and a journalistic text may be examining an economic topic.

Bühler (1934) adopts a different model based on the *language function* of a text. According to this classification, texts are either *expressive (symptomatic)*, expressing the writer's style and thoughts; *representative (descriptive)*, aimed at providing information about a certain issue, exceeding the linguistic dimension of the text; or *signalling (appeal)*, mainly concerned about the reader's reaction (cited in Newmark, 1988: 40). Following a categorisation based on *rhetorical purpose*, Werlich (1975) also identifies three types of texts. First, *expository* texts aim at providing an explanation on a given topic. They fall into three sub-categories: *descriptive*, *narrative* and *conceptualisational*. Second, *argumentative* texts provide an argument to support or refute a proposition, and in turn fall into two sub-categories: *overt* and *covert*. Third, *instructional* texts aim at offering instructions and guidelines. They also fall into two sub-categories: *optional* and *non-optional* (cited in Hatim, 2001: 264).

Under the label of *institutional context*, Baker (1992: 114) suggests a classification that neither corresponds to the subject-based typology nor matches Bühler's model. She lists examples of institutional contexts as follows: newspaper editorial, science textbook, journal article, travel brochure, etc. As such, a journal article may focus on translation as a general framework, yet at the same time be related to a sociological theme or include linguistic aspects. The model of institutional context as suggested by Baker seems to be a mixture of a number of typology models. Like subject-based typology, institutional context tends to involve an open-ended sequence with no limited number of institutional contexts that can be identified.

According to a subject-based classification, political texts and even political discourse are considered a text type that involves texts tackling political concepts, beliefs, and performances in a given society. In this sense, political texts can involve a number of political categories such as treaties, speeches, statements, election campaign manifestos, parliamentary debates, editorials and newspaper articles, press conferences, political interviews, and so on (Lande, 2010: 8).

Schäffner (1997c: 121-133) assembled a typology model for political discourse, categorising political discourse into three types: *diplomatic discourse communicated in multi-national institutions*, which enjoys specific features in terms of lexicon and syntax; *speeches and statements made by politicians*, which in turn yields two sub-types: *internal* and *external*; and *politics-related texts written by ordinary people who are not politicians*, which are manifested in political articles commissioned by writers and intellectuals as well as political views expressed by public figures on specific events that leave a significant impact on society. Some of the data collected on the Arab Spring examined in this research study belongs to this category as it represents statements made by ordinary people contributing to the political discourse of the Arab Spring.

Political discourse can also come under one of these two categories: *internal political communication*, referring to texts made by politicians and directed to politicians within international or national institutions; and *external political communication*, referring to texts made by politicians aimed at illustrating and justifying political actions to the audience (Trosborg, 1997: 128). The latter includes political genres resulting from the expansion of the role played by the media. This is the case whether it is in its printed form such as newspapers, audio-visual form such as news television channels, or even the form corresponding to Cyberspace such as websites, blogs and social media networks (Schäffner, 2004: 118). Political interviews, political articles and public speeches delivered by presidents are examples of the second category. A different classification distinguishes between *inner-state* and *inter-state* discourses (Schäffner, 1997a: 2). While the first should be communicated within the borders of a specific country, the latter crosses national borders, thus indicating political communication between two or more countries (ibid).

Journalistic interviews may be one of the most important genres of political discourse. It is thus helpful to provide a more detailed definition of this genre. Political interviews constitute an opportunity for politicians to present and justify political actions to attract a wide audience for their ideology (Fetzer, 2009: 97). Political interviews often rely on question-and-answer formats, allowing politicians to reach out to a large audience through dialogue (Lande, 2010: 8). Another political genre that constitutes a significant portion of the data analysed in this

research study is political speeches. Schäffner (1997c: 127) argues that public speeches delivered by politicians address a wide audience, and the language they use, as Newmark suggests, is often rich in stylistic features such as metaphors and euphemisms (cited in Schäffner, 2007: 142). Such features often reflect the personal style of the speaker (Schäffner, 2001: 135).

Moreover, the language of political speeches is often loaded with ideological elements, specifically manifested in the speaker's choice of words and cultural references, e.g. to key historical events and prominent geographical places. It is rich in abbreviations of national and international institutions and organisations (ibid: 134). In addition, politicians tend to adopt diplomatic language when delivering public speeches, attempting to avoid sensitive expressions that could sound offensive to addressees. This sometimes leads to ambiguity and vagueness, especially when talking about foreign issues (ibid: 135).

Other genres and types of political discourse that closely correspond to the material analysed in this thesis are related to a unique form of political discourse referred to in this study as *revolutionary discourse*. They range from slogans inscribed on banners carried by protestors and revolutionary humour to political literature and revolutionary chants.

3.2.5 Revolutionary Discourse

Revolutions usually occur in countries governed by oppressive political regimes that neither observe human rights nor allow freedom of expression. Such regimes tend to adopt repressive policies to supress oppositional voices and undermine activists' efforts to gain fundamental freedoms. For decades, the peoples of the Arab Spring countries had suffered from strict restrictions imposed by the ruling regimes on political actors, civil society activists, and journalists. These policies impacted the discourse used by participants in the Arab Spring. When the Arab revolutions took place, the revolutionary discourse encountered a general lexical gap; the revolutionary action required new language and terminology to describe the post-revolutionary unprecedented political reality. To deal with the newly formulated political concepts, protestors and activists had to coin new words and redefine previously known ones.

In his theory of naming needs, Bauer (2001) suggests that the need for new word formation in fact arises from an already existing lexical gap. Similarly, Stekauer's onomasiological theory of English word formation (1998) stresses the notion of *extra-linguistic reality* to explain the reasons behind the need to find new terms. Political activists and protestors during the Arab

Spring had to operate outside existing linguistic reality, making up new terms in order to address the naming demand of the popular uprisings whose major weapon was words.

An example of this phenomenon comes from the Syrian revolution. Pro-revolution activists coined two names to describe Assad's supporters: *šabbīḥa* (plural of *šabbīḥ*) and *minḥibbakjīyyih* (plural of *minḥibbakjī*). *Šabbīḥa* has been used to describe Assad's armed thugs. This term was derived from the word *Šabaḥ* ("ghost"), a local name of the Mercedes 500s car that pro-regime thugs used to drive before the revolution. The other term, *minḥibbakjiyyih* ("lovers"), was derived from the slogan, *minḥibbak* ("we love you"), invented during Assad's election campaign. Thereafter, the term *minḥibbakjiyyih* has been widely used to refer to those who blindly love and support Assad.

Another impact of the revolutions on language was the *semantic change* they exerted. According to Joachim Grzega's theory of semantic change (2004), a variety of forces may trigger a semantic change, affecting the way people perceive the world, concepts, and entities. These forces played an effective role in the perception of language and the constant unrest during the revolutions of the Arab Spring. Both the regimes and pro-revolution activists have changed the meanings of various terms, employing them in new, completely different, and often symbolic ways (Neggaz, 2013: 19).

In the official Libyan discourse before, and during the February 17th Revolution in Libya, Gaddafi was referred to as *al-'Ax Qā'id aṯ-Ṯawra* ("the Brother, the Leader of the Revolution"). However, the Libyans who supported the revolution gave him a different name: *bū Šafšūfa* which means, in the Libyan dialect, a person with curly bushy hair. In his speech after the outbreak of the revolution, Gaddafi described the rebels as *jurḏān* ("rats") – a label that was extensively mocked by the Libyans (Gaddafi, Feb 2011). The ultimate irony was that Gaddafi himself was found hiding in sewage pipes (where rats are usually found) while he was seeking refuge after fleeing from his final shelter in the city of Sirte. In Egypt, activists named the silent majority during the January 25th Revolution *ḥizb al-kanaba* ("the sofa party") in reference to their passive behaviour in the course of events during the revolution.

A major aspect of the impact of revolution on the discourse communicated during the Arab Spring is the rise of popular slogans and revolutionary chants, mainly in colloquial dialects. These slogans and chants produced and sung by protestors and activists spread all over the world. They were exposed to a wider audience by virtue of social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. They were even covered extensively by regional and international news channels. Popular and humorous slogans and chants in Tunisian, Libyan, Yemeni, Egyptian, and Syrian dialects were sung to pass on the protestors' demands for

political transformation and fundamental freedoms. The chants symbolised an awareness of the regimes' tricks to undermine the revolutions and to mislead the public (ibid: 22).

One of the many slogans chanted by Yemeni protestors, for instance, was *ya ᶜAlī sallim sallim, naštī ra'īs mutᶜallim* ("Oh Ali, quit, quit, we seek an educated president"), referring to the near-illiteracy of the Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh, highlighting the crying need for an educated president to run the country. Another example comes from Libya: *irḥal yaᶜnī ḥill, aš-šaᶜb minnak mall* ("leave means get lost, the people are bored of you"). This slogan expresses the Libyans' eagerness for change and the frustration and impatience of the Libyan people.

A sense of boldness and dark humour marked revolutionary slogans during the Arab Spring, reflecting the widespread dissatisfaction among the Arab nations with the domestic political situation. These slogans were invented in colloquial Arabic and local dialects. In fact, they correspond to real events experienced by protestors and would indeed lose a great deal of their meanings if produced in Standard Arabic or translated into other languages. More interestingly, many of these slogans have found their way into international and Arab media outlets, thus exposing dialects and local Arab lifestyles and cultures to a wider global audience (ibid: 23). However, many slogans coined in formal Arabic also found their way to popularity. A good example is the much-quoted slogan *aš-šaᶜb yurīd isqāṭ an-niẓām* ("the people demand the overthrow of the regime").

The linguistic transformation process initiated by the revolutions during the Arab Spring involved proverbs and old sayings. Traditional proverbs and quotations were transformed into new ones referring to the revolution's proceedings. The protestors made changes to already-existing Arabic proverbs. New terms linked to the revolutions were added to these sayings, producing new meanings mainly formulated in a comic mould (ibid: 24). A typical example of this process in the context of the Syrian revolution is the transformation of the Quranic verse, *innamā al-xamru wa al-maiysaru wa al-anṣābu wa al-azlāmu rijsun min ᶜamal aš-Šaytān fa-ijtanibūh* ("wine and games of chance, and altars and divining are only an abomination of the devil's doing, so avoid it"), into *innamā aṭ-ṭāʿifiyya rijsun min ᶜamal an-niẓām fa-jtanibūha* ("sectarianism is an abomination of the regime's doing, so avoid it"). This modified slogan warns the Syrian people of the threat of sectarianism and the Syrian regime's scheme to destroy the unity of the Syrians by spreading sectarianism amongst them, drawing an analogy between the regime and the devil.

Although the role played by political and civil activists in the Arab Spring revolutions remains undeniable, it is the ordinary people who started the protests and secured the popular support needed to achieve the desired change. In fact, the regular citizens who had not had a known

history of political participation were the most effective. Their simple words and statements would remain memorable and immortal. An example of such statements comes from a boy who was injured by the firing of Syrian security forces in the northern city of Aleppo. The boy who thought he was dying said to his father in a tragic scene: *sāmiḥnī yūb* ("forgive me, dad").

Another moving and deep statement was made by a Syrian citizen complaining against the degrading and humiliating treatment he and his fellow villagers received from the Syrian troops: *anā 'insān, mānī ḥayawān* ("I am a human being, not an animal"). The third example is the final words of a young Syrian boy who was pronounced dead immediately afterwards due to a severe injury resulting from shooting by Syrian troops: *sawfa 'uxbiru Allāh bi kulli šay'* ("I will tell God everything").

During the Arab Spring, language became a field of combat between revolutionary powers and official media outlets owned and run by the state. Aiming to promote their own perception of reality, each party used names with negative implications to describe the agenda of the other group while assigning positive names to their own (ibid: 26). The political regimes' narratives were based on the notion of *mu'āmara xārijiyya* ("a foreign conspiracy"), accusing the rebels and protestors of receiving foreign support to form terrorist militias and carry out terrorist attacks. Countering this, the revolutionaries accused official security forces of committing crimes against humanity: *jarā'im ḍidda al-'insāniyya*. This phenomenon was shared by almost all Arab Spring revolutions, especially in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

3.3 Political Discourse Analysis

This section aims to introduce two methods of analysing political discourse. The first relies on disclosing political tools employed by political actors; the study will draw conclusions on the purpose and outcome of this employment. The second method is based on critical discourse analysis (CDA) that links political discourse to the notion of power in a sociocultural context.

3.3.1 Political Tools

A principal method for analysing political discourse is the investigation of political tools used in a given discourse. For Beard (2000: 22), five main tools can be utilised by political actors contributing to the production of political discourse. Firstly, *metaphors of war and contest* are often employed by political leaders to refer to the idea of defiance. Identifying enemies and emphasising the concept of victory over them is the method used. In the constitutional oath

speech on July 16, 2014, the Syrian President Bashar Assad used this tool to identify the enemy as the countries that support terrorism. Apparently, he was referring to the supporters of the Syrian opposition, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and the West:

وقريباً، سنرى أن **كل الدول العربية والإقليمية والغربية التي دعمت الإرهاب ستدفع هي الأخرى ثمناً غالياً.**

[Soon, we will see how **all the Arab, regional and Western countries that supported terrorism will pay a heavy price.**]

(Assad, Jul 2014)

Secondly, politicians may use *metonymy* in their discourse, substituting one word or phrase for another closely associated word or phrase, creating the same impact on the audience. In many of his statements, the then Yemeni President, Ali Abdullah Saleh stressed the concept of *aš-šarᶜiyya ad-dustūriyya* ("constitutional legitimacy"), which is an indication of his intention to stay in power. Thirdly, politicians tend to use *intertextuality* as a political tool by indicating past historical events or quoting old texts written by others. This is done to establish a connection between the past and the present (ibid: 27). In a speech to the Libyan people on April 30, 2011, Gaddafi mentioned *Maᶜrakat al-Qurḍābiyya* ("the Battle of Qurdabiyya") in which one of his ancestors was allegedly killed, along with other Libyans fighting the Italian colonists in 1915 (Gaddafi, Apr 2011). Through this connection, Gaddafi was trying to retain the legitimacy of his position as the leader of the country.

Fourthly, *analogy* can be very useful in political discourse; in fact, many politicians and political experts resort to this tool when producing and discussing political discourse (ibid: 28). In a panel, moderated by Jon Stewart on April 4, 2014, and focused on the role of women after the Arab Spring, Nadia al-Sakkaf, a Yemeni activist drew an insightful analogy examining the progress of the Arab Spring since it started in Tunisia: "The Arab Spring … was seeded in Tunisia, germinated in Cairo, or Egypt, greened in Yemen, wilted in Libya and died in Syria" (al-Sakkaf, 2014).

Lastly, *contrastive pairs* may be employed in political discourse, especially in social or religious contexts. In his article published on February 19, 2013, in the Egyptian electronic news journal *al-Yawm Assabi*, Najeh Ibrahim, an Egyptian writer, addresses the issue of *takfirism* (i.e. accusations of infidelity) in relation to the Arab Spring. He uses contrastive pairs of infidelity and faith, and infidel and Muslim (Ibrahim, 2013):

الفكر التكفيري ... يفرق ولا يجمع، ويمزق ولا يوحد، فكل خلاف بين أصحابه هو **كفر وإيمان**.. ليصبح أحدهما **كافراً** والآخر **مسلماً**.

[*Takfirism* ... divides and does not combine, separates and does not unite; every disagreement between its followers is either **infidelity** or **faith**. Therefore, one shall become an **infidel** and the other a **Muslim**.]

When it comes to the relationship between texts, Chilton and Schäffner (2002) differentiate between two political tools: *recontextualisation* and *intertextuality*. While *intertextuality* simply relates to the idea of linking one text to another, *recontextualisation* refers to the situation where a text includes some textual pieces of another genre for "strategic purposes" (ibid: 17). In his speech to the Security Council on the current events in Syria, on February 1, 2012, Bashar al-Jaafari, the Syrian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, mentions part of a poem by the famous Syrian poet, Nizar Qabbani, to shed light on the stand made by many Arab states against the Assad regime, which he believed was shameful (al-Suhaimi, 2012).

دمشق يا كنز أحلامي ومروحتي؛ أشكو العروبة أم أشكو لكِ العربَ.

> [Damascus, the treasure of my dreams and my fan; shall I bemoan to you Arabism or bemoan the Arabs?]

Another useful tool in political discourse is *implicitness*, which, according to Chilton and Schäffner (2002), is of two types. Firstly, *entailment* means that the truthfulness of one sentence entails the truthfulness of another (ibid: 33). For instance, the statement that 'Egypt's elected president, Muhammad Morsi, stressed the strength of the relationship between both countries' entails that 'elections were actually organised in Egypt and a president was elected'. Secondly, *presupposition* means that a "negated presupposing sentence preserves its presupposition" (ibid: 34). For example, the statement that 'the war did not last any longer' presupposes the fact that 'a war occurred'.

Chilton (2004) explores an aspect of political discourse that is closely related to the subject of this thesis: the impact of religion on political text and talk. He argues that politicians are often keen on positive self-presentation and legitimisation of their actions and ideology. They stress the rightfulness of the *Self*, using forms of self-identification, self-praise, and self-justification. At the same time, they tend to delegitimise the opponent. The other is presented in a negative light. their humanity is questioned and they are often blamed and used as scapegoats. In the context of the Arab Spring, the revolutionary powers were presented negatively by the ruling elites. They were often accused of terrorism and violence, whereas the official discourse of the repressive Arab regimes was based on positive self-presentation as moderate secular governments aiming to fight terror and protect minorities (ibid: 47). To fulfil these strategies, Chilton (2004) suggests a number of political tools such as *metaphors*, *passive constructions*, *implicatures*, *presuppositions*, and *antonymous lexical choices*.

Politicians use *passive constructions* to avoid explicit reference to the doer or the party that the message is directed to. They focus on the event, rather than the people involved in it. This is to avoid direct confrontation with opponents. For instance, in his constitutional oath speech on

July 17, 2014, Assad, avoided naming “the Arab, regional, and Western countries” that would “pay a heavy price” for supporting “terrorism” (Assad, July 2014).

Politicians also often tend to employ *implicatures* by using intentional ambiguity, which can be useful in denying ill intentions to avoid diplomatic crises. In his speech upon signing the GCC Initiative in Riyadh on November 23, 2011, the then Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh did not name the parties responsible for the failed assassination attempt on him. He created a form of intentional ambiguity to avoid causing unwanted tension among the audience when everyone was hoping that the Yemeni crisis had finally come to an end (Saleh, Nov 2011):

> توجت هذه الأزمة بالمؤامرة الكبيرة، وأستطيع أن أقول الفضيحة التي حدثت في جامع دار الرئاسة في صنعاء. لقد كان الصهاينة أهون مننا **نحن في البلدان العربية والإسلامية** عندما عقدوا العزم على تصفية الشيخ أحمد ياسين ... تركوه حتى خرج إلى خارج الجامع فأقدموا على قتله.
>
> [This crisis culminated in the great plot, and I can say, the scandal that occurred in the mosque of the presidential palace in Sanaa. In fact, the Zionists were better than us in **the Arab and Islamic countries** when they decided to assassinate Sheikh Ahmed Yassin; they left him till he left the mosque and then they killed him.]

Jones and Peccei (2004) also refer to two political tools frequently used in political text and talk: *parallelism* and *euphemism*. *Parallelism* refers to the expression of many concepts in similar language structures (ibid: 51), whereas *euphemism* refers to neutral, inoffensive, mild phrases often used by politicians to make a statement sound less provocative to the opponent or audience (ibid: 48). On March 19, 2013, the Lebanese news channel *al-Aan TV* reported the UN Secretary-General’s commentary on the news of the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against unarmed civilians. Ban Ki-Moon used the word “concern”, an alleviated diplomatic expression of condemnation, to tackle the extremely serious issue of the use of chemical weapons (Ki-Moon, 2013):

> **أعرب** الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة بان كي مون خلال اتصال هاتفي مع المدير العام لمنظمة حظر الأسلحة الكيماوية عن **قلقه** من استخدام الأسلحة الكيميائية في سوريا.
>
> [In a phone call with the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons OPCW, Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General **expressed his concern** about the use of chemical weapons in Syria.]

Lazar and Lazar (2004) undertook a comprehensive study on the discourse of the New World Order. They divided groups and people into two categories: *in-groups* (us) and *out-groups* (them), based on four micro-strategies. The first one is *criminalisation*; the enemy’s actions are criminalised and the opponent is accused of committing violent actions and terrorist acts against innocent people, violating international law (ibid: 231). In his second speech to the Tunisian people after the outbreak of the revolution, aired on January 10, 2011, Ben Ali sought to criminalise the protestors and demonstrators by accusing them of committing violent and terrorist acts (Ben Ali, Jan 2011):

أتوجه اليوم إليكم على إثر ما شهدته بعض المدن والقرى في عدد من الجهات الداخلية من **أحداث شغب وتشويش وإضرار بالأملاك العمومية والخاصة.. أحداث عنيفة، دامية أحياناً أدت إلى وفاة مدنيين وإصابة عدد من رجال الأمن.. أحداث قامت بها عصابات ملثمة أقدمت على الإعتداء ليلاً على مؤسسات عمومية وحتى على مواطنين في منازلهم.. في عملٍ إرهابي لا يمكن السكوت عنه.**

[I talk to you today following the events that some towns and villages in interior areas experienced, including **riots and unrest, damaging public and private property** – all **violent**, sometimes **bloody**, acts that led to **the deaths of civilians and the injury of a number of security men**, all **carried out by masked thugs committing assaults at night against public institutions and even citizens in their homes – a terrorist act that cannot be tolerated**.]

According to the second micro-strategy, *enemy construction*, politicians tend to construct an enemy and sell the audience the idea that this enemy is working hard to break the nation's values to destroy its civilised culture and peaceful society (ibid: 227). In the same speech, Ben Ali tried to intimidate the Tunisians, by accusing foreigners of fuelling the unrest to reverse the civilised Tunisian experience. Here, Ben Ali emphasises the Tunisian values of hard-work, scientific excellence and success, claiming that the protestors are in fact supported by outsiders who are willing to violate the Tunisian values (Ben Ali, Jan 2011):

مناوئون مأجورون، ضمائرهم على كف أطراف التطرف والإرهاب التي تسيرها **من الخارج.. أطراف لا تكن الخير لبلدٍ حريص على العمل والمثابرة.. بلدٍ موارده ذكاء أبناءه وبناته.**

[Hired opponents, whose consciences follow powers of extremism and terrorism, **directed from outside** by **parties which do not wish the best for a country that is keen on work and perseverance, a country whose only resources are the intelligence of its sons and daughters**.]

Politicians often employ the third strategy, *orientalisation*, to depict the matter as a struggle between the West and the East (non-Muslims against Arabs and Muslims in particular) (ibid: 234). *Vilification* is also used in political discourse to describe everything linked to God as virtuous and right while the Other is linked with the Devil and is thus evil and wrong (ibid: 236). In his sermon delivered on July 6, 2012, the prominent pro-Assad religious scholar Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Bouti identifies Assad, his government, and his army as believers, accusing all those who question this fact (referring to the revolutionaries) as disbelievers. In this respect, al-Bouti does not only act as a religious scholar, but also as a political actor. He uses vilification to associate the Syrian regime and all its elements to God, therefore linking the revolution to disbelief despite its "bright slogans" (al-Bouti, 2012):

إن سورية برئيسها وبقادتها وبجيشها وبحكومتها وبشعبها دولة تدين بالعبودية لله عز وجل.. يؤمن أفرادها جميعاً بالله عز وجل وملائكته ورسله واليوم الآخر **... إن كل من يريد أن يشكك في هوية أمتنا التي أقامها الله عز وجل فوق هذه الأرض المباركة لا شك أنه هو المتورط في الكفر بالله** ... **ليست العبرة في الشعارات البراقة التي تقال،** ما أكثر ما تختبئ تحت هذه الشعارات عفونة الكفر.

[Syria with its president, leaders, army, government and people is a state which practises slavery to God Almighty. All of its members believe in God Almighty, His angels, His messengers and the Day of Judgement ... **Anyone who wants to question the identity of our nation established by God Almighty on this blessed land is undoubtedly involved in disbelief in God** ... **Bright spoken slogans should not be taken into consideration**; these slogans have always hidden the rottenness of disbelief.]

3.3.2 Critical Analysis of Political Discourse

Van Dijk (1993: 131) does not view Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a homogenous model, school or paradigm. Rather, it is, for him, a shared theoretical perspective on conducting linguistic, semiotic, and social/political discourse analysis (ibid). CDA mainly aims to deal with language use from a social perspective. Language speakers are not isolated from cultural, psychological, or social factors and effects. CDA recognises this social dimension of language and accordingly investigates the relationship between textual structures. Taking this social dimension into consideration, CDA studies the interaction between textual structures and society. This kind of analysis can be complicated and in fact operates at several levels, given the difficulty of identification of direct correspondence between text structures and social factors.

Fairclough (1995a: 135) describes CDA as a discourse analysis with an objective to systematically examine obscure relationships of causality and determination between "discursive practice, events and texts," on the one hand and "wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes" on the other hand. The aim is to explore how these practices, events, and texts emerge from, and are ideologically influenced by, relations of power and conflict over authority. The claim is that the opacity of these links between discourse and society leads to holding power and maintaining hegemony.

The relationship between language and social function in effect works in both directions. Not only is language use influenced by its connection with some cultural and social factors, but also the influence and impact of language on the social and cultural context are manifested in various ways. Discursive practices lay the foundation for social structures, which in turn contribute to the shaping of discursive practices. CDA is aware of this bi-directional process, and investigates the "tension" between these two aspects of language use – "the socially shaped and socially constitutive" (ibid: 134). Fairclough points out that language constitutes the basis for society in different forms, and shapes the social function at several levels: social identity, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief (ibid: 134-136). As long as power is involved, all of these levels are influenced, perhaps to varying degrees. The issue of power and hegemony is essential when it comes to the study of Critical Discourse Analysis, constituting the core of this process.

CDA can be distinguished from other patterns of discourse analysis by the attribute *critical*, which suggests the shedding of light on hidden relations, links, and issues. This is in addition to actual intervention to make change by "providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change" (Fairclough, 1992: 9). It is essential to highlight hidden

aspects of political and social situations, especially when they cannot be seen by those affected by them, and when they are not contended against.

Meyer (2001: 18) points out two main streams of critical discourse analysis: the first is the school that investigates the interrelationship between *society and power*, and the second is the one that focuses on *social cognition*. Fairclough (1992: 86), who is in favour of the first trend, argues that critical discourse analysis is in fact conducted at two levels that operate complementarily: *micro*- and *macro-analysis*. Micro-analysis seeks to explain and comment on the process of text production. It also comments on the interpretation conducted by participants in political discourse based on "their members' resources". The main objective of macro-analysis, on the other hand, is the identification of these "resources" (ibid). Fairclough's approach, which is based on the connection between both levels of discourse analysis, has been developed to account for the ways the triangle of social practice, text, and discursive practice operate.

The concept of power has shifted since the beginning of the twentieth century. In this age of discoveries and technological advancements, power has become more dependent on technology and technical aspects of governance. It is an integral part of the performance of social institutions like governments, parties, councils, and parliaments. One of the main tools of what can be called *soft power* has been discourse. Discourse can exert a tremendous and serious impact, and "causal effects" on the balance of power in society. Discourse can influence individuals' attitudes, feelings, views, and knowledge. It can shape their identities and ideologies, bringing about profound changes to various educational, economic, and political sectors (Fairclough, 2003: 8).

For discourse to effectively exert the causal effects desired by its producers to impact individuals' lives and beliefs, it needs to be accompanied and enhanced by a higher power. The more power seized and exercised, the more effective the discourse is. In this respect, it can be said that power is the "ability to make change by means of action, bearing in mind that this ability can take various political, financial, religious, social and professional forms" (al-Taher, 2008: 35). Jones and Peccei (2004: 38) argue that governments, whether democratic or authoritarian, tend to secure power by convincing the public that the government and the general population actually share the same views and wishes. In a speech to pro-regime Muslim clerics on April 25, 2014, Assad strove to persuade Muslim clerics that the state in Syria has adopted *Sharia* (Islamic law) as the basis of governance. Despite the secular nature of the Syrian regime that Assad and other Syrian officials have always boasted when addressing the West, Assad, here, in front of many loyal Muslim religious scholars, sought to

present the Syrian regime as a political system that observed Islamic law, throwing away all previous claims of secularism (Assad, Apr 2014):

> أريد أن أكون مسلماً أكثر علماً ... أريد أن أسئلكم: على ماذا يستند الدستور السوري؟ على الشريعة الإسلامية، على الفقه الإسلامي، تماماً. على ماذا تستند كل قوانين الأحوال الشخصية في سوريا؟ على الشريعة الإسلامية.
>
> [I want to be a more knowledgeable Muslim ... I want to ask you a question: what are the foundations of the Syrian Constitution? Islamic Sharia (Islamic law); the Islamic jurisprudence – absolutely. What are the foundations of personal status laws in Syria? Islamic Sharia (Islamic law).]

The authoritarian Arab regimes addressed their nations before and during the Arab Spring in a systematic way, using "prevailing ways of talking and writing" aimed at establishing their discourse as common sense in the people's culture and consciousness (Thornborrow, 2004: 65). They were aware that once they achieved this, it would be unlikely for the people to challenge that "presentation", as Thornborrow (ibid) puts it, or adopt different narratives or views. This notion closely corresponds to *naturalisation*, which is a key ideological strategy of discourse. Fairclough (1989: 89) points out that it is easier for ruling elites to determine the "correctness" or "appropriateness" of linguistic elements, whether in written or audio-visual forms, found in newspaper articles, interviews, speeches, and even movies. Fairclough (ibid) stresses the notion of "power behind discourse" as an inseparable part of CDA.

Fairclough (1995a: 97) believes that discourse analysis operates through three elements: *language text*, whether verbal or written, *discursive practice*, and *sociocultural practice*. In order to provide a comprehensive discourse analysis, Fairclough stresses that the examination has to take into account three dimensions: "the immediate situation", "the wider institution", and "the societal level" (ibid). Following a speech delivered by Assad in the Syrian Parliament on March 30, 2011, shortly after the outbreak of the Syrian Revolution, a Syrian Member of Parliament made a short statement that may sound absurd to some, but in fact is very representative of the official Syrian discourse adopted by the regime (Syrian Parliament, 2011):

> الوطن العربي قليل عليك، وأنت لازم تقود العالم يا سيادة الرئيس.
>
> [The Arab World is too little for you; you should lead the world, Mr. President.]

This discourse, primarily representing the personal view of the Syrian Member of Parliament himself, can be also seen from the perspective of the operation environment of the Syrian Parliament, which tends to blindly support Assad regardless of his violent actions. This discourse is also made within the general political system of the Syrian Arab Republic, dominated by Assad. This is an example of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to critical analysis.

Additionally, Fairclough suggests another division that makes a clear distinction between *linguistic analysis* and *intertextual analysis*. Linguistic analysis operates at lexical, syntactical, phonological, semantic, and textual levels, whereas intertextual analysis follows traditional practices of genres, discourses, and narratives; it operates in specific social environments (ibid: 188), mediating between the textual element and the social factor (ibid: 189).

Language, for O'Barr (1984: 264), operates at two levels: "mirroring the society" by reflecting society's values and behaviour; and "influencing … and even transforming social relations" by affecting people's attitudes and ideology. CDA aims to investigate and shed light on both levels, but more importantly, the impact of language on society. Van Dijk (1986: 4) stresses this role, pointing out that CDA explores social problems. It maintains the views of "those who suffer most," while drawing critical analysis of the discourse produced by the ruling elites and those who are in a position of responsibility and who are capable of solving these problems.

The message of CDA, for van Dijk (1993: 249), lies in the "(re)production and challenge of dominance." Similarly, Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 529) assert that the main objective of CDA is to support the dominated in the face of the dominant. It discloses the "emancipatory interests" that underlie the oppressor's behaviour and the delusive methods followed by those in power. It then decodes ideologies, interpreting discourses for the benefit of oppressed people. Critical Discourse Analysis, for Wooffitt (2006: 139), should play a "moral" and sublime role in exposing unjust practices in society, aiming to improve the conditions of social segments suffering from them. Accordingly, critical analysis of the discourse communicated during the Arab Spring should aim to choose the perspective of the oppressed Arab people who revolted against the Arab autocrats in five Arab countries.

However, this noble objective of CDA may not be as easy as it sounds because discourse analysts are not as well equipped as tyrannical regimes. Regimes have the ability to carry out oppressive policies, economic pressure, information monitoring, censorship, imposing restrictions on the flow of data, and more. Discourse analysts' sole tool is their spoken and written words. Therefore, the duties of discourse analysts become more difficult under dictatorships, but are easier under democratic political systems where they can operate freely and efficiently (Fairclough, 1989: 89). Furthermore, a discourse analyst must bear in mind that the power of the ruling elites is not restricted to direct violent practices. It may take the shape of language manipulations, delusion, half-truths, and many other forms of manipulation that politicians are often known for (al-Taher, 2008: 39).

3.4 Political Discourse Analysis and Translation

> Translation, although often invisible in the field of politics, is actually an integral part of political activity. Which texts get translated, from and into which languages is itself already a political decision.
>
> (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 13)

3.4.1 Translation of Politics

As illustrated in previous sections, language can be used as a weapon in the ongoing conflict over power between different political parties, in particular between the oppressor and the oppressed. Authoritarian regimes employ language to gain power, whereas democratic and civil activists use the very same tool to resist it. Translators of political discourse may encounter difficulties when trying to play the role of mediators between languages. By undertaking this role, a translator may find themselves obliged to be a part of the conflict. This might result in a loss and/or modification of the meaning intended in the original text.

Schäffner (2007) argues that the universal properties of political discourse have "consequences for intercultural communication," in general, and translation in particular. In fact, it is translation that enables political discourse to cross linguistically based national borders. It helps to fulfill the objectives of international political communication (ibid: 34). The relationship between politics and translation is actually bi-directional; it operates in both ways. On the one hand, political communication cannot be effective without the helping hand of translation. On the other hand, the political backgrounds of translators and agents seem to govern the translation process, leaving unmistakable traces of the translator's political affiliations. This relationship based on mutual influence is mostly illustrated in the field of media where political discourse communicated and its accompanied translation seem to be dominated by a hidden power, directed to serve a specific political agenda.

Alvarez and Vidal (1996) view translation as a "political act" in which political considerations govern translator's decisions. This is especially the case with regards to the choice of the material that is translated and the way they run the translation process (Schäffner, 2007: 134). In this respect, political and ideological affiliations account for various practices connected to translation. Determining which text will be translated, choosing the target and source languages, deciding what media outlets will publish the translation, and determining the identity of the translators and proof-readers are all examples of this (ibid: 136). These procedures have the potential to distort the original message embedded in the source text.

An illustrative example of this process is the Iranian interpreter's deliberate distortion of Muhammad Morsi's speech during the Non-Aligned Summit, held in Tehran on August 30, 2012 (al-Zahid, 2012). The interpreter deliberately inserted the mention of Bahrain, which had experienced major demonstrations reportedly encouraged and praised by the Iranian regime in early 2011, in the interpreting. Bahrain in fact was not mentioned in Morsi's speech at all. The Persian translation of the speech, published in key Iranian news agencies such as *Jehan News*, also removed mention of the four Righteous Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman, and Ali. This was done to ensure the speech is consistent with the official *Shiite* tradition of the Iranian Islamic Republic, which rejects the above figures except for Ali.

The Persian interpretation of the speech was aired on the Iranian national channel and was expected to be heard by the Iranian people. The Iranian government was aware of the sensitivity of its involvement in the Syrian conflict and its unjustifiable support of the violent practices of the Syrian regime. They thus hoped to avoid an unwanted embarrassment in front of its own people. As a result, the Persian interpreter deliberately omitted some of Morsi's words that condemned the violence carried out by the Syrian regime against Syrian civilians.

The relationship between language and politics is illustrated through Schäffner's (1997a) proposition on the impact of language on political behaviour. Van Dijk's (2003) notion of the influence of different types of discourse on individuals' political cognition by means of education and the mass media also adds to this. The strong connection between language and translation necessarily entails a similar influence of translation on political attitudes. The opposite is also true: translation is governed and dominated by those in power.

Political texts, according to Schäffner (1997b: 131), fall under a very distinctive category of texts known as "sensitive texts". She argues that when these texts are translated, they introduce numerous new expressions and genres to the target language; many SL phrases and words do not have direct equivalents in the TL. Therefore, there is a need for coinage and creation of new structures and phrases. That being said, these texts may pose a challenge for translators and may be confusing to the target reader. Although some may argue that the sensitivity of this category of texts is attributed to their linguistic characteristics, Schäffner (ibid) asserts that it is actually the cross-cultural aspect that makes these texts difficult to translate into other languages. She highlights three major factors responsible for the difficulties that translators encounter while dealing with sensitive texts.

The first factor corresponds to an issue that is more culture-oriented than language-oriented, namely, *function of the text*. Translators sometimes find themselves obliged to change the function of the text under translation. This applies, for example, when the source text function is mainly persuasive or is full of elements that are closely connected to the source culture.

They may seem completely understandable for the source reader, but could be obscure for the target reader. In this case, the translator can decide to change the text function to an informative one, providing more information for the benefit of the target reader who does not share the same cultural background as the source reader (ibid: 132).

The second factor provides translators with a lexical-semantic challenge related to *terminology and interpretation*. The disparity of ideologies between translators and readers might result in divergent interpretations of sensitive political terminology (ibid: 136). In other words, a translator may translate a specific term in line with personal political views, excluding other valid translations. For instance, supporters of the Arab Spring revolutions tend to adopt the Arabic translation *'aṯ-ṯawra 'at-Tūnisiyya* ("the Tunisian revolution") for the English "the Tunisian uprising", instead of *al-intifāḍa 'at-Tūnisiyya* which could attribute less political and historical value to the event. Similarly, supporters of the Syrian revolution resent the term "Syrian civil war", often used by the Western and international media. Instead, they prefer the expression "the Syrian revolution" as a description of the ongoing military conflict in Syria. These views can influence the work of a translator who supports the Syrian revolution and opposes the Assad regime. The third factor relates more to *international treaties and contracts,* but is of less significance to this research study (ibid: 135).

In order to overcome these challenges, translators of sensitive texts must be aware of the nature of their environment. This is especially the case for political text. They should also be well informed of the circumstances under which these texts have been produced. Translators should be informed of the context of the story as well as any specific additional information needed for a better understanding.

3.4.2 Translation of Political Discourse at Macro-Level: Translation-Oriented Text Typology

The study of translation at the micro-level, which investigates smaller linguistic units, will be discussed in detail in Section 3.4.3. Translation at the macro-level, on the other hand, is concerned with the general features of a text, namely translation-oriented text types and categories. As pointed out in Section 3.2.4, the political discourse examined by this research study is varied and diverse. It ranges from political statements and speeches made by politicians and political articles published in newspapers commenting on the events of the Arab Spring, to revolutionary discourse produced by political and civil activists as well as ordinary citizens taking part in revolutionary action during the Arab revolutions.

The fact that these categories can also fall into different text types affects the translation process. It determines the strategies that the translator follows. The translators, in turn, find themselves obliged to deal with cultural issues, as well as the linguistic aspects of the text. This is in addition to the need to familiarise themselves with the ideological and political background of the source text. Schmidt (1993: 348) asserts that translation is characterised by its communicative function, which in fact determines the translation method adopted by translators. It is often influenced by numerous political, ideological, and political factors related to the "communicative situation" of the translation process (ibid).

Reiss (1971), later followed by Wills (1996), was the first to emphasise the need for a translation-oriented typology (cited in Schäffner, 2001: 11). Hatim and Mason (1997) point out a structured approach to text typology, first proposed by Werlich (1976). According to them, texts fall into three main types. First, *expository* texts can either describe, narrate, or conceptualise a situation through language. This type represents the rhetorical function of a great bulk of the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring. This particularly applies to the political speeches of the Arab autocrats and the revolutionary discourse produced by the protestors and activists. Second, *instructive* texts give instructions and provide information. Third, *argumentative* texts, which can be either overt or covert, attempt to persuade the reader of a particular point of view. The political articles providing commentary on issues related to the Arab Spring fall under this category. This type is especially important since many of texts analysed in the data analysis chapter (Chapter Seven) are actually translations of political articles.

This last type of text seems to manifest itself in two opposite models: *through-argumentation* whereby a standpoint is proposed and defended throughout the paper; and *counter-argumentation* where a proposition is first presented, then rejected and disproved. The author's alternative viewpoint is then presented, supported, and proven (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 127). Hence, a translator is required to be familiar with both forms, and should be able to cope with the expected variations among different languages and cultures. For instance, in contrast to English writers, who tend to use the counter-argumentative model, Arabic columnists seem to favour through-argumentation. Hatim and Mason (ibid: 139) point out that the reason for this disparity lies in the question of power addressed previously. An Arabic reader expects a more powerful argument than a counter-arguer can provide by introducing both propositions even though they support one and reject the other. For the Arabic readership, this may be seen as "making concessions" and thus as a weak and "unconvincing" attitude (ibid). However, this establishes the credibility of the discourse producer from the perspective of English receivers (ibid).

The argumentative function proposed by Hatim and Mason corresponds to a main genre of the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring: political articles and interviews. Since the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011, many articles on the event have been published in Arabic and English newspapers. Numerous interviews have also been conducted, hosting political commenters to support or refute viewpoints in relation to the Arab revolutionary action. The outbreak of the Arab revolutions influenced writing style and journalistic work. It created an atmosphere of freedom and change, which enhanced the language of dialogue in political and cultural circles. This helped to violate long-lived and deep-seated taboos. The *al-Jazeera* political talk-show, *al-Ittijāh al-Muᶜākis* ("the Opposite Direction"), hosted by prominent Syrian presenter Faisal al-Qassim, is a typical example of talk show programs promoting freedom of speech and providing a platform to discuss issues related to the Arab Revolutions, using argumentative language and persuasive skills.

According to Newmark's (1988) approach to text typology based on *language functions* proposed by Bühler, texts can be *expressive*, *informative*, or *vocative*. When dealing with texts whose function is mainly *expressive*, i.e. focusing on the writer's attitude and personal opinion, a translator is required to devote particular attention to the author's personal style, as well as the dialectic aspect of the text. Therefore, a translator should put a great deal of effort into rendering metaphors, figures of speech, and syntactic structures (ibid: 40).

If the text to be translated has a *vocative* function, which means that its main concern is the reader's response, a translator should address the relationship between the writer and the reader. They should primarily focus on the persuasive aspect of the text, aimed at convincing the reader of a set of views and beliefs (ibid: 41). Thus, the language used in the target text is required to succeed in influencing the receiver's mentality, opinion, and culture in order to fulfil the original author's objectives. When it comes to translation of *informative* texts aimed at providing information and instructions, a translator is required to be faithful in rendering the information into the target language. Despite his efforts in forming this text-typology, Newmark is fully aware of the fact that there is no text that has only one of the aforementioned functions. On the contrary, most texts tend to include parts with different functions (ibid: 42).

Among these three functions, the vocative function seems to be most connected to the data analysed in this study; the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring was primarily concerned with gaining public support. Perhaps this was largely manifested in the language of the political statements produced by the Arab autocrats who strove to convince the public that the protest movements were in fact a foreign plot aimed at destabilising the country and undermining its successful social, economic, and political experience. This was done in the hope of persuading the majority of the population to adopt the offecial narratives

to support the existing regimes in the face of the winds of change. In his second speech to the Egyptian people aired on February 1, 2011, Mubarak used this language to warn the Egyptians of what he sees as a dangerous threat posed by the protestors (Mubarak, Feb 2011):

> تحولت تلك التظاهرات ... إلى مواجهات مؤسفة تحركها وتهيمن عليها قوى سياسية سعت إلى التصعيد وصب الزيت على النار، واستهدفت أمن الوطن واستقراره بأعمال إثارة وتحريض وسلبٍ ونهب وإشعال للحرائق وقطع للطرقات واعتداء على مرافق الدولة والممتلكات العامة والخاصة واقتحام لبعض البعثات الدبلوماسية على أرض مصر.
>
> [These demonstrations have turned ... into unfortunate confrontations directed and influenced by political forces that have sought to escalate and add fuel to the fire, targeting national security and stability by means of escalation, incitement, looting, arson, blocking of roads, carrying out assaults against state facilities and public and private property, and breaking into some of the diplomatic missions on the land of Egypt.]

However, upon their failure to persuade the population of their narrative, Arab dictators tended to use expressive language in their speeches to gain public sympathy as a desperate strategy to stay in power. In the same speech as a bove, Mubarak seems to use expressive and emotional language to reflect on his experience in ruling Egypt. He pleads for a chance to finish his reign, promising he will not run for future elections:

> إني لم أكن يوماً طالب سلطة أو جاه ويعلم الشعب الظروف العصيبة التي تحملت فيها المسؤولية، وما قدمته للوطن حرباً وسلاماً ... وأقول بكل صدق وبصرف النظر عن الظرف الراهن أنني لم أكن أنتوي الترشح لفترة رئاسية جديدة. فقد قضيت ما يكفي من العمر في خدمة مصر وشعبها ولكنني الآن حريص كل الحرص على أن أختتم عملي من أجل الوطن بما يضمن تسليم أمانته ورايته ومصر عزيزة آمنة مستقرة، وبما يحفظ الشرعية ويحترم الدستور ... إنّ هذا الوطن العزيز هو وطني مثلما هو وطن كل مصري ومصرية، فيه عشت وحاربت من أجله، ودافعت عن أرضه وسيادته ومصالحه، وعلى أرضه أموت.
>
> [I have never sought authority or wealth, and the people know the difficult circumstances under which I took responsibility, and what I gave to the homeland in war and peace ... and I say in all sincerity, regardless of the current circumstances, that it was not in my intention to run for a new presidential term. I have spent enough years of my lifetime in the service of Egypt and its people, but I am now keen on concluding my work for the homeland by ensuring the handing over of its responsibility and banner while Egypt is still proud, secure and stable, so as to preserve legitimacy and respect the Constitution ... This dear country is my homeland, as it is the homeland of all Egyptians. It is the country which I have lived in and fought for; I have defended its land, sovereignty and interests, and on its soil I shall die.]
>
> (Mubarak, Feb 2011)

3.4.3 Translation of Political Discourse at Micro-Level

Having examined the translation of political discourse at the macro-textual level, this section investigates the problems encountered by a translator when dealing with smaller linguistic units included in a source text. Newmark (1991: 160) believes that translators should treat political texts as “sacred” documents. Thus, any intervention or distortion is forbidden and could lead to serious consequences unless it occurs in the form of footnotes or separate comments. He points out the problems posed by political terminology in the translation of

political text and talk (ibid: 147). The translation of basic terms such as 'socialism' and 'imperialism' from one European language into another is generally simple because of the similarities between European languages. Most of these languages have the same Latin or Greek roots, and so at least some of their technical vocabulary shares certain features and characteristics. However, the translation of these terms into non-European languages can be more challenging in the absence of direct equivalents and thus need further investigation (ibid: 148).

Newmark (ibid: 149) argues that political terms possess four main attributes: They are *culture-bound, abstract, value-laden,* and *historically conditioned*. This means that political terms are often deep-rooted in the source culture. They can therefore be obscure in terms of the meaning intended, indicate sophisticated concepts, and contain historical references. In fact, these features can be traced in the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring. The Syrian revolution is marked by its slogans that reflect the political demands and the views of the protestors. Most of these political slogans possess the features of political language proposed by Newmark. For instance, the slogan *qā'idnā li-al-abad, sayyidnā Muḥammad* ("our leader forever is Prophet Muhammad") nominates Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), not Assad, as the "leader" of the Syrians. It is culture-specific and has a historical aspect, containing an Islamic religious reference. Similarly, the slogan *ibn al-ḥarām, bāᶜ aj-Jūlān* ("the Bastard sold Golan") gives strong hints about a historical event when the late Syrian President Hafez Assad, father of Bashar Assad, had lost the Syrian Golan Heights to Israel in the Six-Day War, 1967 whilst serving as minister of defence, following a coup led by the Ba'ath Party in 1963.

The slogans of the Syrian revolution are also value-laden in the sense that they often carry strong connotations and are sometimes connected to ideology. For instance, the slogan *ᶜaj-jannih rāyḥīn, šuhadā' bi-al-malāyīn* ("to Paradise we are going, as martyrs in millions") points out the Islamic ideology of many of the Syrian protestors and defines the revolution as a conflict between Good and Evil; whoever dies while struggling against the regime will be a martyr and thus enjoy eternal life in God's Paradise. The translator of political discourse in general, and that of the Arab Spring in particular, is required to be aware of these attributes and features in order to produce translations that maintain the cultural and ideological value and reflect the historical background of the source texts.

Newmark (1991: 157-160) points out some aspects of political discourse related to terminology that the translator should take special care of when tackling political text and talk. An example of this is the use of *political jargon* (words and phrases usually used by politicians and the media to refer to political issues in a coded way, for instance, *dawāᶜiš* "members and

supporters of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria"). Another example would be *acronyms*, such as *Dāᶜiš* ("Isis") for *ad-Dawla al-Islāmiya fī al-ᶜIrāq wa aš-Šām* ("the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria"). Other examples include: *euphemisms*, *neologisms* (the coinage of new terms, for example, *minḥibbakjīyyih*, referring to those who adore and support Assad), and the use of *pronouns* (such as "we" and "they", which create a kind of ambiguity allowing different interpretations). Then there are *collocations*, for example, expressions such as *masīrat at-taṭwīr wa at-taḥdīṯ* ("the march of development and modernisation"), which had been repeated excessively by the authoritarian Arab regimes prior to the Arab Spring until they turned into clichés, and therefore lost their impact. Finally, *metaphors* can be used. For example, the slogan, *aj-Jayš al-Ḥurr li-al-abad, dāᶜis ᶜarās al-Asad* ("the Free Syrian Army, forever, stepping on Assad's head"), shows support for the Free Syrian Army, demonstrating that it is capable of "stepping on Assad's head," i.e. humiliating Assad.

Connotations are believed to be one of the major challenges encountered by translators of political discourse. This is because political discourse uses passionate language that is rich in value-laden phrases and words. Hatim and Mason (1990: 112-3) emphasise the semiotic aspect of connotations, pointing out that a sign has two meanings: a denotative one, indicating the lexical meaning of a word, and a connotative one defined as a "self-renewing phenomenon that gradually establishes itself within the collective subconscious in a given culture." The media are often influential in promoting specific connotations of a sign. For instance, since the Muslim Brotherhood won legislative elections, and then the presidential elections in Egypt, the Egyptian mass media have tended to target the Islamist group and its supporters using offensive expressions. An example of such expressions is the term *xirfān* ("sheep"); the Egyptian media has used this term to describe the Muslim Brotherhood supporters, accusing them of being blindly obedient to their leadership just like sheep. A scathing attack against Islamists launched by the presenter of the program *al-Qāhira al-Yawm* ("Cairo Today"), Amr Adeeb, broadcast on *al-Yawm TV*, exemplifies this phenomenon (Adeeb, 2014):

> **أنت وزملائك الخرفان** اللي زيك.. إحنا اللي عملناكم.. إنت كنت بتطلع بالإعلام الفاسد ده وبتاكل منو عيش.
>
> [**You and your fellow sheep** that are just like you. It is we who have made you. You used to talk through this corrupt media and feed on it.]

Connotations pose a challenge for translators who are required to be attentive towards both donative and connotative meanings of political expressions. This means that they should be informed about the identity of the discourse producer and the intended receiver as well as the environment in which the discourse is communicated. Connotations seem to develop following any changes occurring to discourse producers, receivers, and time of discourse communication. Thus, according to the Egyptian mass media, the expression *xirfān* ("sheep")

refers **now** to Islamists, in general, and Muslim Brotherhood supporters in particular; however, the connotations may change within a few years' time.

Dickins, Hervey, and Higgins (2002: 66-72) approach connotations from a different perspective. They list five types of meaning: *associative* (hinting at a concept connected to the referent); *allusive* (hinting at a popular statement or quotation); *attitudinal* (hinting at an attitude to the referent); *reflected* (the reminiscence of a homonym or more basic meaning of the same word); and *collocative* (attaching a meaning to a word through collocation). Although these types are intended to remind the political discourse translator of the significance of connotations, a lot of words and expressions are in fact neutral. Therefore, the translator should not associate them with any implications that could change the meaning intended by the original author (Ingo, 1993: 134).

The issue of connotations closely corresponds to the idea of vagueness of political terminology proposed by Newmark. The connotations associated with political terms tend to vary from one county to another and from one political trend to another. This is due to the clash of ideologies and disparity between cultures (Aziz and Lataiwish, 2000: 130). For instance, the concept of *mu'āmara* ("conspiracy") can mean two different things in the context of Arab Spring political discourse. Official media outlets run by the government tended to use this term to refer to the foreign intervention in the country, whereas the protestors and revolutionary powers seemed to employ this term to indicate the desperate efforts made by the autocratic regimes to undermine the revolutions. They also highlight the international indifference towards the sufferings of the Arab masses. These variations can pose a problem for the translator who may not be aware of the differences in the use of specific political terms, and the nature of political conflict in both source and target societies. A translator of political discourse should also pay attention to the expected attempts by producers of political discourse to take advantage of the evaluative aspect of connotations. A translator should also note other possible linguistic aspects to legitimise the actions of discourse producers and delegitimise their opponents in the context of a broader conflict taking place in the field of language.

3.5 Conclusion

To conclude, politics and translation are closely related; both influence each other and affect the decisions taken by actors and participants in the political arena and the field of language. This reciprocal relationship between politics and translation is also governed by power relations that are determined by oppressive policies followed by governments, and strategies adopted by political discourse analysts. Ideology seems to be connected to, and contribute to,

this multi-faceted conflict. The relationship between ideology and translation will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

IDEOLOGY AND TRANSLATION

4.1 Introduction

The development of the Arab Spring in the five Arab countries where it was most prominent has reflected a crucial engagement of ideology, whether Islamist or secular. This was most evident in the events, decision-making mechanisms, and political discourse production. This chapter aims to shed light on the influence of ideology on the production and structuring of political discourse as well as the translation process. It consists of two main sections. The first defines the concept of ideology, and examines its relationship with politics. It explores the outcome of the connection between ideology and language, i.e. ideological discourse. The section ends by analysing ideological discourse and explaining van Dijk's ideological discourse structures, using examples from the political discourse of the Arab Spring. The second section investigates the relationship between ideology and translation, pointing out the various roles taken by a translator as a text reader and a re-writer, and discussing the approaches underlying these roles. The section also looks into the impact of patronage on the translation process and ends by providing recent examples that demonstrate the influence of ideology on the political discourse communicated in the region of the Middle East and North Africa. The theories introduced and discussed in this chapter will be used to analyse the data derived mainly from the Syrian revolution in Section 7.4 of Chapter Seven.

4.2 Ideology in Discourse

The relationship between ideology and discourse is substantial, and the link between the two concepts is indeed intrinsic. Ideology cannot function or be expressed without discourse, and discourse tends to be influenced by the ideologies of its producers, and is thus often rich in ideological structures. This section aims to introduce the concept of ideology, shedding light on its relation with politics and language. It also explores the notion of ideological discourse and examines van Dijk's model of ideological structures. This is used to analyse ideological discourse by detecting the presence of ideology in socio-political discourse. Examples are provided from the political discourse communicated in the Middle Eastern context after the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

4.2.1 Concept of Ideology

The concept of ideology was first introduced and defined by the French thinker Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836). He describes the term as the 'science of ideas' in contrast to the metaphysical world of philosophy (Yahiaoui, 2005: 2). Since then, the perception of ideology as a notion has evolved, acquiring different meanings and implications, the most important of which are the political and cultural ones. Raymond (1981) argues that ideology, in fact, refers to a specific constellation of beliefs and dispositions. Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1993) provides a broad definition of ideology that is linked to culture. Ideology is seen as a systematic scheme of concepts, specifically in relation to human life and culture. Hence, ideology indicates the way of thinking, or sets of ideas held by an individual, group, or culture. Ideologies constitute the underlying foundation of the belief systems or social perceptions of particular groups, van Dijk (2001) affirms.

This description gives a positive or at least neutral image of ideology. However, when it comes to society, political hegemony, and conflict over power, ideology often carries negative implications. In this sense, it is defined as a form of "cognitive distortion" or a "false or illusionary representation of the real" (Beaton, 2007: 272). From this perspective, ideology is used to refer to the values and beliefs of "others", rather than ourselves. Van Dijk asserts that "few of «us» (in the West or elsewhere) describe our own belief systems or convictions as «ideologies». On the contrary, Ours is the Truth, Theirs is the Ideology" (cited in Munday, 2007: 196).

Whether false or not, ideologies as a set of beliefs shared by a group of people are mostly rejected due to the fact that they are often imposed, whether by majority within a democratic system, by force under authoritarian systems, or even through the manipulation of media outlets owned by governments or political forces (Camelia, 2009: 94). Although it still seems appealing to millions of Arabs across the Arab World, the pan-Arabist ideology, for instance, has notably lost a great deal of its popularity in the Arab street. This is because it has been imposed, and even misused, by dictatorial regimes in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen. The same applies to the Islamist ideology in countries ruled by Islamist political systems, such Sudan. By rejecting ideology, people aim to resist dominance and hegemony, fight against manipulation and inequality, and refuse submission.

Karl Marx also gives a negative description of ideology by affiliating it with capitalism. He describes it as a form of delusion, representing a fake version of reality limited to the ideals of the ruling class that will soon vanish when this class is overthrown in an inevitable socialist revolution (cited in Heywood, 2003: 7). In fact, the Marxist conception of ideology has

particularly influenced the approaches related to discourse analysis, such as CDA. Marx uses ideology as a counter strategy to expose the ruling material and intellectual force's delusion about reality. He utilises ideology to reverse this process and unmask society.

Heberman (1973) links ideology to power, describing it as a system of ideas that constitutes and steers power in society. Gramsci (1971) elaborates on the relationship between ideology and power, adding a third element to the process, namely hegemony. He asserts that ideology is the means through which hegemony is conducted. Conflict over power between various classes and social groups leads to constructing and sustaining alliances in order to achieve and maintain dominance. This process takes different political, economic and ideological shapes.

Van Dijk (2006: 116) associates ideology with four main assumptions. The first assumption is that ideology, as a belief system, excludes "ideological practices or societal structures" such as churches and political institutions on which ideology is based (ibid). At the same time, it requires a cognitive element that is capable of explaining the concepts of belief and belief system. The second assumption links ideology to a social aspect, suggesting that there are no "personal ideologies"; ideologies are, by necessity, "*socially shared* by the members of a *collectivity* of social actors" (ibid). In this sense, the main function of a belief system is to identify the social identity of a given group through social representations and features. The third assumption restricts ideology to a particular type of socially shared fundamental beliefs that govern and steer other beliefs. For instance, an Islamist ideology may control attitudes towards women's issues and relationships with non-Muslims. In contrast, a communist ideology may work to undermine the role of religion in public life, enhancing the atheist trends among the population.

According to the fourth assumption, ideologies need time to be adopted by individuals, and thus cannot be acquired in a short space of time. However, "if ideologies can be gradually developed by (members of) a group, they also gradually disintegrate" (ibid: 117). Ideologies tend to change throughout one's life. People may change their ideology with age due to the variability of experiences they encounter. Hence, members of a group may decide to leave the group when they lose faith in the shared values held by a given group. For instance, many pan-Arabists lost faith in pan-Arabism after the outbreak of the Syrian revolution due to pro-regime attitudes expressed by several pan-Arabist parties and figures across the Arab World as well as the subsequent violent policies adopted by the pan-Arabist regime in Syria.

Van Dijk (ibid) argues that ideologies lose their meanings and stop functioning as ideologies when they are so widely adopted in society that they become generally held values within the entire society. This arises when the ideology is seen as so obvious or expected that it becomes unquestioned. In conclusion, van Dijk (ibid) notes that ideologies are not personal; they are

not necessarily negative (ideologies vary from Islamist to secularist ideologies; from nationalist to communist). Van Dijk disagrees with the Marxist perception of ideology, asserting that they are not by any means a false representation of reality. Ideologies are distinguished from the discourses and other social forms that represent and promote them, certainly differing from other socially shared beliefs.

4.2.2 Ideology and Politics

Politics and ideology are closely related; ideologies, by nature, are political, and the political arena is the platform where various ideologies are manifested, interact, and are fiercely competed over (van Dijk, 2002: 22). Politics often operates to serve an ideological agenda, and at the same time ideologies are employed in the political domain in order to achieve political ends. Political actors act not only as politicians, but also as Islamists, pan-Arabists, communists, socialists, and so on (ibid). For instance, in an election campaign tour, the then Egyptian presidential candidate Muhammad Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood who later became the President of Egypt for one year, clearly expressed his Islamist ideology (Morsi, 2012):

> القرآن دستورنا والرسول زعيمنا والجهاد سبيلنا والموت في سبيل الله أسمى أمانينا، وفوق كل ذلك الله غايتنا.
>
> [The Koran is our constitution; the Prophet is our leader; Jihad is our path; and death for the sake of Allah is our ultimate wish. Above all, Allah is our end.]

Morsi, here, is speaking not only as a politician or presidential candidate, but also as an Islamist who believes in an Islamist ideology that is based not only on the teachings of Islam but also on the Islamic philosophy and trend established by specific Muslim scholars and thinkers, such as Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb.

In many cases, the ideology embedded in a given political discourse produced by a political actor, party, or even a government may vary depending on the situation and the target audience. A politician might, for instance, emphasise Islamist values when addressing a conservative Muslim audience, yet express liberal ideas on economic issues when the target audience is businessmen. "[B]ased on their personal experiences and life situations, and diverse group memberships, individuals may share in (sometimes 'incompatible') ideologies. Political and ideological discourse analysis is usually based on individual discourses, so it will not be strange at all to find influences of various ideologies" (ibid: 23).

The Saudi government often adopts a conservative Islamist discourse when it comes to domestic politics since this might contribute to gaining popular legitimacy and support.

However, the foreign discourse of the Kingdom seems to be quite liberal. This is primarily manifested in their strong alliances with Western countries and their troubled relationships with Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Van Dijk (ibid) argues that one of the many challenges encountered by analysts of political discourse is to spot these ideological variations in the same discourse and to examine the way they interact and are presented.

In addition to the three commonly known broad system types of ideologies, political ideologies such as communism and nationalism, social ideologies such as feminism and racism, and religious ideologies such as Islamism and *Jihadist Salafism*, a different type of ideology plays a fundamental role in political practices: professional group ideology (ibid). Just like journalists, professors, and lawyers, politicians can act not only as socialists, feminists, or Islamists, but also as professional politicians (Geison, 1983) who focus on practising politics and representing citizens, aiming to govern a country, province, or city. They perform their tasks on the basis of their political values as democrats or even autocrats, deriving their authority from the political power of their position. Based on this understanding of ideology, van Dijk (2002: 23) proposes that "listening to the voice of the people" becomes an integral part of the professional group ideology of politicians, even if they actually fail to do so in practice.

Among all types of ideologies operating in the political domain, the ideologies that are concerned with the organisation of the state and the method of governance, especially democracy seem to have particular political significance (ibid: 24). Hence, it is not a coincidence that many politicians, political parties, and political systems identify themselves as 'democratic'. These claims can be easily verified by checking to see whether they observe equality of rights, as the most important characteristic of democracy, and whether they consider the power of the people as the main source of legitimacy. In fact, the ideology of democracy has become so popular that it cannot be considered as an ideology, but rather "a general, undisputed value that is part of what we have called the cultural common ground" (ibid). Therefore, lack of democracy is often associated with intellectual, civilisational, and political underdevelopment. The concept of democracy has special significance for the subject of this study because the Arab Spring revolutions took place in the first instance to establish democracy and to achieve equality of rights in the Arab countries.

4.2.3 Ideology and Language: Ideological Discourse

The relationship between language and ideology is so close that Joseph and Taylor (1990) believe that the essence of linguistic theory making is ideological. Language is seen as a

medium through which ideological forces seek to achieve their ends. Heberman (1973) argues that language can be utilised to legitimise relations of organised power. However, Schäffner (2003) asserts that the ability to detect the ideological elements found in a text relies on the topic of the text itself as well as its genre and communicative functions. Ideology for Belsey (1980: 5) is "inscribed in discourse … it is not a separate element which exists independently in some free-floating realm of ideas … but a way of thinking, speaking, experiencing." According to post-structural theory, however unbiased and impartial the form and content of discourse seems to be, it is in essence filled with the biases, prejudices, opinions, and judgments of certain ideological or cultural groups. As Macdonnell (1986: 59) puts it, "All discourses are ideologically positioned; none are neutral."

Althusser (1972) views ideology as a process of language whereby people and groups, by forced, are *interpellated* as subjects that represent certain ideologies. Through this process of *interpellation*, individuals are *recruited* and eventually transformed into subjects who seem to create their own relationship with society. Although this relationship is real and natural, it is based on their own ideology and interpretation of the world (ibid). These subjects, by means of language, find themselves in charge of the meaning of their own discourse. They produce the meaning, instead of being subject to it; they are active rather than passive, dominant rather than submissive. Nevertheless, such a relationship for Weedon (1987) is *imaginary* and leads to a sort of *misrecognition*, given the fact that the individual presumes that they are the producer of the ideology that underlies their subjectivity

The working environment of organisations, ideological structures, and discourses encourage managers to perceive and present themselves mainly as managers rather than "family members", "employees" or "citizens". This is based on their qualities of "responsibility" and "loyalty" and the values of "work morale" and "result orientation" (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 173). This applies to the leaders of parties and political organisations, who tend to identify themselves primarily as leaders as well as policy and discourse-makers.

One of the prominent theorists who examined the relationship between ideology and discourse is van Dijk. He affirms that this relationship is "complex and often quite indirect" (van Dijk, 2006: 124). Such discourse can rely, in ideologically steered contexts, on ideological interpretations of events by participants who tend to shape this discourse according to "subjective mental models", or more directly on ideologically dominated group beliefs (ibid). However, ideology is not always transparent in discourse. Speakers and/or discourse producers can decide to cover and conceal their ideological beliefs (ibid). On many occasions, Islamists before the Arab Spring, for instance, found themselves forced to hide their ideological affiliations and opinions to avoid expected repressive measures carried out by the

ruling Arab regimes. Thus, ideology is not always detectable in discourse, and speakers' ideologies are not always deducible through discourse analysis. This always depends upon the nature of the communicative situation encountered by the participants, i.e. context. Therefore, van Dijk (ibid) maintains that the idea of ideology is "*non-deterministic*" as participants do not always express the beliefs they embrace or explicitly represent the ideological trends they are influenced by. Besides, ideological discourse may vary due to personal and contextual considerations.

This typically applies to the context of international political negotiations and bargaining situations where the concealment of direct ideological expressions and opinions often prevails. This does not, by any means, imply that ideologies increasingly lose their role in a world that is advancing rapidly towards globalisation. It only means that in certain situations they are not expressed transparently, often in attempts to resolve some conflicts and prevent others from erupting (ibid). In fact, in the case of discourse communicated among the same group, or what van Dijk calls "ingroup talk" (ibid), ideological opinions may be presupposed. When it comes to discourse directed to outgroup members, ideological beliefs can be subject to considerable censorship and modification. In both cases, the relationship between ideology and discourse becomes indirect and unobtrusive.

Van Dijk (2002) also views the relationship between ideology and discourse from a different angle – the speaker's personal perspective. He admits that ideologies, among other social representations dominate and steer discourse. Nevertheless, they are capable of doing so only under a set of conditions and only when their natural and abstract properties "apply in specific situations, to specific actors, actions and events" (ibid: 17). Van Dijk (ibid) stresses the need to investigate the individual psychology of personal beliefs of social and political participants in discourse making. This is alongside the conventional study of the social psychology of group beliefs. Political discourse tends to articulate group ideologies, views and opinions, particularly in collective forms of discourse such as party programmes. However, individual actors may personalise the ideology that is supposed to be included in the discourse. This may slightly, but significantly, affect particular political characteristics of the discourse. Van Dijk (2002) therefore stresses the need for a cognitive interface to link ideologies and discourse and to represent personal beliefs, views, or experiences.

People differ in their evaluations of an event that they participate in, witness, or just hear about. They tend to adopt different personal interpretations to form what van Dijk calls "models" (ibid). Not only do these models constitute personal knowledge about this particular event, but they also contribute to shaping personal opinions and beliefs. In fact, the "experiences" people go through, which are represented by their personal evaluations and

interpretations, influence the forming of their own perception of events (ibid: 18). In effect, they contribute to shaping, and are shaped by, general social beliefs, including ideologies. In other words, personal models can be socially and ideologically biased, such as when political activists disagreed on the nature of the Arab Spring, adopting different (Islamist or liberal) interpretations of the event. When individuals communicate about a specific event, they use their mental models as the cognitive basis of the processes of discourse making or perception. This means that during the process of production and semantic representation of discourse, a speaker includes (sometimes ideological) elements derived from their own mental model. "[T]he structure of this model" can, therefore, leave its impact and trace on the structure of the discourse (ibid).

4.2.4 Ideological Discourse Analysis and Structures

The relationship between ideology and language and its effect on shaping ideological discourse has been examined. Meanings are often manipulated and structures are employed to favour in-group ideology and interests. Out-group beliefs are derogated, which is common in social cognition and can be detected through analysis of ideologies (van Dijk, 1995b: 146). This section aims to provide the theoretical framework of ideological discourse analysis.

Based on "group schema categories," which suggest that ideologies are employed and structured in discourse to serve the agenda of the "ingroup", against "outgroup" interests, van Dijk (1995b: 146) argues that discourse is often semantically steered by ideologies and is designed to provide answers for the following questions:

- Who are We? Who do (do not) belong to Us?
- What do We do? What are Our activities? What is expected of Us?
- What are the goals of these activities?
- What norms and values do We respect in such activities?
- To which groups are We related: Who are Our friends and enemies?
- What are the resources We typically have or do not have (privileged) access to?

An ideological discourse analyst, therefore, needs to dig for answers to these questions in order to carry out an in-depth analysis of a discourse. It must be taking into consideration that in the process of analysing an ideologically influenced discourse, it is expected to locate meanings that express the modes of self-defence, positive self-presentation, legitimation, justification, and other self-serving expressions, as well as negative framing presentations of others (ibid: 147). Ideologies are often present in political discourse, even if indirectly. This is especially the case when political discourse aims to persuade and convince the audience, helping to shape and/or emphasise ideologies adopted by discourse producers and communicators. Van Dijk (1995a) identifies nine discourse structures that have efficient

expressive, persuasive, and communicative functions to convey the underlying ideological meanings assigned by discourse producers: *surface structures*, *syntax*, *lexicon*, *local semantics*, *global semantics*, *topics*, *schematic structures*, *rhetoric*, *pragmatics*, and *dialogical interaction.*

Surface structures

Van Dijk uses the term 'surface structures' of discourse to refer to "the variable forms of expression at the level of phonological and graphical 'realisation' of underlying syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, or other abstract discourse structures" (ibid: 23). Generally speaking, these surface structures found in discourse do not express explicit meanings on their own. They are, rather, only employed as representations of deep underlying meanings that reflect the ideology of the speaker. For example, special stress or volume, or words written with capital letters, can be a strategy to highlight and mark the significance or importance of certain meanings. They can also express irony or other semantic or interactional functions (ibid). The headline of an article by Peter Welby (2014) published on the Tony Blair Faith Foundation website serves as an example of this structure: "Muslim Scholars Denounce ISIS 'Caliphate.'" The use of inverted commas to mark the word *Caliphate* represents a strategy used here by Welby to express irony. The writer, who apparently opposes the Jihadist ideology, seems to find it ironic that a so-called Jihadist organisation, which is globally recognised as a terrorist group, gives its top leader such a title that has significant Islamic historical and religious implications even though it adopts an ideology that is rejected by the majority of the Muslim scholars and population.

Syntax

This aspect of structure suggested by van Dijk highlights the ideological implications of syntactic structures found in political discourse. These implications seem to be primarily associated with a number of factors: for example, use of active or passive voice (i.e. the presence of grammatical subject), or word order, such giving specific items the initial position in a sentence and transactional structures of sentences. All of these can refer to underlying semantic (or indeed, cognitive) agency (Fowler and Hodge, 1979; Hodge and Kress, 1993). Ideologically influenced viewpoints regarding the responsibility for social actions or events, whether positive or negative, differ in the way they are expressed using different syntactic forms and structures. Negative qualities assigned to out-groups may be intensified by

highlighting their responsible agent (Hamilton and Trolier, 1986), i.e. using an active voice, thus providing a grammatical subject or naming the agent (the doer of the act) instead of using a subject pronoun. In this case, the out-group is meant to be the subject and topic of the sentence so that its negative properties are highlighted. The same applies to positive actions done by *us* (van Dijk, 1995a: 24). By contrast, "the agency of ingroup members who engage in negative actions will be syntactically played down by the use of passive sentences and their role may be wholly dissimulated by agentless passives or nominalizations" (ibid).

In his interview with the *BBC* aired on February 10, 2015, Bashar Assad seemed to favour a particular structure in his answers with *BBC's* Middle East Editor Jeremy Bowen (Assad, Feb 2015). Bowen asked whether the Syrian government had indeed made mistakes in handling the demonstrations in the early days of the uprising, and whether Assad took responsibility for committing these mistakes that led to the outbreak of the Syrian revolution. The leader of the Syrian regime's answer was:

> No, I never said we made mistakes in handling this. I always said that "anyone could make mistakes" (Assad, Feb 2015).

Assad seems reluctant to use a grammatical subject referring to the Syrian government. Instead, he uses the word "anyone" to avoid taking personal responsibility for the mistakes. He also tried to evade any mention of "demonstrations". Rather, he uses "this" to refer to the event or the unrest. Assad's discourse is, in fact, consistent with the broad outline of the political discourse adopted by the Syrian regime which refuses to admit making any serious mistakes that caused the revolution in the country, or even acknowledge the revolution that erupted on March 15, 2011.

Lexicon

Lexicalisation is a major field of ideological expression that aims to persuade and positively present the self and provide a negative image of the other. Discourse producers tend to use different terms to refer to the same individuals, organisations, social relations, or social issues. Choices adopted by speakers depend on a variety of elements, such as "discourse genre, personal context (mood, opinion, perspective), social context (formality, familiarity, group membership, dominance relations), and sociocultural context (language variants, sociolect, norms and values)" (ibid: 25). Many of these contexts are influenced by ideologies, especially when it comes to political discourses communicated in conflict zones such as the Middle East during and after the Arab Spring.

Assad, for instance, in his interview with the *BBC* aired on February 9, 2015, adopts a discourse in which he plays the lexicon game very persistently. He says, "We took the decision to fight *terrorism* from the very beginning" (Assad, 2015). The political discourse of the Syrian regime has always been based on describing the mass uprising from the very beginning as a terrorist action. Assad thus places emphasis on the government taking it upon itself to "fight terrorism" since the first cry of freedom. This has become a well-known *terrorism/terrorists* versus *revolution/revolutionaries* binary opposition that is valid in mostly all the Arab Spring countries; the revolutionaries and opposition activists have been frequently labelled by the regimes as terrorists and their opposition activities as terrorism.

Local semantics

Van Dijk (1995a: 26) argues that what applies to lexicalisation in the previous section also applies in general terms to the management of meaning. The structure of local semantics introduced by van Dijk is essentially associated with ideologically dominated representations of the situation and biased explanations. This includes reasons and circumstances provided by a specific group to justify getting involved in negative actions. This also includes "positive self-presentations and negative presentation of outgroups" within a social-cognitive environment (ibid). Blaming the victim for violent actions that they are subject to serves as an example of situations of social inequality, racist behaviour, and political conflicts. In such cases, ideologies and attitudes are adopted to provide a self-serving explanation of negative social acts, political decisions and security and military procedures.

Following the Rabaa Massacre in August 2013 in which hundreds of pro-Morsi protestors and members of the Muslim Brotherhood were killed, Nader Bakkar, Assistant Chief of the al-Nour Party was one of the prominent supporters of the coup led by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi against Muhammad Morsi. He adopted a victim-blaming discourse (Al-Nahar: Apr 2014):

> قال نادر بكار، مساعد رئيس حزب النور لشئون الإعلام ... أثناء حوار له على قناة صدى البلد ... أن [قيادات الإخوان] تركوا الشباب في الواجهة يموتون. وعن مقتل أسماء نجلة القيادي الإخواني محمد البلتاجي قال بكار، أنها من ضمن قائمة هؤلاء الشباب المغمورين الذين زج بهم و قتلت لأنها صدقت خدعة أبوها مثلها مثل بقية الشباب.
>
> [Nader Bakkar, Assistant Chief of the al-Nour Party for Media Affairs said … during his interview on Sada al-Balad Channel … that [the Muslim Brotherhood leaders] left the young people on the frontline dying. Regarding the death of Asmaa, Muslim Brotherhood leader Muhammad al-Biltagy's daughter, Bakkar said that she was among those nameless young people who were thrown away and killed because she believed her father's deceptions like the rest of the young people.]

It is evident in this excerpt that Bakkar blames the Muslims Brotherhood leaders for the murder of their members, sons, and daughters. He avoids any reference to the brutal actions

taken by the Egyptian security forces when attacking the protestors in the Rabaa sit-in or the coup authorities that actually made the decision to carry out the massacre.

Global semantics: Topics

Topics or semantic macro-propositions of a given discourse are typically used to define and give a brief description of the information that discourse producers believe to be most relevant, crucial, or significant. This implies that the process of topic determination can also be influenced by ideological considerations. “Ingroup speakers may be expected to detopicalize information that is inconsistent with their interests or positive self-image and conversely they will topicalize information that emphasizes negative outgroup properties” (van Dijk, 1995a: 27).

Al-Arabiya news channel is known for adopting an anti-Muslim-Brotherhood liberal editorial policy and expressing constant criticisms against different Islamist groups and parties in the region. They seem to have a particular dislike for the Turkish ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (JDP) (AKP in Turkish), led by Erdogan. This technique is thus frequently used to distort the image of JDP, and the Muslim Brotherhood. In an article published on the *al-Arabiya* website, the Saudi funded news outlet seems to detopicalise the most important piece of information on the launching ceremony of the Turkish government initiative (al-Arabiya News, Feb 2014). 100,000 iPads were handed to Turkish students across the country, an event attended and sponsored by Erdogan himself. The news outlet, however, chose a less convincing title:

أردوغان يدعو الشباب إلى ألا يكونوا "عبيداً للإنترنت."

[Erdogan calls for young people not to be “slaves of the Internet.”]

(al-Arabiya News, Feb 2014)

This choice made by *al-Arabiya* of selecting this piece of news as a headline of the article, excluding more important information mentioned in the body of the article is consistent with what it seems to be an editorial policy, frequently attempting to present a negative image of Erdogan as a hardline Islamist leader who resists development, the spirit of new technology, and liberal voices.

Schematic structures

Schematic structures refer to the way overall meanings are organised according to a specific schemata (superstructure). These superstructures are conventional and, like all formal structures, have the features of a specific genre such as a news report, narrative, or dialogue. They are not typically dominated by ideologies, but because they often adopt a "canonical" order, they may "signal importance of relevance" (van Dijk, 1995a: 28). The role of ideology is manifested through the link between the super-structural level and the macro-structural level, which is primarily concerned with expressing the general topic of a discourse. It is therefore the most crucial piece of information in a report (van Dijk, 1988), occupying the highest position in the hierarchy, such as initial summaries.

A discourse producer may adopt a schema that allows subordinate topics or less important local information in the text to be upgraded and included in the overall headline. By doing this, they give more importance to these topics. Conversely, a news editor may decide that a main topic should "be downgraded to a lower level of the schema" as a subordinate topic on the sidelines of the news (van Dijk, 1995a: 29). Thus, in one report, van Dijk (ibid) affirms, the same incidents could be given the label of "circumstances" or "setting", whereas in another report they are presented as the significant *complication* of the event. These differences in tackling the relevance and importance of a certain story are often governed by the ideology of discourse producers or news editors who can downgrade information that does not conform to their ideology and/or the interests of the powerful groups that sponsor or control them. At the same time, they attach more importance to information that represents outgroups in a negative way (ibid). This applies to the way political discourse, in particular, is produced and dealt with by news outlets that adopt a specific text schema reflecting ideology-based opinions.

Rhetoric

Specific rhetorical structures of discourse, such as rhyme, alliteration, or semantic figures of speech, could be used as an ideological tool to achieve dominance over discourse, serving the agendas of discourse producers. Rhetoric can be adopted in this case to downgrade information that is "unfavourable" to the speaker, attaching less importance and prominence to it. Negative information about the *others* is then marked and made significant (van Dijk, 1995a: 29). Van Dijk points out many figures from classical rhetoric that can be used in this context, namely "over- and understatements, hyperbole (exaggeration), euphemism and mitigation, litotes and repetitions" (ibid).

Pragmatics

According to ideological discourse theory proposed by van Dijk, "the social control of speech acts should operate through context models that represent the communicative situation and its participants, goals, and other relevant appropriateness conditions" (van Dijk, 1995a: 30). Commands and threats reflect feelings of dominance and power experienced by a speaker who could be targeting certain recipients only because they belong to a specific group of people, such as Muslims, blacks, women, and so on. These attitudes towards outgroups are manifested through impoliteness, rudeness, and other impression management modes as forms of verbal discrimination. The inferiorisation of others stemming from ideological beliefs normally result in inferiorisation of speech partners, which is manifested through breaking usual norms of respect and politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Dialogical interaction

Conflict of ideologies and ideologically influenced power relations can be reflected through interaction strategies in dialogues; speakers tend to verbally adopt a superior attitude towards speech partners who belong to a different group or adopt a rival ideology. This often occurs when the normal rules of conversation are violated by carrying out "irregular interruptions, not yielding the floor or taking very long turns, avoiding or changing undesirable topics, negative meta-comments about the other's style (choice of words) or other attributed breaches of etiquette, using inegalitarian speech acts" (van Dijk, 1995a: 30).

These aspects of discourse structure are essentially valid where there is a conflict of interest leading to different, and sometimes opposing interpretations and evaluations of events. The representation of these differences is mostly reflected through an "*us* versus *them*" pattern. According to this pattern, the members of one group typically adopt a discourse whereby positive terms are used to present their own group, and negative terms to describe the other group (ibid: 22). Thus, a discourse analyst should pay special attention to any ideological elements. They are represented by what van Dijk calls "discourse structures" that establish or emphasise any ingroup-oriented propositions that are expressed from a self-serving perspective or position within a socio-political conflict (ibid). Such discourse structures often function in a legitimising manner to justify dominance or hegemony, for instance when violent actions are carried out by a totalitarian Arab regime.

4.3 Ideology in Translation

Having discussed the concept of ideology and its relationship with politics and language, this section aims to explore the role of ideology in shaping decisions made by the translator whether as reader of the source text or author of the target text. It will also shed light on the influence of patronage on the translation process in a world of ideological and cultural conflicts. It will thereafter endeavor to provide characteristic examples of the translation of political discourse communicated in the Middle East region after the Arab Spring, in particular those that illustrate deliberate distortion and manipulation carried out to serve ideological agendas.

4.3.1 The Influence of Ideology on the translator as a Reader

Examining the impact of ideology on translation requires an extensive investigation into the influence of a translator's personal beliefs regarding their role as a reader first and foremost. The reading process is the first step towards the translation production. The examination of the process of reading cannot be carried out accurately without exploring the perspective through which the Structuralists viewed language. Language, for them, is system of symbols that operates within the linguistic realisation of the world, as well as contributes to shaping the social characterisation of the individual. The Structuralists studied the nature of language and concluded that "language is constructed as a system of signs, each sign being the result of conventional relation between word and meaning, between a signifier (a sound or sound-image) and a signified (the referent, or concept represented by the signifier)" (Roman, 2002: 309).

The era of post-structuralism witnessed a leap in the perception of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds. Barthes argued that signifiers and signifieds are not fixed or unchangeable (cited in Roman, 2002: 310). Conversely, "they can make the sign itself signifying more complex mythical signs as intricate signifiers of the order of myth" (ibid). This new perspective had an immense impact on the field of Linguistics, leading to major changes in tackling issues associated with the processes of reading and writing. The most significant change was the development of the death of the author as a concept, which was later integrated into Translation Studies.

On the basis of the new hypothesis that asserts that signifiers and signifieds are constantly changing, Barthes believes that the interpretation of a given text can no longer be dependent on raising speculations on the intention of the writer who creates the text in the first place

(Royle, 2003: 7). Barthes thinks of a text as a separate entity that is detached from the author's control and dominance, asserting that "since writers only write within a system of language in which particularised authors are born and shaped, texts cannot be thought of in terms of their author's intentions, but only in relationship with other texts: in intertextuality" (cited in Roman, 2002: 311). With the decline in the author's role in determining the semantic interpretation of a text, readers, including translators, interpret texts in line with their existing knowledge and experiences that are inevitably based on their ideologies or beliefs. The meaning of a text can therefore be determined by the reader's understanding, which varies from one individual to another, not by the author's input. "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author," Barthes concludes (cited in Hermans, 1999: 69).

Derrida, who is also a poststructuralist, adopts the structure of sign developed by Saussure, but views it as "a fluid entity" whose meaning is not crucially determined. This is because "signifiers refer only to each other" and thus meaning is in continual transformation; every new signifier adds a different aspect to the meaning in an everlasting chain of signification (Roman, 2002: 311). The result is indeterminacy (or indefiniteness) of meaning, which has been referred to as *différance*, a new term coined by Derrida from the French word *différence* (derived from the French verb *différer*, which literally means *to differ* or *to delay*) (ibid).

Post-Structuralists believe that a source text is in fact a translation itself, a constant process of transformation of a chain of signifiers into a univocal signified. The process becomes further complicated if a translation of the same chain into another language is conducted. In this case, the originality of both source and target texts is refuted. In fact, both are derivative semantic unities consisting of various linguistic and cultural elements that are open for different interpretations and acquisition of new meanings (Venuti, 1992: 7). Accordingly, neither the author nor the translator as a reader of the source text has the supreme authority over the text to unequivocally determine the meaning. Rather, the ability to do so will constantly belong to *all* the readers and thus remain open for a never-ending circle of interpretations.

The concept of equivalence in Translation Studies is reshaped by the emergence of the poststructuralist notion of *textuality*. It suggests that the differential plurality in a given text prevents, and constitutes an obstacle against, adopting a single meaning, and thus "a ratio of loss and gain inextricably occurs during translation process" (ibid: 7–8). Correspondingly, Carbonell (1996: 98) emphasises the heterogeneous nature of the signification process in both the source and target cultures, adding that the constant transformation of the meaning cannot be evaded in the translation process. The disparity between the author's intention and the translator's choice is therefore inevitable. A translator, just like an author, is not only an individual, but also an agent involved in both processes of the source text decoding and the

target text production. However, both processes are governed by the ideology of this agent, who is a socially and historically shaped subject. They can be conducted differently by another agent who is differently culturally and ideologically constituted. The difference in the translator's behaviour and performance is due to the difference in the knowledge they possess and the experiences they have undergone.

Robinson (2001: 72) notes that translators tend to let their knowledge and previous experience, which is ultimately ideological and governed by ideological norms, control their performance. Those who intend to work as professional translators must be aware of the translator's "submissive role" and thus "submit" to being steered and guided by what their ideological background imposes on their performance and decisions (ibid). In fact, what bridges the gap between the different individual interpretations of the source text, thus bringing the translations closer to each other, is the ideological background shared by the translators.

Identifying the role of the translator's socio-cultural background, which subconsciously influences the translator's performance and reading of the source text is not simple. This is why Toury (1999: 18) prefers not to address the "question of how, or to what extent, the environment affects the workings of the brain," or the socio-cultural factors that impact the cognition of the translator. Nevertheless, he admits the importance of these questions, which, if answered, would contribute immensely to the understanding of the translation process. The influence of ideology on the translator's behaviour is not limited to the process of reading and interpretation of the source text. Ideology, among other socio-cultural factors, also governs the production process of the target text, i.e. re-writing of the text, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.3.2 The Influence of Ideology on the Translator as a Re-Writer

Poststructuralist theory succeeded in undermining the role of the author as a sole and sacred determiner of the source text meaning. The translator, as a reader of the source text, was given the authority to adopt a personal interpretation of the text. That being said, Functionalists then sought to undermine the source text itself by granting absolute power to the translator as a producer of the target text who can create it in line with a new purpose assigned to the text. Schäffner (1996: 2) defines functionalist theorists as those researchers who believe that the "purpose" of the target text is the most crucial factor that determines and influences the outcome of the translation process. The functionalist approach is regarded as a giant leap from viewing the translation process from the perspective of linguistic equivalence, to dealing with it from the angle of functional appropriateness. It is now viewed as a communicative act and

a process that is concerned with achieving intercultural communication, delivering a translation "capable of functioning appropriately in specific situations and context of use" (Schäffner, 1998a: 3).

Vermeer's (2000) Skopos theory suggests that every action must have a purpose or objective. It laid the solid foundation for viewing translation as a process that should be conducted to serve a specific end within a communicative environment between two cultures (Vermeer, 2000). Accordingly, the translation process is no longer seen as a procedure of *transcoding*, i.e. merely converting a language from one form of coded representation to another, which was the viewpoint of previous non-functionalist theorists. Rather, it is a human action whose aim is determined by the translator, constituting the focal point of the entire intercultural process, Hönig (1998: 9) asserts. The *Skopos* of a translation constitutes the aim or purpose, which is determined by the nature of the commission and communicative context. It is influenced by the translator's standpoints, cognition and ideology, and can thus be modified accordingly. Vermeer (2000: 229) defines *commission* as the "instruction" supplied by the self, or another person, to perform a specific action. In this context, that is translation.

Skopos theory views a text as a linguistic entity that includes a set of information supplied by its creator (an author), and passed on to a recipient (a reader). Therefore, the target text is looked at as a subsequent offer of information derived from prior information. This offer was primarily provided in a different language within a different cultural communicative environment (Schäffner, 1998b: 236). According to Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997: 156), a translator's job is to design, shape, and produce a target text that complies with the requirements of the target context. It must be consistent with the target culture and meet the expectations of the target reader. Schäffner (1998b: 236) asserts that translation, in accordance with this recent trend, can be defined as "the production of a functionally appropriate target text based on an existing source text". However, the relationship between both texts, and thus the translation process, is steered in the service of the purpose of the translation within a target communicative context. The outcome of the translation process, then, is not solely governed by the source text, its expected impact on the (source) reader, or its author's intention. Rather, it is primarily determined by the purpose of the target text, which often corresponds to the target readers' expectations and requirements. These requirements, however, are currently anticipated and proposed by the translator, who is the *author* of the target text. They can therefore be subject to the translator's ideology and can be subsequently decided based on their socio-political knowledge and experiences.

Skopos theory allows the translator more freedom in forming and creating the target text, freeing them from the "restrictions" imposed by the principle of loyalty to the source text and

the intention of the author (Schäffner, 1998b: 238), thus allowing them to be *visible* (Hönig, 1998: 12). However, it puts the translator in the position of a decision-maker who is responsible for determining the skopos of the target text (ibid: 13). They are therefore entitled to make crucial decisions to meet the expectations of the target reader, respect the norms of the target culture, and bear the consequences that follow from these decisions (Toury, 1999: 19).

Nord (2003: 11) maintains that the decision making process, whether conscious or subconscious, is, in fact, governed by ideological considerations. Lefèvere (1992: 13), who was the first to examine translation as rewriting of the original text, emphasises the role of ideology and patronage among other cultural and social norms to control and shape the decisions made by the translator. Translators can choose to manipulate the original discourse to be consistent with their ideology and beliefs, producing a target text that does not constitute a transparent representation of the source text or the author's intention. This manipulation, which can also imply deliberate distortion, aims on some occasions to undermine the other's ideology, culture, and norms.

The previously mentioned ideological reasons, among numerous other socio-political cognitive factors, may make a translator force adjustments and modifications onto the source discourse to devise a product that fits into a desired model. Álvarez and Vidal (1996: 3) argue that a translator often makes changes to an exotic discourse in accordance with the target culture and norms. This is done in order to make it absorbable by the target reader, or even to choose to create imaginary geographical and temporal settings that comply with the social, ideological, cultural, or religious values of the target audience or readership. This is regardless of whether the created environment matches, or even is close to, the original in the source text. The misconceptions held by the target audience or translator regarding the source culture and language often result in adopting hostile, or arrogant religious, political or ideological attitudes towards the other. These misconceptions may then govern this deliberate manipulation of the text.

The tendency to present a negative image of the other may be a result of (1) the translator's feelings of superiority or inferiority towards the culture or language of the other; (2) the translator's submission to a dominant ideology or political system, such as the authoritarian Arab regimes that urge them to adopt a certain linguistic behaviour; (3) the need to meet the expectations of the target audience to whom the translated discourse is directed (ibid: 6); and/or (4) the terms and ideology of the publisher and other patrons involved in the translation process. This is closely linked with the role of patronage in the translation process, which will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.3.3 Ideology, Patronage, and Translation

The translator is not the only agent who exerts their effect on the translation of political discourse, especially in the context of unrest. Ideology also influences the translation through the presence of patrons, such as publishers, editors, and regulatory bodies. These agents tend to censor, restrict, and impose their own agendas, ideology, and terms on the translation. It is essential to begin this section by defining the concept of patronage and its implications. Lefèvere (1992a: 15) defines patronage as "something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature." The role of patronage is often more concerned with the ideological aspects of literature than with the literary part of the work itself. Patronage is typically associated with the notions of power and authority, and thus should be examined accordingly. Patronage can be exerted by persons, groups, institutions, upper social classes, political parties and organisations, publishers, media and news outlets, and authoritarian political systems. Patrons often attempt to put pressure on the literary system to be consistent with specific social, cultural and ideological systems and thus respect their values.

Two important elements, according to Lefèvere (ibid: 14-15), help to avoid an intellectual and ideological clash between the literary system and other subsystems in a given society. These are: professionals, such as tutors, critics, reviewers; and translators, who may repress the works that challenge dominant and prevalent beliefs and opinions (ibid). These professionals can still be tempted, possibly for ideological reasons, to produce or encourage such works. Therefore, there is always a need for the second element – patronage – which attempts to hinder these forms of works.

Lefèvere (ibid: 16) identifies three aspects of patronage: ideological, economic, and patronage of status. Ideological patronage tends to impose restrictions on the decisions made by literary professionals, including translators. It contributes to the shaping of their work and product in terms of form and content. Economic patronage seeks to influence what literary professionals write and re-write (i.e. translate) by giving them financial rewards and pensions, or promising them promotions. The status aspect implies conferring prestige and recognition on the individuals who provide services that follow and defend the patrons' ideology. Lefèvere (ibid: 16-17) further argues that if the three aspects are all controlled and steered by one patron, as in the case of the totalitarian regimes in the Arab World, then it can be called undifferentiated patronage; otherwise it is called differentiated. Nevertheless, in both cases individuals and authorities with power can exert patronage through either encouraging or restricting translation activities.

Although Lefèvere (1984: 92) admits that 'patrons' as a term for participants in the literary system, including translation and its environment, "has both positive and negative connotations," he seems to stress the "discouraging, censoring" and destructive aspects of the patrons' mission. This affirms that patrons can be individuals, such as Bashar Assad, Gaddafi, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Mubarak, Ben Ali, and other leaders of the totalitarian political systems in the Arab World, but can also be institutions, such as the Egyptian Military Council that took over in Egypt after Mubarak's resignation, or even media outlets and organisations such as official or private news outlets in the Arab countries. Unlike Lefèvere, Foucault (1979) tends to focus on the productive, encouraging and supportive implications of patronage. For him, power is a productive element. This perspective contradicts the negative and radical Marxist view that perceives power as a "repressing, constraining, distorting" force (Philp, 1983: 35). Foucault (1979) believes that power, patrons' most instrumental tool, has to be seen from a positive perspective. He urges people to stop blaming power for the acts of excluding, repressing, censoring, abstracting, masking and concealing. On the contrary, "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth," he argues (ibid: 194).

The translation process is doomed to be governed by patronage. Translators find themselves with very little freedom when it comes to their relationship with patrons, "at least if they want to have their translations published," Lefèvere (1992b: 19) asserts. Lefèvere (1992a: 10) further highlights the necessity to analyse translation "in connection with power and patronage, ideology and poetics," in an attempt to expose the constant efforts devoted by patrons to use translation to promote their ideology and undermine the opponent's. Translation can be used as part of a strategy to "maintain" specific cultures and identities to "deal with what lies outside their boundaries" (ibid).

The patrons' intervention in the translation process starts with the selection process of the texts that are translated. Upon accomplishment, the translation is often overseen and edited by agents who work for the patron to ensure the translation does not violate the cultural, ideological, social, or even religious values of the patron and/or target audience. In other words, the translator is allowed to perform only within certain boundaries; they are asked to fulfill the aims specified by the patron, giving up most of their authority as a re-writer of the target text. The patron occupies the supreme position over the entire process and has the ultimate power and authority to publish what is deemed to be acceptable or suitable, whilst rejecting what is not. In fact, some consider their cultures to be superior due to their political, cultural, or economic status. Lefèvere (1992a: 70) points out an illustrative example regarding the feelings of superiority enjoyed by the French towards the cultures and languages of the others, to the extent that even Homer, the famous Greek epic poet and the author of

the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, "must enter France a captive and dress according to their fashion so as not to offend their eyes."

As illustrated in the third and fourth chapters of this study, the translation process is interlinked with politics, ideology, and power. These three factors govern the decisions made by participants in the translation process at two levels: micro-level, where authors and translators operate and impose their ideology on the texts; and macro-level, where patrons, such as publishers, governments, media organisations, and political regimes, hold the actual and ultimate authority that allows them to impose their ideology on the authors and translators. Therefore, the translation industry can be seen as a battlefield for conflicting ideologies and political stands. Writers, translators, and editors do have a say, but patrons dominate the process and prove to have the upper hand. This will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, which investigates the role played by the media in steering the translation process.

4.3.4 Translation and Manipulation: Illustrative Examples

In the previous sections, it was established that it is frequently not possible for a translator to resist cultural, historical, social, or ideological forces. Translators, therefore, often work under the constant (possibly subconscious) pressure of these factors. As a result, the translator produces a translation that is influenced by their own reading of the source text (which is, in turn, governed by the translator's previous knowledge and experience, as explained in Section 4.3.1) as well as their cognitive socio-ideological background. A translator can also consciously choose to carry out deliberate manipulation of the translation, thereby forcing a certain ideology upon the translation. This can be due to certain ideological affiliations or instructions from the patron. Hatim and Mason (1997) concede that translation has never been perceived as a neutral activity.

Al-Taher (2008: 82) identifies three circles that the decision-making mechanism in the translation process must go through. The creation of the source text, on the one hand, is governed by the source culture, the author's ideology, and the way ideas are processed and issues are addressed by the author. The production of the target text, on the other hand, is carried out in line with three elements too: the target culture, the translator's ideological background, and the way the translator comprehends and processes ideas. Among these three circles, the target culture and the translator's ideology, added to the influence of the patron, are the circles which the manipulation process goes through before a modified and biased translation is produced.

Ghazala (2002: 147) stresses the notion of "biased" translation. He refutes the notion of the translator's objectivity, asserting that a translator is ultimately a human creature that belongs to a society and thus holds its values, promotes its culture, and defends its beliefs. Therefore, a translator has no choice other than being a "biased translator" who holds a certain ideology and seeks to implement it through translation. Shunnaq (1994: 104) also criticises the view that a translator should observe the principle of objectivity when translating, irrespective of their ideological affiliations. The view that defends the notion of the translator's neutrality has proven to be unrealistic. It is no longer possible to conceive translators as "invisible glass, pale reflections and echoes, neutral, faceless, etc." (Newmark, 1991: 170). In fact, "they never were," Newmark (ibid) concludes.

The impact of power held by patrons on the translation process and the role of the translator as a writer of the target text also lead to the production of manipulated translations. Often, though, the manipulation is conducted against the will of the translator (Delisle and Woodsworth, 1995: 131). These assumptions regarding the manipulation of translation can also be extended to include the translation of political discourse communicated after the Arab Spring. There have been many cases of manipulation targeting the translation of political discourse produced in the Arab World since the outbreak of the Arab Spring from late 2010 till today. The reasons behind this distortion of discourse when rendered into a different language have varied, but it seems that the translators' ideological affiliations as well as the influence of patrons have played a crucial role in encouraging this form of manipulation.

The following is an extract from an article by David D. Kirkpatrick published on October 7, 2014, on the *New York Times* website under the title, "As Egyptians Grasp for Stability, Sisi Fortifies His Presidency" (Kirkpatrick, 2014). It comments on the new Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's speech in front of the UN General Assembly. The subsequent translation of the article is conducted and published in the form of a report on the website of *al-Ahram*, an Egyptian newspaper funded and run by the Egyptian government (al-Ahram, Oct 2014):

The New York Times article

> With President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi back from his first visit to the United Nations, **the Egyptian news media** is hailing his performance there as a transformational moment, for the Egyptian president and even for the General Assembly.
>
> No longer tainted as a former general who ousted Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mr. Sisi was finally recognized by the international community as a respected statesman and regional leader, **Egyptian commentators say**. Mr. Sisi even "changed the way presidents make speeches at the United Nations," **the talk show host Amr Adeeb proclaimed**, showing a video clip of Mr. Sisi ending his speech late last month by chanting his nationalist campaign slogan.
>
> …

More than any change in his standing abroad, however, what the event demonstrated was the **strength of the cult of personality that Mr. Sisi's allies are building around him at home as he consolidates his power** — a persona far more exalted and protected than even that of Hosni Mubarak, his long-serving predecessor … But the Egyptian media's applause was sustained and unanimous, **dramatizing a monopolization of power under Mr. Sisi that many analysts say has not occurred in this country since the rule of Mohamed Ali Pasha, the early 19th-century founder of the modern Egyptian state.**

[مع عودة الرئيس عبد الفتاح السيسي من زيارته الأولى للأمم المتحدة، تشيد **وسائل الإعلام المصرية** بأدائه هناك واصفةً إياه بلحظة التحول، ليس فقط بالنسبة للرئيس المصري، بل وحتى بالنسبة للجمعية العامة.

ويقول معلقون مصريون أن السيسي لم يعد موسوماً بكونه الجنرال السابق الذي أطاح بأول رئيس منتخب ديمقراطياً في مصر، فقد اعترف بالسيسي أخيراً من قبل المجتمع الدولي كرجل دولة محترم ورائد في المنطقة. وقد غير السيسي حتى "الطريقة التي يلقي بها الرؤساء خطبهم في الأمم المتحدة،" **وفقاً لما أعلنه المذيع التلفزيوني، عمرو أديب،** والذي أظهر مقطع فيديو للسيسي وهو ينهي خطابه في أواخر الشهر الماضي هاتفاً بشعار حملته الانتخابية.

...

ورغم ذلك، وأكثر من إظهاره لحدوث تغيير في موقف الخارج بالنسبة له، ما أظهره هذا الحدث هو **قوة عبادة الشخصية التي يبنيها حلفاء السيسي حوله في الداخل بينما يقوم هو بتعزيز سلطته،** حيث إنه شخصية مفخمة ومحمية أكثر بكثير حتى من حسني مبارك، وهو سلفه الذي خدم في نفس المنصب لفترة طويلة ... **ولكن تصفيق وسائل الإعلام المصرية استمر وبالإجماع، في تهويل لاحتكار السلطة في ظل السيسي، وهو الاحتكار الذي يقول العديد من المحللين أنه لم يحدث في هذا البلد منذ حكم محمد علي باشا، مؤسس الدولة المصرية الحديثة في أوائل القرن التاسع عشر.]** [2]

The al-Ahram report

قال الكاتب ديفيد كيركباتريك إن الرئيس عبد الفتاح السيسي أكد صورته أمام الرأي العام الدولي كرجل دولة يحظى بالاحترام والتقدير في المنطقة من خلال خطابه في الجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة.

وأوضح كيركباتريك في مقال نشرته صحيفة "نيويورك تايمز" الأمريكية، أمس، أن السيسي استطاع "تغيير الطريقة التي يلقي بها الرؤساء الخطب في الأمم المتحدة"، من خلال إنهاء خطابه، وهو يهتف "تحيا مصر".

...

ورأى كيركباتريك أن السيسي استطاعَ أن يمحو صورة كانت في أذهان البعض أن ما حدث في مصر في يونيو 2013 "انقلاب" وليست ثورة.

وذكر أن حكم السيسي أصبح يعتمد على قوة شخصيته وشعبيته الجارفة بشكل غير مسبوق، من خلال الدعم الذي يلقاه في الدولة المصرية ومن قبل حلفائه، وهو الأمر الذي عزز من سلطته وتوج كل ما قام به منذ اندلاع ثورة 30 يونيو.

[**Author David Kirkpatrick** said that President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi affirmed his image in front of international public opinion as a statesman who is respected and honoured in the region through his speech in the UN General Assembly.

Kirkpatrick explained in an article published by the American newspaper, *The New York Times* yesterday that al-Sisi managed to "change the way in which presidents deliver their speeches at the United Nations," by ending his speech, shouting "Long live Egypt."

...

Kirkpatrick saw that al-Sisi was able to erase the image that was present in the minds of some people which suggests that what happened in Egypt in June 2013 was a "coup" not a revolution.

He stated that al-Sisi's rule became dependent on the strength of his personality and unprecedentedly tremendous popularity through the support he receives by the Egyptian state and his allies – a factor that strengthened his authority and crowned everything he has done since the outbreak of the revolution on June 30.]

[2] All back-translations are produced by the researcher unless stated otherwise.

Although the article (the English source text), clearly and undoubtedly expresses negative opinions about al-Sisi, portraying him as an oppressor who enjoys a "monopolization of power … that many analysts say has not occurred in this country since the rule of Mohamed Ali Pasha, the early 19th-century founder of the modern Egyptian state," the translator manipulates the translation and inserts words and sentences that do not actually exist in the ST. An example is the following sentence from the *al-Ahram's* report (back-translated), "Kirkpatrick saw that al-Sisi was able to erase the image that was present in the minds of some people which suggests that what happened in Egypt in June 2013 was a 'coup', not a revolution". Meanwhile, the translation ignores other information that presents the coup leader negatively and is thus against the translator's (or perhaps patron's) best interest.

In the beginning of the article, Kirkpatrick cites some opinions of key Egyptian commentators, such as Amr Adeeb. However, the deliberately distorted translation claims that these opinions belong to Kirkpatrick himself, ignoring any mention of Adeeb or other Egyptian media sources that the author quotes in the ST. Apparently, the entire article by Kirkpatrick aims to criticise the "strength of the cult of personality that Mr. Sisi's allies are building around him at home as he consolidates his power." Paradoxically, though, the *al-Ahram* article claims that the *New York Times* writer states, "Al-Sisi's rule became dependent on the strength of his personality and unprecedentedly tremendous popularity through the support he receives by the Egyptian state and his allies." *Al-Ahram*'s translation undermines the entire original (negative) discourse embedded in the ST, replacing it with a different discourse with a completely different (positive) content, which was invented by the translator and was steered to serve the ideology and agendas of the patron, namely the Egyptian regime led by al-Sisi.

Another example comes from Algeria, a large Arab and North African nation that also witnessed limited, but significant, mass protests following the outbreak of the Arab Spring. During an official visit made to Algeria, the US Secretary of State John Kerry made controversial remarks on April 3, 2014, concerning the forthcoming Algerian presidential election (US Department of State, 2014). The Algerian National News Agency *Algérie Presse Service* translated the remarks into Arabic, and published them on its website in the form of a report (Algérie Presse Service, 3 Apr 2014). Thereafter, the US State Department released a statement in which it accused the Algerian News Agency of manipulating Kerry's remarks.

John Kerry's Remarks

> Lastly, you have an election coming up here in Algeria two weeks from now. **We look forward to elections that are transparent and in line with international standards**, and the United States will work with the president that the people of Algeria choose in order to bring about the future that Algeria and its neighbors deserve. And that is a future where citizens can enjoy the free exercise of their civil, political, and human rights, and

where global companies, businesses, are confident in being able to invest for the long haul.

[أخيراً، ستكون لديكم انتخابات هنا في الجزائر بعد أسبوعين من الآن، **ونحن نتطلع إلى إجراء انتخابات تكون شفافة ومتوافقة مع الأعراف الدولية**. وسوف تعمل الولايات المتحدة مع الرئيس الذي يختاره الشعب الجزائري لكي يبني المستقبل الذي تستحقه الجزائر وجيرانها، مستقبل يتمتع فيه المواطنون بممارسة حقوقهم المدنية والسياسية والإنسانية بكلّ حرية، وحيث تكون الشركات العالمية ورجال الأعمال واثقين من قدرتهم على الاستثمار على المدى الطويل.]

Algérie Presse Service's report

و قال السيد كيري في كلمة ألقاها لدى افتتاح أشغال الدورة الثانية للحوار الاستراتيجي الجزائري الأمريكي "**إننا مرتاحون** لكون الانتخابات الرئاسية المقررة في 17 ابريل **تجري في إطار الشفافية**."

و يرى السيد كيري أن الولايات المتحدة ستعمل مع الرئيس المنتخب على تطوير العلاقات و التعاون بين البلدين.

و أضاف قائلا أن **"الجزائر بلد حريص على تطور شعبه و مجتمعه المدني."**

[Mr. Kerry said in a speech at the opening of the second session of the Algerian American Strategic Dialogue, "**We are satisfied** with the fact that the presidential election scheduled on April 17 **is held in line with the principles of transparency**."

Mr. Kerry sees that the United States will work with the elected president on the development of the relations and cooperation between the two countries.

And added that **"Algeria is a country that is keen on the development of its people and civil society."**]

The Algerian translation of Kerry's remarks gives the impression that Washington has a positive prejudgment of the forthcoming Algerian election, giving it full political endorsement and recognising its transparency in advance. However, the US State Department regarded the translation as inaccurate and released a statement highlighting the distortions, pointing out the differences between the correct translation and the manipulated one. Although *Algérie Presse Service* later also released a statement denying any deliberate distortion (Algérie Presse Service, 5 Apr 2014), pointing out to technical reasons to justify these mistakes and explain the circumstances of the incident, the motive behind this manipulation is abundantly clear and understandable; the Algerian regime was desperate for international recognition in light of the forthcoming election, hence establishing its legitimacy to rule the country. In fact, the manipulation occurred as part of the domestic political conflict over power in Algeria, and this example illustrates how translators, journalists, editors, publishers, at one level, and patrons, such as *Algérie Presse Service* and the Algerian ruling regime, at a higher level, can be active and influential participants in this conflict.

Such examples taken from translations of political texts illustrate the influence of ideological, and socio-political affiliations on the decisions made by translators and patrons to control the translation process and use it to serve specific agendas.

4.4 Conclusion

The relationship between ideology and language in general, and translation, in particular, is substantial, yet complex. It can be manifested through the presence of translators, whether as readers of the source text or as producers of the target text, and patrons, whether productive or repressive. This relationship has governed, and will continue to govern the translation process, giving political and ideological conflicts a new dimension. Accordingly, translation can be viewed as a battlefield in which fighting is carried out by means of expressions and words, and the warriors are translators, reviewers, publishers, and patrons.

In fact, the translation of political discourse communicated in a central region like the Middle East, which constitutes a scene for many ideological, cultural and political conflicts, is expected to be subject to many forms of intervention, whether ideological or political. In all conditions, the media remains a prominent field and sometimes the means of such interventions. The next chapter will examine the role of the media in the translation dilemma.

CHAPTER FIVE

MEDIA AND TRANSLATION

5.1 Introduction

The media played a crucial role during the Arab Spring in circulating and translating the political discourse produced by the Arab leaders and officials or even protestors and civil activists. In fact, neither ideology nor politics can be effective in today's world of rapidly developing technology and information exchange in the absence of mass media outlets. Therefore, there is a need for a close investigation into the role of the media in shaping, influencing, and even manipulating the translation of political discourse. This chapter examines the effect of the media institutions' agendas, goals, and political affiliations on the translation process. It begins by looking into the relationship between the media and politics as well as the different ideological strategies and tools employed in media discourse. It also discusses the impact of decisions made by media outlets on the translation process, considering in detail the stages of news translation as well as the strategies often employed by news channels and newspapers in press translation. Furthermore, this chapter points out a number of tools often exploited by the media to manipulate the outcome of the translation process such as framing, hyperbole, and understatement, ending by investigating newsroom translations in particular. The theories introduced and discussed in this chapter will be used to analyse the data derived mainly from the Syrian revolution in Section 7.5 of Chapter Seven.

5.2 Media and Politics: Media Discourse

The mass media controls people by possessing the tools necessary to effectively mobilise the public for political, social, and economic causes. It is argued to have direct and unlimited access to the population, which no other medium has. The influence of the media on the public is exerted through a "hidden power", which tends to cover any underlying ideological and political conflict of interests (Fairclough, 1989: 49). Fairclough agrees with Karl Marx that the political elites who possess power address the people through mass media using a repeated discourse, which is ultimately ideological and thus serves their own political agenda. This discourse, which is often politically and ideologically steered, is broadcast to the entire population and is repeated on numerous media outlets (ibid: 54).

Paul Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945), Adolf Hitler's Propaganda Minister in Nazi Germany, said, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." If included only in one text, however, the lie, according to Fairclough (1989: 54), will not make any change to public opinion. "The effects of the media power are cumulative, working through the repletion of particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader, and so forth" (ibid). A political party, regime or institution aiming to promote their narrative often does so through creating a cumulative media effect on millions of readers and watchers. It is done through numerous newspaper articles, interviews with political commentators, movies, news reports, and talk shows, typically leading to serving the political and/or ideological agenda of this political organisation or government. This process often goes unnoticed by the audience who, in many cases, will not have the opportunity to discover the real agent that sponsors these activities.

One of the most striking examples of this employment of the mass media cumulative effect after the Arab Spring is the constant attempts to demonise Islamist parties, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. Pro-Sisi Egyptian media outlets have associated the movement with *al-irhāb* ("terror"), frequently accusing them of *at-taxābur ma*ᶜ *Ḥamās* ("collaborating with Hamas") as well as *talaqqī ad-da*ᶜ*m min Amrīkā* ("receiving support from America"). Although the Egyptian authorities have failed to provide evidence on many occasions, the Egyptian media have kept repeating these allegations, giving the anti-Islamist voice a platform to spread Muslim-Brotherhood-phobia amongst the Egyptians.

Fairclough (1989: 185) points out five voices that can be found in mass media outlets: *politicians, political reporters, experts, representative of social movements,* and *ordinary people.* Media outlets often allow these five categories of voices to be heard. However, they tend to give a specific voice a prominent position to serve a specific ideological or political agenda, giving it the upper hand and the last word. Political commentators who are often given the status of "experts" by media outlets, according to al-Taher (2008: 45), "have a great influence on the readership, especially when they, in a given newspaper, agree on directing the people to take a stance based on a certain ideological view." Political institutions, governments, and lobbies often exert pressure on media outlets, subsequently affecting their decisions.

Van Dijk (1998: 187) notes the "influential" and "pervasive" function of today's global media. The media is becoming more important and effective than any other institution in society, whether religious, political, or social. News, movies, talk shows, documentaries, and other genres of information and analysis sources broadcast on the media are often produced and re-produced in accordance with the values and agenda of political institutions in order to serve

certain ideological and political attitudes. In this sense, these sources of information are in fact colonised by political powers that heavily invest in the media to steer public opinion and dominate society (Fairclough, 1995b: 200). However, the relationship between politics and the media in the battle for control can also work the other way around. The media may ignore, and thus weaken, specific political groups, at the same time allowing more space and coverage to praise others (ibid).

The media can also be used to crystalise support for a political leader by shedding light on his or her featured advantages, strengths, and achievements. This process is referred to by Fairclough (2000: 4) as making "media personalities" whose "communicative styles" are given all the attention needed to make them stars in the world of politics. An example of this phenomenon is the unpreceded attention given by the Egyptian media to the then Egyptian Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi before he was elected President with 96.91% of votes in the presidential election which took place between 26 and 28 May 2014. The concept of "media personality" can be compared to the notion of voices proposed by Fairclough (1989).

In the field of journalism, the relationship between politics and the media seems to be essential since the majority of texts, including articles published in newspapers, tackle political issues, often occupying the "first pages of quality newspapers" (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 4). Most editorials and newspapers seem to provide biased evaluations of political situations, adopting political stances that are far from neutral. By doing so, they influence the readers and dominate their judgement on various political events. They, therefore, contribute to the political decision-making process itself. Schäffner and Bassnett assert that in many cases "the publication of a text in a broadsheet, often as the result of investigative journalism, has made a politician resign" (ibid).

According to Schäffner and Bassnett (ibid: 5), editorials resort to a process of recontextualisation of news stories in which the story is evaluated and subjected to a process of transformation. Some details may be deleted, the incidents can be rearranged, and some elements can be omitted or substituted with others that are more consistent with the editorial's agenda. In line with this strategy, which can also be employed in news reports and interviews, some segments of political speeches may be ignored while others are highlighted. Similarly, some quotes are given a new context; i.e., preceded and followed by sentences that may alter the meaning of the original quote. The result may be the destruction of the message embedded in the original text. Blackledge (2005: 121) states that this process of transformation may not be restricted to simple linguistic changes; rather it often entails "filtering of some meaning potentials of a discourse."

Intertextual references to other texts, written by either the same or different writers are a feature of political discourse in general, and political commentary in particular. These "pre-existing texts may belong to a different genre and may have functioned in a different context" (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 6). The outcome is a chain of texts that produces a new meaning since the updated version of the chain is placed within a new context, in a new text, with a different genre every time there is quoting. This cumulative process of textual chaining in media ultimately leads to semantic and syntactic transformation. The changes that occur as a result of this process of recontextualisation depend on "the goals, values, interests and [on] the context into which the discursive practice is being recontextualised" (Blackledge, 2005: 122).

Recontextualisation is more common in the case of reporting on political events taking place in foreign countries where different languages are spoken. In this situation, the political text concerned is probably produced in a different language. Therefore, the text will be subject to a process of translation whereby recontextualisation, and thus transformation, are most likely to occur. Section 5.5 dealing with translated media material will investigate the recontextualisation process as well as the underlying effect of ideology and politics om translation.

5.3 Ideological Strategies in Media Discourse

Media effect is exerted through employing strategies aimed at promoting certain ideologies and nurturing specific political trends. This systematic process of strategy employment is intended to be invisible, as ideological elements are often embedded in the background of the media material. The aim is to allow the audience to read and understand the text in line with the interpretation already set by the media institution (Fairclough, 1989: 85). In order for a given piece of media material to exert the intended effects on the audience, the ideologies embedded in it must be "least visible", so that they attain a high degree of naturalisation. This allows the receiver to be subconsciously influenced, leading the ideologies to be perceived as "common sense" (ibid). For Fairclough, the greater the absence of "ideological content" and political orientations, the more effective the text becomes (ibid: 92); a successful and influential ideology is a disguised one that pretends to be something that it is not (ibid). This mechanism of effectiveness is explained by al-Taher (2008: 47) as an attempt to utilise "the human tendency to be most influenced" by the discourse that addresses "the spontaneity of the subconscious". This is a strategy whereby embedded ideological and political assumptions become unquestionable for a normal receiver.

Hodge and Kress (1993) identify two ideological strategies employed in discourse production and media presentation. They argue that political events represented on the media are first subject to a process of manipulation where "reality" is manipulated in line with a pre-existing agenda (ibid: 157). The so-called political commentators tend to manipulate "the orientation to reality" through political analysis and then evaluate the events in a way that is consistent with the political beliefs of the media outlet or its sponsors and funders (ibid). For Fowler (1991: 1), a piece of media material is not based on mere ideas. Rather, it is composed of beliefs and propositions that are mainly ideological, commonly indicating the political affiliation of the media outlet. Before it is published or broadcast, such a media item is subject to a process of careful *selection* in accordance with a number of ideological and/or political considerations, regardless of its importance as a piece of news. The selection is followed by another process of *transformation* in an aim to present a news item that is a "value-laden" representation of the actual political or social event (ibid: 2).

Al-Taher (2008: 48) highlights what he sees as a "discrepancy" between Hodge and Kress's approach to the manipulation of reality carried out by the media and Fowler's model of selection and transformation. Therefore, he suggests a new approach that can bridge the gap between the two above models, proposing that a news item often goes through three stages before publication or broadcasting. First, the item is *selected* in accordance with a set of standards and principles, most of which are ideological and/or political. Second, the media material is *represented* linguistically and technically in a certain way that serves the agenda of the media institution. Third, political commentators and analysts carry out an *evaluation* of the news, highlighting some details and ignoring others depending on the values of the media outlet. According to this model, a news report is considered a manifestation of the second stage (representation) even though it might carry a degree of subtle evaluation. Political commentary articles, on the other hand, represent the third stage of evaluation in which a news item is explicitly analysed.

Another approach that offers an insight into the strategies employed in the media industry to empower certain ideologies whilst undermining others is Hatim and Mason's (1990) model, which discloses the strategies employed mainly by print media: *monitoring* and *managing*. Shunnaq (1992: 36) explains *monitoring* as an act aimed at providing a description of the event offering any "evidence" available. *Managing* is defined as an act of "steering" undertaken by a media outlet to employ and use a given event in the service of a specific agenda (ibid). When an event is monitored, the media outlet producing the news item imitates a spectator but when the event goes through the managing stage, the media outlet gets involved in the event itself and becomes a participant (ibid: 40).

According to Shunnaq, the use of direct quoting indicates a form of monitoring since the situation is neutrally described. However, using indirect quoting, though, gives some space for transformation of the original message (ibid: 106). Reporting verbs like *claimed, regretted, alleged,* and *confirmed* reflect the personal stance and opinion of the reporter, while using more neutral reporting verbs like *said* or *stated* indicates a higher degree of objectivity (ibid: 107). Fairclough (2003: 49) associates direct quoting with faithful exposition of news since it ensures reproducing the statement as it "was actually said or written." This notion of faithfulness correlates with Hatim and Mason's *monitoring* whereby a media outlet tends to use a more objective language. Nevertheless, attaining complete objectivity and neutrality is rather far-fetched in the sphere of mass media.

Shunnaq (1994: 112) outlines a set of procedures that media outlets employ while managing news items prior to publication or broadcasting. The first procedure involves the choice of the events to be covered. Certain stories that correspond with the media institution's goals are picked up, while those that do not are largely ignored. Secondly, general and vague expressions can be used to describe serious incidents to soften the effect on the receiver. Thirdly, in some cases, the agents of reported actions can be omitted to shed light on the act itself, rather than the doer. Fourthly, quotes, whether direct or indirect, can be framed using reporting verbs carrying negative or positive implications. Common examples are *alleged* and *regretted*. Fifthly, a reporter may decide to interfere in the original statement produced by the source in order to either intensify or alleviate the effect on the receivers (e.g. *a terrorist act*). Lastly, using phrases that carry appropriate connotations accentuate the emotiveness of the story.

These strategies and procedures require suitable tools in order to be implemented effectively in media discourse that tackles political subjects. The following section investigates a number of devices employed in media discourse production and proposed by different discourse analysis scholars.

5.4 Ideological Devices in Media Discourse

The process of transformation that arises by employing the aforementioned strategies cannot be achieved without the use and development of certain devices that are aimed at steering the discourse and dominating the perception of the audience. According to Fowler (1991), four major devices can be utilised to ideologically influence the audience through a news item: *promotion of ideological consensus*, *using terms of abuse and endearment*, *using conversational style*, and *employment of stereotypes*.

Despite acknowledging that the ideological and political *consensus* is unattainable, media outlets resort to generalisation to convey an impression that the entire nation is united and maintains the same stance on a given cause. By doing this, the media tries to gain the support of the vast majority of the population, at the same time demonstrating that most of the people share the same views and beliefs as the media outlet (ibid: 48). The use of the pronouns "we" and "us" reinforces this tendency. The following is an excerpt from a news report published on the *al-Wafd* newspaper website, known for its support for al-Sisi in Egypt. The report cites and covers a statement by Mustafa Hijazi, Political Advisor to President (Farghali, 2013):

> أوضح أن الدولة ستحمي المصريين، الذين خرجوا يوم 30 يونيو، من العنف باسم الدين، مؤكدا أن مصر سوف تنتصر لأن المصريين الآن متحدون أكثر من أي وقت مضى ضد عدو واحد وهو الإرهاب، ولهذا السبب هم يعرفون الأمل والحلم بنفس القدر الذي يعرفون به العدو.
>
> [He explains that the State will protect **the Egyptians** who protested on June 30 from **violence** in the name of religion, stressing that Egypt will win because **the Egyptians are united now more than ever before** against one enemy which is **terrorism**. That is why they recognise hope and dreams as much as they recognise the **enemy**.]

The extract reflects the speaker's and the reporter's desire to assert a form of consensus among the Egyptians against the "enemy", as if the entire population approves the speaker's proposition regarding the nature of the political conflict in Egypt. Such an implication is not exactly accurate, as one may conclude from the course of events in Egypt. Fowler (1991: 117) refers to the use of *terms of abuse and endearment* in media discourse. Media outlets tend to praise certain individuals or groups by using diminutives or honorifics or by highlighting their positive qualities and achievements. They may also resort to insults and criminalisation to distort the image of other individuals or groups. Using the term "enemy" in the above extract to refer to the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters exemplifies this ideological tool.

Conversational style can even be used to enforce familiarity and stress commonalities between the media outlet and its audience, whether readers or watchers. This creates an atmosphere of informality and agreement between both parties (ibid: 57). The closer the media's material style is to people's daily life, the more effective it becomes. In addition, the use of *stereotypes* is a common tool in media discourse production; individuals or groups are cognitively framed and classified into "paradigms", which are in turn placed in "pigeon-holes". Media institutions reinforce them to create a particular image of these groups or individuals within a political and ideological conflict over power (ibid: 17).

In the above extract, the speaker, Mustafa Hijazi, insists on stereotyping the behaviour of the Islamist parties in Egypt, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, who he labels as primary enemies of the Egyptian people. The Muslim Brotherhood is described as the main source of "terrorism" in Egypt and thus all Egyptians must stand and fight against them. In addition, Suleiman (2004: 166) underlines the significance of *place naming* in the context of conflicts.

In the context of the Arab Spring, some political commentators and reporters seem to implicitly express their support for the Arab Spring protests by adopting names such as *Sāḥāt at-Taġyīr* ("Change Squares") (in Yemen), *Sāḥāt at-Taḥrīr* ("Tahrir Squares") (in Egypt), and *Sāḥāt al-Ḥurriya* ("Freedom Squares") (in Syria) for the squares in which the demonstrations were held.

Fowler's ideological tools employed in media discourse seem to overlap with Beard's (2000) procedures that are utilised in political discourse production to legitimise or delegitimise the actions and behaviour of politicians and parties. The main difference lies in the identity of those who produce the relevant discourse; Fowler is more concerned with the analysis of the discourse produced by media outlets, i.e. news articles and reports, whereas Beard examines the discourse produced by politicians and political organisations.

Editorials are the natural platform for political commentary and analysis, including the expression of ideologies, and beliefs or opinions on current events. "Newspaper comments", al-Taher (2008: 54) asserts, "are argued to be one of the forms of pure ideology. They are expected to display maximum ideological attitude." Fowler (1991: 110-5) points out two main characteristics related to the style and content of the articles published in this sort of newspaper: first, the use of *evaluative adjectives and adverbs*; and second, the use of *intertextual elements* such as proverbs and other forms of previously written texts. The following is an extract from an article by Richard Spencer published on the *Telegraph* website on January 6, 2013, comparing Assad's statement to Gaddafi's speeches directed at the crowds:

> Then there were the lapses into **bizarre sentimentality**, as when he announced: "I look at the eyes of Syria's children and I don't see any happiness" – something that would hardly surprise anyone who had watched the news over the last two years.
>
> (Spencer, 2013)

Throughout this extract, and most of the article, intertextual elements originally produced by Assad and Gaddafi can be traced. This is not the only feature pointed out by Fowler that can be found in this commentary article. The writer, in this extract, also seems to use what Fowler calls 'evaluative adjectives', which show here that the author is not impressed with Assad's statement. The adjective "bizarre" is an example of the author's dissatisfaction, contempt and skepticism, given that it is followed by the word "sentimentality".

Fowler's reference to intertextuality as a key characteristic of political commentary articles can be linked to Achugar's (2004: 311) proposition that intertextuality is found in editorials in two forms: *comparison* and *reported speech*. Political commenters often tend to compare

between events, situations, and statements. An example of this compared intertextuality can be found in the following extract taken from the aforementioned article by Spencer:

> There was more than a little of the **Gaddafi about Bashar al-Assad's** appearance on Sunday, and not just the theatre of a personality cult … even the slogans were the same as the slain **Libyan dictator**: **"God, Syria, Bashar, enough".**
>
> (Spencer, 2013)

This extract and the previous one are good examples of articles that use the second form of intertextuality, referred to by Achugar as reported speech. In both extracts, the writer tries to support his argument using previous statements by the likes of Assad and Gaddafi. Other writers can also incorporate the views expressed by various authorised political analysts and politicians to support their analysis. In addition to intertextuality, Achugar (2004: 300) identifies three forms of emotions that authors, especially political commentators, tend to employ in their articles and other forms of political commentary to influence watchers/readers: *(dis)satisfaction* (e.g. expression of admiration, respect, etc.); *(un)happiness* (e.g. expression of excitement, sadness, frustration, etc.); and *(in)security* (e.g. expression of reassurance, fear, anxiety, etc.). However, in order to be effective, these emotions must not be exaggerated or used in the absence of convincing proofs and logical arguments. Otherwise, they fail to exert the desired effect on the audience.

The objective behind the aforementioned ideological tools can be summarised as the implementation of the media outlet's strategies aimed at positively presenting the in-group and distorting the image, beliefs, and values of the out-group. This process has to be undertaken without being noticed, so that it can exert the desired impact on the audience. It is worth mentioning here that the notion of neutrality seems to be an illusion. In fact, the big questions that need to be addressed are: To what extent is a media institution being subjective and biased? To what extent are news items managed in accordance to the media outlet's criteria? And to what degree are the above ideological tools employed in the discourse produced and circulated by a given media outlet?

5.5 Media and Translation

Before investigating the relationship between the media and translation, it is very important to note that the work of a translator is often a hidden task in media reporting, even though politicians' statements are constantly reported directly and indirectly in translation by the media. The word 'translation' is often avoided in the media industry and there are many examples of translators referred to as journalists (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 9). Despite its

immeasurable importance and the constant need for it, the craft of translation remains invisible and translator training in the news and reporting sector in the media is still absent.

The translation process is largely unnoticed and remains absent in an area where the primary concern is to deliver news to the audience even though it involves procedures that may affect the content and style of a news item. For instance, in order for an interview to reach the target audience, it has to undergo a long and complicated chain of textual transformations between two or more languages. These transformations are derived from a set of processes, which include initial editing, summarisation, translation into the target language, further editing, transferring into a media outlet, adaptation to the publisher's textual style, and shortening to fit in the space allocated for it by the publisher (ibid).

Schäffner and Bassnett (2010: 7) refer to "recontextualisation across linguistic boundaries" as part of the expected transformation process that a news item undergoes during translation. Typically, the reader does not have access to the full interview transcript; they can only read a few quotes and extracts carefully selected by the media outlet. Because the reader does not have the privilege to read an interview in full, it is not possible to estimate the amount of information excluded by the publisher. It is not possible even to check if the sequence of the original interview has been changed or even manipulated to produce a different meaning other than the original (ibid). In fact, the decisions made in these cases determine the outcome of all the processes including the translation process.

Schäffner and Bassnett (ibid: 8) affirm that all forms of transformation that are associated with recontextualisation during the translation process are in fact consistent with the aims, principles, agenda, and interests of the media outlet broadcasting or publishing a news report, which may be, in turn, based on the ideology and political affiliation of this particular institution. These factors are manifested in the preferences demonstrated when "specific information" is privileged "at the expense of other information" (ibid). It is further witnessed when certain news is suppressed and prevented from being published or broadcast.

Statements made at press conferences, political speeches (such as the ones made by the Arab autocrats during the Arab Spring), and interviews with the local and international media are often converted by media outlets into news reports that only include a few extracts from the actual text. In all these cases, the original political discourse is expressed in a language different from the one in which it was primarily produced. That being said, it is rarely pointed out that a significant part of the report (whether direct or indirect quotations) has been translated or interpreted. These excerpts are therefore subject to a complex process of textual transactions (ibid: 7).

When political interviews are conducted, they are typically interpreted and recorded. Thereafter, the recorded interpretation is converted into a transcript that is to be edited and corrected to match specific stylistic criteria (ibid). If the interview is not interpreted, the interviewee may have license to review the transcript and authorise it. This, however, becomes more complicated if the transcript is made in a different language to the interview since the interviewee may not understand or speak the target language. In this situation, "advisors or the interpreters themselves often fulfil this checking function" (ibid). This means that a news report may include extracts from a transcript that has not been checked or authorised by the interviewee, but rather by interpreters and journalists who often work for the same media outlet that publishes or broadcasts the interview.

Fairclough (2006: 98) maintains that the form and meaning of stories are transformed in accordance with "the genre conventions of news narratives." Furthermore, if no translation is conducted, the audience who is already familiar with the general subject being reported on can presuppose some information that the reporter may choose to omit since it can be easily inferred (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 8). However, if a translation is made, the target audience may not necessarily share the background knowledge and culture of the interviewee and may thus misunderstand the news or statement if some details have been suppressed or ignored by the reporter.

Schäffner and Bassnett (ibid) ask a number of questions regarding the circumstances surrounding the translation/interpretation of a piece of media material that needs to be addressed in order to determine the degree of transformation accompanying the information rendering process: What is the language of the actual text? Was an interpretation /translation conducted? Who carried out the interpretation/translation? Who provided the interpreter(s)/translator(s)? How many interpreters/translators were involved in the process? If it is an interpretation, who prepared the transcript, converting the interview into a text? And who translated it into the target language? What transformations developed as a result of these procedures? Who took the decision to publish and who selected the information to be included in the report? Who granted the approval for the final version of the report before it was sent for printing? Were all of these aforementioned procedures undertaken by journalists, or professional translators/interpreters?

Bani (2006: 37) points out an important principle featuring print media translation, namely "the imperative of quickness". According to her, this refers to two notions that the translator has to bear in mind when conducting media translation: firstly, *speed in translation*, which means that the translator has a limited time to conduct and finish the translation – normally a matter of a few hours for daily newspapers; and secondly, *speed in translation exploitation*,

which means that a translated news item is typically read quickly by the reader, given the fact that it is, by nature, a light text featuring instant information and "should offer immediate comprehension" (ibid).

The factors explained above prompt Schäffner and Bassnett (2010: 9) to wonder if the characteristics of the craft of translation indeed apply to press translation "since what happens does not fit established models of interlingual translation activity and comes closer to what happens in interpreting, where the goal of the transaction is more important than any sense of equivalence." In any case, the issues introduced in this section of the study shed light on the possible transformations that normally occur in media translation, affecting the content, style and genre of a news item published by a media outlet. They pave the way for a further investigation to be carried out on this topic in the following sections.

5.6 Stages of News Translation

Understanding the stages which the translation process undergoes allows us to understand the impact of the different agents involved in the translation process on the translation itself. For Vuorinen (1995), each of the translation process stages, starting with the choice of material to be translated and ending with the feedback provided by the readers of the target text, represent a gatekeeper that influences both the content and style of the text. Moreover, each of these stages involves decisions made by certain agents affecting the outcome of the translation process. Bani (2006) has conducted an interesting study on the various stages that a translated news item, especially articles published by the Italian newspaper *Internazionale*, passes through. It starts with "the selection of sources to be analysed," which often represents "favoured sources" for "the Italian editorial board from the ideological and political point of view" (ibid: 38). Although the study is focused on the working environment and criteria established by *Internazionale*, its results and conclusions can represent a pattern and thus offer an insight into media translation in general.

The first stage of the translation process is governed by the fact that the editorial board of a given newspaper is normally familiar with a limited set of languages (ibid). These languages are often international languages, such as English and French, or languages taking on an added importance for being spoken in neighboring countries, such as Turkish in the case of Syrian newspapers for instance. Subsequently, newspapers published in other than these particular languages do not represent possible sources; newspapers do not typically review the articles published in all the global newspapers, as many readers may think (ibid).

Typically, the editorial board that are responsible for selecting the articles for translation examine the leading global newspapers published in the range of languages known by the editors. They also search among a number of newspapers belonging to the "the most important countries," (ibid) as well as those published in countries that have a special importance from a cultural, political or economic perspective. The editorial board is also keen on shedding light on original subjects and attitudes that can attract a reader's attention (Venuti, 1998). Although Bani (2006) points out interesting criteria for topic selection in media translation, she seems to neglect the ideological and political motives that account for the preference of specific topics over others, especially at times of conflict. For instance, in the first days of the Syrian revolution, pro-Syrian regime media outlets tended to deliberately avoid presenting articles published in key international newspapers offering political commentary on the mass protests, preferring other subjects such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The next stage of media translation, according to Carbonell (1996), is associated with the selection of the actual text to be translated. The factors governing this selection may vary, but Bani (2006: 39-40) identifies four main factors.

First, most newspapers seem keen on selecting articles by famous authors and/or initially published by prominent newspapers that have a *high reputation* worldwide. Bani (ibid: 39) asserts that "the source contributes to guarantee translations prestige." For Ayala (1985), the status of the author is essential for attracting the global media attention to their articles. The authors can also be among those sailing against the wind and arguing against a dominant ideology. Nevertheless, newspapers seldom show interest in translating and re-publishing items that adopt a rival ideology or political stance unless they imply a sort of self-criticism. This eventually contributes to the justification and support of the newspaper's own ideology.

The second factor governing this process of selection is *stylistic convenience*. In other words, the article should fulfil, and adhere to, the stylistic requirements and guidelines set by the newspaper itself. This is a requirement to ensure stylistic consistency with other items published in the newspaper. However, Bani (2006: 40) asserts that, in many cases, "the information function prevails over the formal aspect: it does not matter whether an article is badly written or if its style hardly fits" with the newspaper's; "what does matter is its subject," simply because the style will be "manipulated" in line with the style desired by the editors (ibid). This reflects an aspect of manipulation undertaken in news translation, which affects not only the content, but also the style of the translated material.

The aforementioned argument by Bani leads to the third factor that influences article selection in news translation: *subject matter*. Some items are selected because they address specific issues, which the rest of media outlets overlook for different ideological and political reasons

(ibid). However, this tendency towards presenting articles that address subjects neglected by other newspapers is, more often than not, ultimately driven by ideological and political considerations.

The fourth factor is associated with the world's perception pertaining to the country that the newspaper belongs to. Newspapers are especially keen on presenting articles that reflect the world's opinion on the local affairs of the home country (ibid). In an era of armed conflict and political instability, many Middle-Eastern newspapers aim to translate and publish articles that discuss issues such as the Arab Spring, the Yemeni conflict, the war against Islamic State, and the armed revolution in Syria. This is due to the belief shared by most Arab readers as well as media outlets that the political decisions regarding the conflicts occurring in the region are actually made abroad in the West. Of course, when this is the case, translation acquires an added importance.

After the selection process is completed, the translation process begins; the chosen material is sent to a translator, who may work either as a freelancer or full-time employee, in order to produce a target text. Bani (2006: 40-1) identifies two main characteristics of the translator's role in news translation: *invisibility* and *loyalty*.

The invisibility of the translator is manifested by both the little importance attached to the translator's name (in comparison with the focus given to the author's) and the efforts made by the translator to make the target text similar to a text originally produced in the target language. This usually allows the reader peace of mind, creating the illusion that the target text is identical to the source text (Venuti, 1995). They are thus unlikely to question the outcome of the translation process, not feeling the need to go back to the source text and try and detect any possible inaccuracies or manipulation. On the other hand, the loyalty of the translator, being the expert responsible for leading the translation process, is imperative, as in many cases editors are obliged to trust the translator's choices due to their lack of relevant cultural and linguistic skills (Nord, 1997).

After the translation is finished, the editors receive the first draft, which is then reviewed and checked by more than one person: an *editor* who reviews the quality of the translation and the translator's decisions by comparing the target text to the source text; a *proofreader* whose sole responsibility is to check the target text alone; a *copy editor* who decides where the new text will be placed amongst other items published in the newspaper; and finally the *director* who manages the entire process (Bani, 2006: 41). Out of the four, only one editor accesses the source text. This shows that the perception of the target reader is a priority over other values such as sincerity, truthfulness of translation, and the translator's faithfulness (ibid).

The successive processes conducted by translators and editors often result in various forms of manipulation, such as adjusting and modifying the target text in line with the target reader's expectations and requirements; fully reorganising the text both conceptually and structurally; breaking up some paragraphs and merging others; changing the syntactic features of the text to adhere to the editors' stylistic criteria; and adding explanations where needed (Vidal Claramonte, 1996). Playing with the headings and changing them in order to "guide" the "reader's comprehension and interpretation" is another manifestation of the manipulation carried out throughout the translation process (Bani, 2006: 41).

Bani (ibid) concludes the examination of news translation by shedding light on the reader's reaction to the translated text. This is considered the final stage of the news translation process. Typically, readers' reactions vary; some write to the newspapers to point out mistakes and inaccuracies, and others object to the newspaper's partiality in selecting the items translated and published in the newspaper. Readers are often unable to understand that the selection process by nature is inherently biased, and the role of ideology and influence of politics often account for a newspaper's practice (ibid).

5.7 News Translation Strategies

The previous section introduced the various processing stages that a news item undergoes before it reaches the reader: from locating a piece of media material written on an event in a foreign newspaper, news agency, or media outlet, to creating the news item in the target language and sending it to be printed. These sequential processes comprise both translation and editing, or what Hursti (2011) refers to as "transediting". This process is aimed at transforming the source text both linguistically and structurally to match the expectations of the target reader and the norms of the target language. The underlying goal is consistency with the agenda and goals of the media outlet. This transformation is carried out through certain strategies such as re-organisation, deletion, addition, and substitution (ibid). These "gatekeeping" procedures, in fact, rely on the extent to which the editorial team is familiar with the news reported, including its context and historical background, as well as the identity of the editor assigned to each phase of the *transediting* process (Gambier, 2006: 13). According to Hajmohammadi (2005), the gatekeeping decisions are mainly imposed and influenced by the media institution in line with certain goals and ideologies as well as the standard requirements of speed, news style, and readability. Gambier (2006: 13) asserts that the final news product is aimed at pleasing the target reader as well as the media outlet.

Gambier (ibid: 14) then identifies four main strategies often employed to transform news items in line with the media outlet's guidelines and criteria: *reorganisation*, *deletion*, *addition*, and *substitution*. In many cases, editors tend to *re-organise* and restructure the original news item by redistributing the information among the paragraphs and rearranging the order of the story details. This may entail "permutation of individual lexical items, but also extensive revamps of information at a higher textual level" (ibid). This re-organising procedure becomes necessary due to disparities between languages and varied linguistic norms and cultural conventions. It must comply with the expectations of the target reader and goals of the news organisation that publishes the target text.

Translators and editors can *omit* some of the information embedded in the source text. The deleted content may involve words, sentences, and even paragraphs. The amount of lexical omission is totally dependent "on the number of facts, the degree of accuracy," and "the redundancy of the source text" (ibid). *Addition* may occur in this complex process of transformation of content and style. This is often required when clarification is needed to provide more background explanations regarding the issue under investigation. *Substitution* can be used to generalise some details, alter the focus, provide summaries, or depersonalise certain figures (ibid).

In some instances, the aforementioned strategies do not succeed in rendering a certain lexical item into the target language. According to Gambier (ibid), *lexical borrowing* therefore becomes necessary. Many theorists have pointed out the same strategies with different labels, while others identified other strategies and procedures employed in news translation, such as *controlling*, *transforming*, and *supplementing* (Akio, 1988). However, neither the number of strategies, nor the naming of said strategies, are important to Gambier (2006: 14). Rather, the realisation that news translation cannot be viewed as an honest and transparent medium of news reporting is the key. An analyst of news and discourse has to bear in mind the textual changes that arise from the recontextualisation and transformation processes and the implantation of the above strategies. Translators and editors working for news institutions ultimately determine these processes.

In an article published on *Correspondents.org* online editorial, Mohammad Kheir, an Egyptian journalist, sheds light on an event "seen by the entire world during President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi's visit to the United Nations this past September" that proves that news reports can still be distorted and fabricated (Kheir, 2014). In October 2014, Kheir affirms that *The New York Times* accused *al-Ahram*, a pro-regime Egyptian newspaper known for its support for President Sisi, of carrying out a manipulated translation of an article originally written by David Kirkpatrick, which was published on October 7, 2014 under the title "As Egyptians

Grasp for Stability, Sisi Fortifies His Presidency" (see Section 4.3.4). In the original article, the writer mentions that Gen. al-Sisi's speech was received with silence in the UN General Assembly meeting, yet the Egyptian media celebrated the event. Nonetheless, in its report, Kheir adds that *al-Ahram* manipulated the translation of the article, alleging that the audience in the meeting actually praised the speech. The *al-Ahram* report tried to demonstrate that *The New York Times* also praised Prisdent al-Sisi. The writer employed many strategies that were noted by Gambier (2006), namely deletion, addition, and substitution in line with *al-Ahram*'s political affiliation.

Bani (2006: 42-3) makes a clear distinction between two kinds of strategies employed in media translation: *textual strategies*, concerning the operations tackling the text itself; and *extra-textual strategies*, aimed at restoring the "visibility of cultural diversity" featuring the source text.

According to Bani (ibid: 42), four types of textual translation strategies can be employed when dealing with cultural elements in news translation: *cutting* or *summary*, *inclusion of explanations*, *generalisation*, and *substitution*. *Cutting* or *summary* is where a cultural element is omitted if its presence is regarded as too insignificant to be worth including in the target text. *Inclusion of explanations* means the providing of further explanations (through paraphrasing and backgrounding) on a given cultural reference that already exists in the source text. This is employed to make the text comprehensible for the target reader. *Generalisation* is where a certain cultural reference "is made more generic" and *substitution* is utilised in case a given cultural element seems obscure to the target reader and is thus substituted by "another functionally equivalent element, but better known" to the target reader.

Bani's (2006) model of textual strategies can be compared to Gambier's (2006) strategies employed in media to transform a news item in line with certain requirements. Both *cutting (summary)* and *deletion* refer to the omission of some information that is already existent in the source text. Moreover, both *inclusion of explanation* and the strategy of *addition* imply the providing of further explanations on certain obscure concepts; extra information is added to make the source content intelligible to the target reader. Finally, the strategy of *substitution* is in fact pointed out by both Bani and Gambier alike as a necessary procedure according to which an item in the source text is replaced by a culturally equivalent item in the target text.

In addition to the textual strategies used to facilitate the comprehension process for the target reader, Bani (ibid: 43) identifies seven *extra-textual strategies* aimed at providing clarifications on the source text. These clarifications go beyond the actual text, assisting the reader to comprehend the information embedded in the text by contextualising the source content, making it more understandable for the target reader. Through *subheading*, an editor

can refer to certain concepts that would stay undiscovered if not stated in a prime position. *Pictures* can be used to clarify some ideas that become difficult for a target reader to understand if translated into a foreign language, as visual "communication makes textual comprehension easier without requiring effort from the reader" (ibid). *Maps* help a target reader visualise the text thereafter and thus place it in its appropriate geographical context. *Chronologies* contextualise a news material in a certain timeline, and *glossaries* refer to listing and explaining the words posing difficulties for the target reader's comprehension, providing the reader with "a graphically clear reference where to find unknown words" (ibid). *A subject-related bibliography* provides information on the source cited in the article, often referring to other books and articles for further reading on the topic discussed to help the reader reach out to other sources that investigate the same subject. Lastly, *information about the author,* in the form of a short biography, helps the reader to relate the source text to a convenient context. It also reminds the target reader that the text is actually rendered from a foreign language.

5.8 Translation Strategies for Ideological Conflict

Alongside the aforementioned strategies, Loupaki (2010) adopts a model based on three strategies and procedures that translators often employ when working on the translation of texts that contain ideological elements related to conflict. The first is reproducing ideological conflict in the target text, the second is erasing ideological conflict in the target text, and the third is introducing new conflicts in the target text. These strategies are aimed at increasing, toning down, or eliminating ideological content and elements related to conflict in the target text.

Reproducing ideological conflict in the target text can be achieved by a literal importation of original lexical choices from the source text. Rendering ideological micro-textual units into the target language can ensure the preservation of a certain approach to ideological conflict and particular pattern established by the original author (ibid: 64). Furthermore, preserving original frames established by the author of the source text contributes to the reproduction of ideological conflict embedded in the source text. Such frames, in fact, reflect "internalized structures of expectation" within a given community or ideological group and are employed textually by using a number of *framing devices* (ibid: 65), such as *interpretative naming*, *evaluative language*, and *modals*. *Interpretative naming* refers to utterances used to depict a person, group or situation (Tannen and Wallat, 1993: 31). *Evaluative language*, such as adjectives and adverbs, reflects the author's ideology and beliefs, while *modals* indicate the author's personal judgement about individuals, concepts, and situations (ibid: 45). By re-

employing these techniques, a translator can ensure the preservation of ideological conflict in the target text.

The second strategy proposed by Loupaki (2010: 66) aims to remove micro-elements that refer to ideological conflict from the target text. This technique can be implemented by resorting to neutralisation and omission. Some strong and tense ideological terms can be neutralised by using more general and neutral words. Omission is considered by Loupaki (ibid: 67) to be a "very frequent" norm in news translation that is a wise choice when the source text item is either regarded as already known to the target reader, or classified as less important to the interests of the target reader. The translator may also deliberately follow this strategy along with its two aforementioned tools in order to avoid giving the target reader an undesired ideological shock, which may contribute to increasing the intensity of ideological conflict. Apparently, such a decision is ultimately made by the translator and/or their employer to serve their interests.

The third strategy aims to present new aspects of ideological conflict in the target text. This can be achieved, according to Loupaki (ibid: 68), through either addition or omission of ideological elements. Addition is meant to attract the reader's attention to a certain opinion, and the added text is thus often given a prominent position. For example, the first lines of an article constitute the lead in the text since people tend to take for granted any opinions presented in an authoritative manner. This procedure of addition may involve names and adjectives bearing negative or positive implications as well as the actual stating of the subject, i.e. the agent responsible for the action in the sentence (ibid: 70-71).

However, addition can be implemented to meet readers' expectations and for the article to be consistent with readers' beliefs and opinions on a certain ideological conflict. In any case, choosing to add or delete specific information reflects "a clear one-sided position on behalf on the translator" (ibid: 68). Moreover, by introducing ideological conflict, the translator can resort to explicitation of what is made implicit in the source text (ibid: 70). This choice illustrates the translator's awareness of the readers' tendency towards "perceiving the world in terms of contrasts" (Sidiropoulou, 2004: 33).

Alongside addition, omission of ideological textual units that do not adhere to, and serve, specific trends and beliefs held by the original author seems to be a norm frequently used by translators (Tannen and Wallat, 1993: 32). This device can operate in the target text at the macro level, establishing a new pattern of argumentation throughout the text; one opinion is promoted and the other is entirely eliminated. This necessarily results in undermining the objectivity of the article.

5.9 Tools of Manipulation: Hyperbole, Understatement and Framing

Having examined various strategies employed in press translation in the previous sections, this section aims to discuss three tools often utilised by media outlets to manipulate news and translated media items: *hyperbole*, *understatement*, and *framing*.

Gambier (2006: 10) defines *hyperbole* as "a rhetorical device used to highlight, intensify, and amplify selected elements of the image of reality," often aimed at persuading the audience in a communicative environment. This tool is typically related to literary works, but can be employed as a linguistic device in non-literary texts, such as pieces of news, articles, interviews, and political speeches seeking to promote a political agenda and achieve specific political goals (ibid). According to the *Literary Devices* website, *understatement* is defined as "a figure of speech employed by writers or speakers to intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is" (Literary Devices, 2015). In fact, the two tools are not equally present in all sorts of cultural, political and linguistic texts. However, whether dependent on information overtly or covertly stated, both devices significantly contribute to determining the reader's perception of the text.

In order to exert the desired effect on the receiver, neither device should be accompanied by successive exaggeration without providing logical evidence for the claims made. Otherwise, they would be considered as political propaganda (Gambier, 2006: 10). In many cases, politicians using tools such as hyperbole and understatement tend to succeed in persuading the public of the truthfulness of the claims embedded in their political discourse circulated by the media. However, they seem to fail in achieving the same outcome with a foreign audience speaking a different language. Gambier (ibid: 11) wonders if such failure is because the discourse employing such devices is not used "with the same frequency" and, in many cases, is literally translated into the target language. Therefore, these elements are regarded as false exaggerations and allegations that lack credibility. This is especially the case, given the fact that a target audience speaking a different language belongs to a remote culture, and therefore they more likely to take hyperbolic statements literally.

In addition to the aforementioned tools, *framing* is employed in news production and translated news as a tool of manipulation to provide "frames of reference, or highly stereotyped representations of specific situations, to make the event accessible to the public" (ibid). These frames influence the way the recipients interpret the discourse and stories circulated by the media. According to Schank and Abelson (1997), these frames may take the shape of stereotypical scenarios and routines, reinforcing certain beliefs. They are consistent with certain expectations in a particular political context and are designed by media outlets to

determine the audience's perception of events, allowing the audience to label and determine the nature of realities.

By framing media discourse, reporters, alongside editors, produce a specific context for a given event or statement, according to which readers perceive and interpret the event, determining the meaning of a given statement. Through the employment of this device, media outlets aim to "shape the inferences made, reinforce stereotypes, determine judgments and decisions," and "draw attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements" (Gambier, 2006: 11). For Baker (2006), this process of selection forces the audience to interact with the text in line with their comprehension of the news item as originally delineated by its producers.

Stories produced and circulated by the media are often biased and subjective, framed to enhance and impose a certain narrative and interpretation of an event. The text is manipulated both semantically and stylistically to steer the audience's perception and emotions. The study of the influence of translated frames becomes more significant in this age of globalisation, Gambier (2006: 12) affirms; news materials circulated by multi-media outlets, news websites, and social media networks are normally translated, reframed, and put in new contexts, thus acquiring new meanings. This process of reframing translated news often leads to a reconstructed reality that has already gone through a former process of recontextualisation when first reported in the source languages.

In this process of *double transformation*, translators and editors are the main players responsible for the reproduction and adaptation of the frames (ibid). *BBC* news reports, for instance, by nature involve framing. Arabs in an Arab country watch them, and the Arab audience's frames are unlikely to match the original frames embedded in the English material. This is due to many factors that are mainly associated with culture and familiarity with the topic of the report. This situation is equally applicable if an Arabic-speaking TV channel is watched in the UK.

This gap between frames becomes wider when translation is involved. Valdeón (2005a) cites examples of media institutions that launched channels in foreign languages, but failed to attract a large enough audience or produce sufficiently high-quality media material and so had to close down. Foreign media channels seem to present translated news items that are ambivalent and intertextually incoherent towards sensitive and debatable topics. The problem is that translated media items seem to express so much loyalty to the source culture that they often adopt its narrative, thus creating obscurity and misunderstanding. Gambier (2006: 12) argues against the role of the translator as a mediator and translation being a transparent medium of information transfer: "The translated texts signal an ethnocentric position" (ibid).

Valdeón (2005b) notes another problem caused by the gap between frames: generally speaking, what was considered true and suitable at some point in the past may not be regarded likewise in the present or the future. Subsequently, closer to the main concern of this study, the frames produced before the Arab Spring, for instance, are no longer effective after 2011. Due to its importance to the subject of this dissertation, the notion of *framing* will be examined in further detail in Chapter Six.

5.10 Newsroom Translation and Interpreting

The relationship between the media and translation takes on an added importance in the broadcast newsroom where a translator is required to work under pressure and within tight spatial and temporal constraints. This becomes even more challenging when interpreting is involved. Gile (1995: 178-83) investigates the consecutive interpreting process, identifying two main tasks undertaken by a consecutive interpreter working for broadcast news media. First is the listening and analysis task, which also involves reading when the interpreter is provided with a transcript of the speech being interpreted. Second is the note-taking task, in which information received is processed, re-structured and re-expressed in the target language. The role of memory, which becomes almost minor in the case of simultaneous interpreting, is essential in the consecutive interpreting process.

Tsai (2006: 60) attempts to implement Gile' model on broadcast news translation in which the listening and analysis task transforms to a reading effort. A broadcast news translator at times has to deal with numerous large source texts that need to be reduced by third or even less; they rely on their own judgement to summarise the news material. They therefore often "flip through a range of copies, making almost instantaneous decisions as to what is relevant to the construction of the story and taking the liberty to drastically rule out anything repetitious and less relevant" (ibid). In the case of audio material, the translator, not having access to a transcript, is obliged to listen carefully to the story, analyse it, and come up with a sufficient and meaningful summary. According to Tsai (ibid), the second task pointed out by Gile, namely note-taking, is transformed into a re-writing effort; many procedures and strategies are employed to produce translations of news items originally written in a foreign language. Such procedures involve, but are not restricted to, the following: omission, addition, synthesis, generalisation, and reorganisation.

According to van Dijk (1988: 14-15), *concision* represents a main quality of broadcast newswriting; news channels often resort to summarising broadcast stories before they are translated into the target languages. Unlike newspapers, which tend to publish full and detailed

stories, news channels use shortened and concise versions of the news. Brooks and Pinson (2005: 358) mark *condensation* as another characteristic of broadcast news; news item are often condensed since a TV or radio news broadcast is typically allowed a limited time to deliver a full day's news stories (Cohler, 1990: 7). This, in fact, opens the door for news channels to use manipulative strategies, highlighting certain events of a story at the expense of other important details that may be hidden or dumbed down. This environment of rapid reporting and brief newswriting can pose a challenge for translators who find it difficult to ignore details, and as a result produce long, constantly refined translations (Tsai, 2006: 61).

News broadcast translators and newsroom interpreters often deal with texts, speeches and news broadcasts that do not use "beautifying language" (Padilla and Martine, 1992: 201). The material is often rich in dialogue and has a conversational style similar to that used by ordinary people speaking everyday language (Gunter, 1987: 170). Therefore, Brooks *et al.* (2002: 411) find it necessary for translators to produce a target text that can be fluently spoken as part of an ordinary conversation. At the same time, it should be accurate and informative to fulfil the purpose of a news item. Since the target audience do not have access to the original news material and often have a limited knowledge of the source language, a broadcast news translator typically structures the story effectively, prioritising the values of clarity and accuracy in order to produce a precise target text that contains all the important details of the story. The least amount of speech should be used, bearing in mind that "the ultimate goal is to write to speak to people, not read to them" (Tsai, 2006: 61).

Tsai (ibid: 62) stresses the factor of time, which seems to place constant pressure on translators working in a newsroom. Tsai argues that a news translator needs to undertake and record the translation of a given item within less than two hours. This process involves three main tasks: the translation production, voice-over recording, and film editing, all of which are required to be carried out within half an hour. This means that the translation process must be completed in 10 minutes (ibid).

Seleskovitch (1994) stresses the importance of producing a meaningful target text regardless of the words used to express the meaning. This is because the news audience normally listen to words simply to capture the message behind the statement (Seleskovitch and Lederer, 1995: 2-3). Analysis, therefore, constitutes the core of the understanding process. Only through analysis are messages successfully delivered and the meaning understood. Seleskovitch and Lederer (2003: 22) identify three stages for the interpreting process. First, *understanding the linguistic units*, i.e. words carrying the meaning, can be achieved through critical analysis and interpretation. Second, *deverbalisation* is where words are deliberately discarded and the interpreter becomes mentally aware of the message behind the statement. Third, the target

language utterances and structures are used to express the message embedded in the source text meaningfully. In the case of news broadcast translation, the stage of deverbalisation becomes more crucial in determining the outcome of the translation process since the source text is subject to a significant process of transformation and summarisation. In this process, the original wording is entirely discarded and the structures are reshaped before the news item is broadcast in the target language.

5.11 Conclusion

The media plays an important role in presenting political discourse as well as shaping public opinion on current political issues. Many examples derived from today's mass media demonstrate that political affiliations and ideological views influence the strategies adopted by media outlets. More often than not, one needs to understand the underlying discourse and editorial policy to account for the decisions made by media institutions and news agencies.

Since news items can cover various parts of the world and are therefore produced in different languages, translation becomes a crucial element in the media process. Newspapers, media channels, and news agencies all need translators and interpreters in order to address different audiences that speak different languages, and to make news stories originally produced in foreign languages understood by particular audiences. Translators working for media institutions, however, cannot be isolated from a range of social, ideological, and political factors. These factors govern translation choices and decisions made by news translators or their employers, and thus control the final product of the translation process. This chapter alongside the previous ones can be summarised as follows: Translation, politics, ideology, and media are interlinked and affect one another. The effectiveness of each is dependent on the others, and each element influences, and is also governed by, the others.

The following chapter introduces an approach that is closely correlated to the subject of this research study: a narrative approach to the relationship between conflict and translation, examining the role of different – sometimes irreconcilable – translated narratives, effectively (re)shaping the image of conflict.

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSLATION AND NARRATION OF CONFLICT

6.1 Introduction

The last two chapters investigated the translation of political discourse while reflecting upon other factors that are interlinked with the translation of politics. Alongside ideology and media, conflict constitutes the third side of this triangle of political discourse-related concepts. Whatever roles people occupy in life and whatever activities they participate in, they remain part of a conflictive environment. They contribute to shaping this environment while it influences them accordingly. Today's conflicts not only influence the geographical area in which the conflict occurs, they also transcend political and social boarders, exerting an instant impact on a larger regional or even global population. Therefore, translation, whose main function is to facilitate communication across linguistic boundaries, becomes substantially sought after by opponents and disputing parties to legitimise and promote their descriptions of the conflict while undermining the rival parties' narratives.

Competing popular narratives produced by revolutionaries and pro-regime elites during the Arab Spring revolutions and subsequent military conflicts represent a typical example of discursive dispute at all political, ideological, and social levels. Translation is an integral part of conflict, playing a vital role in describing, shaping, and unfolding its events. This chapter looks into narrative theory and the way translation operates in this environment of conflicting narratives. It aims to introduce narrative theory, list types of narrativity, and explain its features and the way narrative works. It also explores the concept of framing, examining the different modes of narrative framing in translation. The theories introduced and discussed in this chapter will be used to analyse the data derived from the Syrian revolution in Section 7.6 of Chapter Seven.

6.2 A Narrative Approach

Offering a deep insight into narrative theory first requires providing a clear and comprehensive definition of the concept of narrative. Labov (1972: 359-60) provides a basic definition of 'narrative' as a way to summarise personal experience by using linguistic and verbal utterances, i.e. words and sentences, to describe events that indeed took place. Fisher (1987:

193) suggests that through narration, all forms of communication are interpreted, assessed, and judged. Unlike discourse production which expresses a "deliberate" decision made by the producer, narration, for Fisher (ibid), is an act that reflects the background knowledge and experience of the narrator. Somers (1992: 600) emphasises the significance of narrativity in assessing the surrounding environment, comprehending concepts and events, and dealing with society, as well as constructing personal "social identities".

According to Baker (2006: 19), narratives can be the stories that people narrate to themselves, as well as to others. They may touch people's personal lives or tackle public issues, ultimately governing people's actions and influencing their beliefs. Although a micro- and macro-textual analysis of translated narratives is to be carried out in this research study, the emphasis will not be on textual or structural aspects of narrative. Instead, it will be, as Bennet and Edelman (1985: 159) suggest, on the ability of narratives to influence human behaviour, way of thinking, morals, values, principles, and the way people perceive themselves and the surrounding world (see Section 7.5). Thus, the significance of narratives does not lie in the way they are structured but rather the way they function as tools for changing attitudes and constructing reality (Bruner, 1991: 5-6).

Narratives refer to stories that are produced and circulated, often by ordinary people on a daily basis, and thus develop dynamically and change subtly or radically when narrators encounter new experiences and hear fresh stories (Baker, 2006: 3). Baker draws a comparison between the three concepts of narrative, discourse, and myth. She asserts that concreteness and accessibility are two main characteristics of narrative along with its tendency to feature personal stories produced by normal individuals. In this sense, narrative is not limited to stories serving public interests and causes (ibid). Conversely, the idea of discourse seems much more abstract, while the concept of myth constitutes "an element in a second-order semiological system," and both tend to tackle political, social, and cultural issues that interest the public as a whole, rather than individuals (ibid). Whitebrook (2001: 15) affirms that narratives allow the representation of personal identities with "singular sets of characteristics" that may not be consistent with any proposed political affiliations or "group identity".

Based on the aforementioned description of the concept of narrative, Baker (2006: 3) points out three main features of narrative theory. First, narrative theory suggests that people's actions are steered and influenced by the stories they hear about, and conceive from, the outside world, forming their judgements accordingly. Second, narrative theory emphasises the dynamicity of narratives and their ability to change and constantly evolve. Therefore, people do not just choose the stories they circulate, yet they contribute to forming and developing these stories. Third, due to their tendency to change following new exposures and experiences,

narrative theory claims that narratives have a subversive nature. Narratives can be transformed and even reversed, and thus evolve into counter-narratives whose ultimate function is to challenge and undermine the original ones. The effectiveness of the Arab revolutions, on many occasions, was dependent on the ability of the revolutionaries to construct counter-narratives that can challenge and undermine those nurtured by the ruling elites and regime loyalists. This undoubtedly contributed to convincing millions of frustrated people to join the few thousands who started the early demonstrations across the Arab World.

Unlike many linguistic and literary scholars, Baker (2006: 9) does not consider narrative as a separate genre since a narrative is not confined to political and social topics. Instead, it can refer to technical and scientific texts, as there is no text that does not benefit from, or constitute a part of, "the story of life" (Fisher, 1987: 85). Even a scientific paper leading to findings and conclusions represents an "organized sequence" of events that follows the regular pattern of a typical narrative, which includes a beginning, a middle, and an end (Landau, 1997: 104). Predictably, statistical figures are often employed to contribute to conflict between competing narratives by supporting one while undermining the other. In the context of the Arab Spring, *Middle East Monitor* reports on the use of allegedly fake statistical figures to support the legitimacy of the Egyptian opposition's demands and the reportedly pre-planned military coup following large-scale anti-Morsi demonstrations on June 30, 2013:

> [T]he numbers game was played by the opposition and the military to orchestrate and justify the coup d'etat against President Mohamed Morsi. For whatever reason, several external parties also used the numbers claimed to validate their support for the military intervention … To give their statistics an air of respectability and credence, the anti-Morsi alliance claimed that their crowd statistics were obtained from coverage and analyses conducted by Google Earth. Though never confirmed by the satellite giant, the estimates given ranged from 14.3 million to 33 million demonstrators. A search of the net revealed no official statement by Google Earth to confirm these claims. Meanwhile, MEMO requested a comment from Google but has not received a reply.
>
> (Middle East Monitor, July 2013)

Each set of statistical data cannot be isolated from the story itself, and thus "should be interpreted in a storied context" (Fisher, 1987: 48). In other words, they should be considered and assessed in light of the events of the story; first, they constitute an essential part of the story proceedings, and second, they are used to justify certain actions resulting from the event.

Narrativity is often employed in political contexts to exert a long-term normalising effect on listeners (Baker, 2006: 11) in order to accept and believe the stories they hear about events without questioning or expressing any doubts with regards to the credibility and trustworthiness of the source. The Arab Spring has proved that narratives can be used by autocratic regimes as a propaganda weapon to justify brutal procedures against opponents, civil and political activists, and demonstrators.

The Houla Massacre took place in the Syrian village of Taldou, located in the Houla Region near Homs on May 25, 2012, and was reportedly carried out by pro-Assad militants. The *National Review Online* news outlet published an article by Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi and Phillip Smyth, investigating the narrative that the Assad regime constructed, attempting not only to deny their responsibility for the massacre, but also to portray its loyalists to be the victims. The authors attempted to observe the reports undertaken by various newspapers on the event and Assad's propaganda in general: "FAZ [German newspaper *Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung*] alleges that not only did opposition-group members carry out the Houla massacre, but the victims were principally Alawites – that is, part of Assad's religious sect – along with some Sunni families that had converted to Shiism" (Tamimi and Smyth, 2012) FAZ does not seem to be the only Western newspaper that comes to believe the Assad regime's propaganda and adopt their narrative: "Throughout the Syrian conflict, Western media sources have accepted bait provided by Bashar al-Assad's most prodigious propagandists, who regularly weave tales of anti-Assad, al-Qaeda-style groups' expelling or murdering members of minority groups" (ibid). These "tales" are the grounds of the regime's political discourse, which turns to a form of narratives adopted and circulated by its supporters and loyalists (ibid).

Translation as a mandatory medium of communication is essential in normalising and nourishing narratives across linguistic barriers (Baker, 2006: 14). Any conflict, whether political, military, or social, is necessarily a conflict of image in which all parties aim to construct and deconstruct an enemy by delegitimising its actions and distorting its image. Nelson (2002: 8) asserts that a conflict entails dehumanising the enemy and dealing with the enemy as a "foreign and distant" entity. This subsequently provides a pretext for torturing, maiming, and slaughtering the other. Translators and interpreters contribute to either facilitating or challenging this process of dehumanisation, which aims to transform the *who* into *it* whose misery and anguish become acceptable and tolerable (Baker, 2008: 14). Bassnett and Edelman (1985: 159) assert that political narratives often seek to promote a certain ideology, imposing it on people who normally choose to act passively and adopt towards events. This makes it easier for them to accept, circulate, and translate these narratives without investigating and inquiring into their implications, especially if they tackle people who are seen as alien to the set of norms, beliefs, and values in a given society.

Another topic that has captured much attention from scholars interested in narrative theory is the connection between narrative and reality. Bruner (1991: 5) argues that only recently have scholars started to think of narrative not only as a representor of reality, but also as a contributor to constructing reality. According to this approach to narrative theory, which advocates the role of narratives in representing as well as shaping reality, there is no place for

an independent story, i.e. a story that is isolated from other stories (Baker, 2006: 17). Reality, according to this approach, is a chain of interlinked narratives that not only describe but also constitute experiences. Even history, in this sense, is not really about the past, but rather about our ability to construct cohesive and meaningful stories about the past out of "the scattered and profoundly meaningless debris" we encounter (Kellner, 1989: 10). Contemplation lies at the heart of this process as a substantial act in forming stories about what people observe and experience (ibid).

Since narrative plays a vital role in forming reality, Baker (2006: 17) stresses the importance of validating and checking the veracity of narratives that substantially affect us and tackle the issues that are important to us, whether at the personal level as individuals, at the political level as citizens and voters, or at the social level as members of society. The fact that a given narrative is widely circulated and promoted by media outlets should not prevent the receiver from trying to verify the validity and credibility of the story as well as the source. The receiver's endeavour to reason on a certain narrative is ultimately governed by the believability of the narrative, which is determined by whether the story is derived from, and backed by, some facts and thus linked in some way to reality. This, according to Baker (ibid: 17-8), "brings in the whole question of the relationship between narrative and truth."

Zhang (2004: 400) advises not to take any historical event as an absolute and unquestionable truth. This is not a call for skepticism; he encourages us to study history, take the claims made by historians and subject these claims to careful examination and analysis. Only by doing so can people avoid falling into the trap of blindly believing in narratives that affect people's perception of the world. In other words, no narrative can claim to depict the ultimate truth of any happening. That being said, it is necessary to understand that in real life, events do occur, but it is the receivers' responsibility to follow reasoning methods that enable them to check the credibility of the narratives describing these events. It should be understood that these methods should be subject to constant "refinement and reassessment" (Baker, 2006: 18), as they do not necessarily lead to the truth either. The notion of constructedness thus can be summarised by four main pieces of advice for those seeking the truth: take claims embedded in narratives; validate their credibility; do not entirely reject the truthfulness of a certain narrative; and acknowledge the existence of multiple truths since "knowledge is socially and politically produced" (Ewick and Silbey, 1995: 199).

In political terms, narratives are employed to steer public behaviour, legitimise certain political decisions, and challenge others. They can be used to both exert hegemonic effect and subvert counter narratives. All events, including the Arab Spring happenings, are depicted and reported differently by various sources. This results in multiple narratives tackling the same

event. They can be entirely contradictory. They can also meet at some level and part at another, sharing some aspects, and differing in the reporting of certain details (Baker, 2006: 20). One narrative may prevail over time, becoming more dominant due to military, political or social factors: Walter Benjamins once said that history is written by the victors. In any case, the differences between narratives, whether subtle or substantial, are what define these narratives and make their existence both meaningful and significant. Bennet and Edelman (1985: 160) affirm that by accepting a certain narrative, we reject another, and only this clash between narratives sustains their existence.

This conflict between competing narratives is not confined to a certain period of time; rather it continues over time (Baker, 2006: 20). The Syrian revolution and Iraqi conflict have shown how narratives of the past can define present narratives; former Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki interpreted his political conflict with his opponents in light of historical events that took place hundreds of years ago between Husayn and Yazid (al-Maliki, Dec 2003):

> أنصار يزيد وأنصار الحسين مرة أخرى، وعلى طول الخط يصطدمون في مواجهة شرسة عنيدة، وهذا يعطينا رؤية أن الجريمة التي ارتكبت بحق الحسين لم تنتهِ.
>
> [Supporters of Yazid and supporters of Husayn, once again as always are engaged in a fierce and bitter confrontation, and this proves to us that the crime that Husayn was the victim of has still not ended.]

Al-Maliki's statement shows how a narrative on an ancient conflict between two figures in Islamic history is repacked after more than thirteen centuries, continuing to affect, explain, and shape present narratives which depict a completely different conflict. Baker (2006: 21) asserts that re-narrating stories of the past can be used as a tool of hegemony, since it "socializes individuals into an established social and political order and encourages them to interpret present events in terms of sanctioned narratives of the past." When competing versions of a given narrative entirely contradict each other, it seems that there is no solution that can be reached (Liu, 1999: 299); people over time tend to stop trying to search for the truth, questioning any part of their version of the narrative, or validating the truthfulness of the other versions. They become so faithful to their version of the narrative that any new discovery may result in a tremendous, intolerable shock. They therefore end up isolating themselves within the boundaries of their "narrative communities" (Baker, 2006: 21), i.e. the people sharing the same convictions on the validity of a certain narrative and falseness of others.

Thus, a narrative community should not exert tremendous effort to try and persuade other narrative communities to change their version of the narrative. They can, instead, invest in appealing to other audiences that are interested in, and affected by, the issue concerned, but have not adopted a certain version of the narrative yet (Fisher, 1997: 312). In the context of

the Arab Spring, these undecided circles of people come under the name of silent majority (*ḥizb al-kanaba* "the party of the sofa" in Egypt, and *ar-ramādiyūn* "the greys" in Syria). Both regime loyalists and revolutionaries endeavoured to convince this broad category of the population of their own version of the narrative regarding the political conflict and mass mobilisation during the Arab Spring.

Translation is essential in this process, since most conflicts are not limited to communities that speak the same language. Rather, they cross linguistic borders and reach out to communities that speak different languages. In most cases, they are discussed in multi-lingual regional and/or international environments, such as the Security Council where competing narratives use translation as a weapon of persuasion as well as a method of communication (Baker, 2006: 22). When a narrative is translated and re-told in a different language, it embraces new elements from other narratives floating in the new cultural and linguistic atmosphere. It thus develops into a new narrative modified by the new narrators. This constantly evolving narrative, in turn, influences and contributes to shaping other narratives that circulate within news linguistic communities (ibid).

6.3 A Narrative Typology Model

This study will adopt a typology model primarily suggested by Somers (1992, 1997) and Somers and Gibson (1994), and thereafter developed by Baker (2006). Based on their social effect and political significance, this model makes a clear distinction between four main types of narrative: *ontological*, *public*, *conceptual*, and *meta-narratives*.

Baker (2006: 28) defines *ontological narratives* as "personal stories that we tell ourselves about our place in the world and our own personal history." These stories shape and give the people's lives their meanings. Even though they essentially tackle issues related to the self in the first place, they are also interpersonal and social since they are communicated to other people in a social environment (ibid). The existence of a social context is vital for the narrator to tell their story (Whitebrook, 2001: 24), allowing it to exist, function and develop. According to Ewick and Silbey (1995: 211-2), this surely implies that ontological narratives depend on, and appeal to, collective narratives using symbols, utterances, and expressions similar to those found in shared narratives by which personal ones are interpreted and made intelligible. This explains why translation faces challenges when rendering ontological narratives from one language into another: "The retelling is inevitably constrained by the shared linguistic and narrative resources available in the new setting" (Baker, 2006: 29). Thus, it is true that ontological narratives are contingent on and determined by the collective narratives that

circulate in the surrounding social environment, but they are also important in maintaining and elaborating collective narratives (ibid).

Collective narratives therefore contribute to the forming as well as framing of personal stories produced by members of a given society, setting their meanings, implications, and effects (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997: 121). The collectiveness of a narrative, one the other hand, cannot be achieved until supported and enhanced by many personal stories. Only then, can such a narrative be seen as collective and thus be accepted, widely circulated, and normalised into "self-evident accounts" of life in order to avoid critical examination (Baker, 2006: 30). A representative example of the need for personal narratives to enhance shared ones is the situation of Syria under the rule of the Ba'ath Party, where citizens were urged to perceive themselves as ultimately Arabs in political and social terms. As a result, this promoted, and contributed to, the collective narrative adopted by the pan-Arabist regime. Without the contribution of enough citizens to this process of creation and circulation of compatible personal stories, the collective narrative adopted by the government would not have gained any currency or achieved popularity.

The following is an excerpt from a report including a field interview undertaken by *Orient News* reporter with a Syrian boy from Aleppo after a rocket reportedly fired by Assad's troops hit his family house and killed many of his relatives in 2013 (Orient News, 2013):

> كنا والله باركين. نايمين حوالي الساعة عشرة. فوق سمعنا صوت ... طلعنا لهون لبرا صحنا يا عالم حدا ينقذنا..! تاري العالم هي بدها مين ينقذها. فتنا والله طالعنا أخواتي. ولاد عمي أربعين واحد راحوا؛ بيت جدي راحوا؛ نزل الصاروخ عبيتي؛ فيّو إجر ... طلعت نانتي أربع شقف؛ خالتي طايرة لهلأ ما لقوها؛ ما منعرف. بس أفهم، ليش عميضربنا؟ يعني حكم القوي على الضعيف؟
>
> [We were sleeping, at around 10 am. Above us, we heard a sound ... We went out and called on people to save us! Then, it seemed that there were people who needed to be saved. We went inside and took my siblings out; my cousins, forty of them, were gone; my grandparents were gone. The rocket hit my house. We found a human leg. My grandmother was torn to pieces. My aunt is still missing; they have not found her yet. We do not know. But I want to understand: why is he [Bashar Assad] bombing us? Is it because he is strong and we are weak?]

These personal narratives about personal experiences in fact contributed to a collective anti-regime narrative adopted by the Syrian opposition and the Free Syrian Army, allowing it to gain currency and acceptance, not only internally but also internationally.

The second type of narrative according to the model adopted in this study is *public narrative*, which is similar, but not identical to the aforementioned collective (shared) narratives that refer to any sort of popular narrative circulating widely within a certain social environment (Baker, 2006: 33). Public narratives are best defined as stories produced and communicated at the level of communities and institutional bodies higher than an individual, such as the family, sect, school, university, political party, city, and country (ibid). Public narratives

dominating a given community may quickly evolve, develop, and witness changes within a few years or even less (Baker, 2006: 33). An example of competing public narratives depicting the outbreak and mobilisers of the Arab Spring is a speech by Saif al-Islam, Gaddafi's son on February 20, 2011, in which he expressed the Libyan regime's version of the narrative about how the mass uprising started in the Eastern part of the country and the parties responsible for starting the movement (Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, Feb 2011):

> تنظيمات إسلامية ... هاجموا معسكر للجيش قتلوا جنود وضباط وعملوا مجازر واحتلوا معسكرات بشكل مفاجئ وسيطروا على الأسلحة ... وأعلنوا إمارة.. ما يسمى بإمارة إسلامية في البيضا وعملوا إذاعة خاصة بيهم ... الأطفال.. وبعض الناس اللي.. أيضاً.. وهذا شيء معروف.. كانوا يتناولوا مخدرات وحبوب هلوسة تم أيضاً استعمالهم.
>
> [Islamist organisations … attacked an army camp, killed officers and soldiers, carried out massacres, suddenly occupied camps and took control of the arms … and declared an emirate, something called an Islamic emirate in Bayda, establishing their own radio channel … Children and some people, who – and this is something known – were on drugs and hallucinogenic pills, have been used as well.]

The Libyans had to either believe or reject Saif al-Islam's version of the public narrative of the outset of the February 17th Revolution. This is dependent on whether this narrative, in all its aspects, is compatible with every Libyan's "own story of identity" (Whitebrook, 2001: 145). That is why we find that the Syrians are relatively divided in their acceptance or rejection of the official narrative of the Syrian regime depicting the Syrian conflict. Syrians, in fact, differ in the way they define their identity socially, nationally, religiously, and politically, and thus their stories of identity are varied.

Translators participate actively in the process of spreading and circulating public narratives within their own communities, making sure that all social formations in these communities become familiar with the views embedded in these narratives that may have currency in foreign societies (Baker, 2006: 36). That being said, Tymoczko (2003: 201) suggests that translators can affiliate themselves with some ideologies or agendas, endeavouring to promote certain versions of a narrative, typically external to the target culture, at the expense of others. This may challenge, weaken, or even undermine domestic versions of the same narrative, creating controversy within society. Translators can also contribute to the promotion and circulation of domestic public narratives, giving them a chance to transcend political and linguistic borders. This is to achieve greater worldwide public recognition and acceptance or to be examined by a different readership with different sets of values and beliefs (Baker, 2006: 37). This, in turn, could lead to the development of these narratives over time, considering the volume of criticism they may receive from foreign audiences when translated.

Somers and Gibson (1994: 62-3) define *conceptual narratives*, the third type of narrative, as explanations and analyses that social researchers and scholars provide to demonstrate and illustrate the relationship between ontological and public narratives. They expound upon their

role in shaping social action and identity in a given society. According to Baker (2006: 39), this definition can be extended to include stories that researchers in any area of study develop "for themselves and others about their object of inquiry." For Ewick and Silbey (1995: 201), this can also refer to representations produced by scholars of the topic under investigation. An example of conceptual narrative is the book, *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*, by Hamid Dabashi. *The Washington Post* describes the book as a leading cultural observer of the Arab Spring events. It provides a conceptual and intellectual account of the Arab Spring and its implications, factors and impact. It sheds further light on personal narratives associated with the event, linking them to mainstream public narratives circulating among the revolutionaries and the Arab people in general about the Arab Spring revolutions. A critical analysis of the implications of the event and its impact on the political and social future of the Middle East and North Africa is thereafter provided.

As in the case of public narratives, translators have the liberty to support and enhance or reject and refute a certain conceptual narrative (Baker, 2006: 43). However, translators cannot ensure that their final product would not be eventually understood against their inclination and intention (ibid). Producers as well as receivers determine the meanings and implications of conceptual narratives.

Somers and Gibson (1994: 61) provide a brief definition of the fourth type of narrative *meta-narratives* as narratives "in which we are embedded as contemporary actors in history." Somers (1992: 605) also describes meta-narratives as "the epic dramas of our time," which, according to Baker (2006: 44-5), can live and last for long time and can affect even ordinary people in the world. A possible example of a meta-narrative in present times is the public narrative of the war on terror, which has been extended recently to include the war on Islamic State, which has emerged, and eventually controlled a vast area in norther and western Iraq as well as half of Syria. Terrifying beheading narratives have circulated across the world and have been followed by a large-scale military operation carried out by numerous Western and Arab countries against IS. The military action would not have been possible if not preceded by circulation of a meta-narrative on the brutal and barbarous actions carried out by IS members. Baker (2006: 45) suggests that choosing the term *terror* instead of *terrorism* is suggestive since it provides an example of how careful choice of terminology used in public and meta-narratives is essential in generating desired public responses. *Terrorism* indicates one or more acts involving violence whose effect is relatively limited and minor, whereas *terror* is a frame of mind whose meanings and implications can go further beyond national and cultural boundaries and be grasped by people across the planet.

Baker (ibid) asserts that the principal factor that determines the continuance of a given meta-narrative is normally political or economic. Another factor, as pointed out by Alexander (2002: 5-29), is the representation of evil and reference to traumatic experience with a global impact involving all human kind. The Western media have striven to shed light on the horrible acts of IS, knowing that this can ensure the survival of the impact of such stories on the public, thus forming a meta-narrative that can last for a long time, justifying Western military involvement in the conflict ongoing in the Middle East. The decision-making and motivations, of course, are political in the first place. The absence of a political decision explains why no similar meta-narrative has been formed by the global media on the brutal actions carried out by Syrian regime. Despite the relative global silence, the consequences of such actions are manifested through half a million Syrian deaths, thousands arrested, millions of destroyed homes, and 12 million Syrians forced to flee their hometowns.

The role of translators is unquestionably essential in allowing public narratives to transcend linguistic, national, and cultural borders. They facilitate their development into widespread meta-narratives, leaving a large-scale impact on humanity for generations. Nevertheless, the role of translators becomes even more effective in contributing to the formation of narratives that can compete and undermine public and meta-narratives produced and promoted by dictators and autocrats. These dictators have oppressed their people, forcing their own version of meta-narratives for decades (ibid: 48).

6.4 Features of narrativity

Having examined the different types of narrative, we move on to investigating the features of narrativity and the way narratives operate and shape what people see as reality. Baker (2006) points out eight different features of narrativity; the first four are formerly proposed by Somers and Gibson (1994) and Somers (1992, 1997), while the rest are originally suggested by Bruner (1991): *temporality, relationality, causal emplotment, selective appropriation, particularity, genericness, normativeness/canonicity and breach*, and *narrative accrual*.

Temporality is seen, according to Baker (2006: 50), as an essential feature that constitutes the narrative, rather than as "an additional or separable layer of a 'story'". It does not imply, as many may expect, that events are arranged in the right sequence to represent, and be consistent with, the actual chronological order of the story events in reality. Rather, it means that the order in which the story details are arranged is significant (ibid: 50-1) and cannot be changed or replaced without resulting in a loss of meaning. Therefore, temporality has an organisational function that is important for the audience to interpret and comprehend the narrative; events

and characters included in the story are not considered as meaningful to the audience if they do not follow a sequential structure, both temporally and spatially (ibid: 51).

Baker (ibid: 61) explains that *relationality* is an important feature of narrativity, as human beings by nature cannot make sense of events that are not logically connected. In other words, for a text to be perceived as narrative, there must be a degree of coherence. Bruner (1991: 8) asserts that composing a narrative requires more than merely choosing random events derived either from present reality, the past, or fiction, and then arranging them in a suitable sequence; story events need to be structured in line with the larger narrative. Therefore, when translating a narrative from one language into another, the translator may avoid importing source cultural or religious elements that do not relate to, or are not consistent with, the target culture. Baker (2006: 61) insists that the relationality of a narrative cannot tolerate such simple and direct rendering of some elements and aspects from other narratives.

Most African churches, for instance, draw a picture of Jesus in their divine narratives as a black man, which is consistent with the expectations of African believers. A similar tendency is observed in Western churches, in Europe and North America, where Jesus is pictured as a white blonde man. Both versions of the narrative probably contradict the historical fact that Jesus is more likely to have looked like a Middle Eastern man, as he was born in Palestine. Baker (ibid: 64) argues that translators in many cases decide not to opt for equivalents which are differently or negatively employed in other narrative contexts in the target culture. For Baker (ibid), it is an aspect of maintaining relationality not to borrow an utterance or element from an alien narrative.

According to Somers (1997: 82), *causal emplotment* "gives significance to independent instances, and overrides their chronological or categorical order." The emplotment of events ensures the construction of a meaningful narrative, because this will shed light on their participation in, and contribution to, the overall meaning of the narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). In concrete terms, causal emplotment makes it possible to evaluate and elaborate on events rather than merely state them. This is to make a coherent comprehensible sequence that the audience can pass a judgement on out of separate events (Baker, 2006: 67). It thus makes a set of events morally and ethically significant, carrying a semantic value that goes beyond abstract meanings embedded in the narrative.

White (1987: 14) sees casual emplotment as an "impulse to moralize" real events. It is the link between events, rather than isolated representation of each event that gives them their meanings and moral implications. People may make a similar judgment on two different events, but express different opinions on the way these two events relate to each other and are interpreted in light of each other (Baker, 2006: 67). For example, one narrative of the Arab

Spring depicts the story of the outbreak of the revolutions in the Arab World, while another narrative describes the conflict between the Arab regimes and Israel. Supporters of the two narratives may admit that the events of each narrative did indeed occur and may even agree to the details of each narrative, but they disagree regarding the way each narrative is interpreted in relation to the other. One may believe that Israel in fact encouraged the Arabs to revolt against their governments to undermine Arab states, while another may suggest that Israel has actually helped the Arab regimes and supported them to suppress the Arab Spring as it would enjoy a greater sense of security in the presence of autocratic regimes in the region, oppressing their people and preventing them from carrying out any unexpected hostile action against what is seen as the enemy of the nation. Baker (ibid: 70) suggests that translators can make use of this function to link translated events differently, creating new meanings through "the choice of equivalents in translation and interpreting."

Baker (ibid: 71) agrees with Somers and Gibson that a narrative is formed in line with a set of standards that allow narrative producers to appropriately select, from a wide range of numerous events, only specific events to be included in the narrative, excluding many others. A narrative may seem complete and whole, yet it is in fact composed of a limited number of events to the exclusion of other events (White, 1987: 10). This exclusion and inclusion may be guided and influenced by factors related to certain ideologies, agendas, and cultural and political affiliations. A representation of this feature of *selective appropriation* in the field of translation is the tendency of translators and/or sponsoring media outlets to select certain materials (texts or videos) for translation.

The selection process is undoubtedly governed by the patrons' agendas and benefits as well as the translator's ideology. In the context of the Syrian revolution, which has ultimately developed into a military conflict, materials chosen for translation by what are described as anti-Islamist Western media outlets such as *Fox News* and *The Mirror* often present a negative image of the opposition fighters, especially those fighting alongside Islamist factions. They tend to highlight some violations against locals in opposition-controlled areas, ignoring examples of efficient management, good treatment, and moderate ideology.

Bruner (1991: 6-7) explains *particularity* as a feature of narrativity, which means that the reference to certain incidents and characters in narratives occurs on the basis of an overall frame of story typology or genres, making these events meaningful and intelligible. It is the role the events play within this general frame of genre and the position they occupy in this scheme of story types that enable the audience to fill in the narrative happenings in case they are missing from an account (ibid: 7). Bruner uses *genre*, here, in the sense of generic story

outline or plot combining an array of "raw elements" rather than conventional text type (such as *novel*, *play* and *poem*) (Baker, 2006: 78).

However, when investigating *genericness* as a feature of narrativity, Bruner (1991: 14) adopts a different definition of genres as "recognizable" kinds of narrative such as tragedy, comedy, fiction, satire, news report, and interview. These genres serve as established models that enable both narrative producers and audiences to limit the interpretative task of rationalising the events that human beings encounter – the ones that people tell each other about and the ones that people hear others narrate (ibid).

Bruner (ibid: 15) seems to value *breaches of canonicity* as a feature of narrativity which entitles a story to be narrated to others. In the absence of innovative gestures that represent breaches of canonicity, events embedded in a text do not technically constitute a narrative, Bruner (ibid) asserts. Since its tellability relies on "a breach of conventional expectation, a narrative is necessarily normative" (ibid). In translation, this feature is manifested mainly through the choice of equivalents in the target language. By observing *normativeness*, a translator opts for equivalents that make the narrative intelligible for the target reader. This can also be done through a process of recontextualisation to form a narrative with "moral resonances" for the target audience (Baker, 2006: 99). Translators of a narrative also tend to opt for translations that constitute a breach of conventional expectations and canonical scripts to challenge dominant narratives. In the context of the Arab Spring, these could be the narratives promoted by autocratic Arab regimes. A pro-revolutionary translator can adopt translations that emphasise the brutality of the Arab regimes and sacrifices made by the revolutionaries in their endeavour to obtain freedom and democracy.

Bruner (1991: 18) describes *narrative accrual* as the way in which people "cobble stories together to make them into a whole of some sort." This can be accomplished by imposing "bogus *historical-causal entailment*" (ibid: 19). An example of this feature is the constant claims that the Syrian revolution occurred as a result of Qatar's scheme aiming to lay gas pipelines through Syria to Europe. The Syrian regime allegedly had not given its consent to the Qatari plan. Therefore, Qatar alongside other Middle Eastern countries benefitting from the Qatari scheme such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Jordan, pushed towards an uprising in Syria to topple the current Syrian regime. Another example from the context of the Arab Spring is the proposition that the Arab Spring revolutions would not have taken off if the Tunisian revolution had not happened in the first place. The five revolutions, according to this view, are interlinked narratives that cannot be assessed and interpreted in isolation.

6.5 Framing Narratives in Translation

Features of narrativity listed and detailed in the previous section pave the way for the introduction of the central concept of *framing*. This is of particular importance for the subject of this research study, because through farming, features of narrativity were in fact renegotiated during the Arab Spring to form narratives loaded with political, social, and ideological implications and references in the target language. Translated texts and utterances can also be treated as frames, even beyond the basic interpretative sense of frames, which implies that a text is to be translated using direct equivalent utterances and codes from the target language (Baker, 2006: 107). Translation can be seen as an act of framing that can bring about changes in terms of the message as well as the style of the text translated. Five aspects of framing suggested by Baker (2006) are discussed in this section: *frame ambiguity*, *temporal and spatial framing*, *selective appropriation*, *framing by labelling*, and *repositioning of participants*.

Frame ambiguity, according to Baker (2006: 107), occurs when a sequence of events is framed differently to foster rival narratives produced by different parties, which are aimed at legitimising their actions in the context of a given conflict. For instance, different parties can frame the Syrian conflict in different ways. Syrian regime loyalists and pro-Assad media outlets often refer to the conflict as *azmah* ("a crisis"). The Syrian opposition and the Free Syrian Army factions fighting on the ground, on the other hand, insist on describing the situation in Syria as *ṯawrah* ("a revolution"). Following the recent Russian intervention in Syria which mainly targeted the armed opposition factions, Turkish President Erdogan stated (al-Jazeera, Oct 2015):

الشعب السوري يخوض **حرب استقلال**.

[The Syrian people are fighting a **war of independence**.]

This description of the Syrian conflict as a "war of independence" has thus gained wide acceptance from allied countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as well as the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces and the armed Syrian opposition, including the Free Syrian Army and Islamic factions. Islamic State, and to a less degree Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda in the Levant), normally describe the Syrian conflict as a phase of a larger international Jihad against the non-Muslim West and Russia. However, many international news outlets opt for terms like *Syrian conflict* or *Syrian civil war*. For Goffman (1974: 302), this represents a disagreement on the description of a certain situation, which often occurs when various parties to a conflict seek to justify their actions by adopting and promoting competing versions of a narrative.

Frame ambiguity can also be employed in translation (Baker, 2006: 108), as translators at times decide to change the definitions of certain situations embedded in the source text, opting for choices in the target language that match certain ideologies in line with their political affiliations and/or the patrons' interests and agendas.

Temporal and spatial framing denotes the process of choosing a specific text that depicts a certain narrative, placing it in a new temporal and spatial environment. Readers and listeners are encouraged to make a connection between this narrative and others that may be more up-to-date even though its events actually belong to different temporal settings or take place in a different geographical area (ibid: 112). In an interview with Dr. Ragheb Elsergany, a Muslim cleric and historiographer, a link is established between the events of the Egyptian revolution and the Battle of Badr (between the Muslim army led by the Prophet Muhamad and the non-believers of Quraysh) (Elsergany, 2011). Both the revolutionaries during the Egyptian revolution and the Muslims of the Battle of Badr, Elsergany (ibid) argues, were neither expecting the conflict to break out that soon, nor were they prepared enough to win when it did occur. However, in both events, the aforementioned parties managed to achieve victory (ibid). Elsergany, here, exploits a narrative derived from ancient Islamic history to forward a current narrative belonging to a completely different setting. This is an example of what Baker calls temporal and spatial framing.

Selective appropriation, the third aspect of framing suggested by Baker (2006), is manifested through omitting and/or adding some elements of a narrative when it is told to a different audience or when rendered into a foreign language (ibid: 114). The omission and addition procedures aim to "suppress, accentuate or elaborate particular aspects" of the narrative "encoded in the source text or utterance, or aspects of the larger narrative(s) in which it is embedded" (ibid). This selective appropriation of textual items is observed in the media (mainly in reports and news broadcasts, even when translation is not involved), translation, and interpreting. This form of framing can sometimes result in a diversion of the message embedded in the source version of the narrative to make it consistent with certain ideologies and agendas.

A representative example of this aspect of framing is the satirical news analysis show DNA, presented by Lebanese journalist and political analyst Nadim Koteich aired on Future TV on a daily basis (Future TV Nadim Koteich, 2013). Koteich analyses and comments on the latest political events in Lebanon, Syria and the Arab World using selected elements of statements and stories produced by politicians and political commentators. These excerpts, which are often subjected to numerous omission procedures, are exploited to criticise the same narratives

that these excerpts are derived from. The narratives criticised by Koteich are typically promoted by political opponents, namely Hezbollah, Iran, and the Syrian regime.

Framing by labelling is described by Baker (2006: 122) as any "discursive process that involves using a lexical item, term or phrase to identify a person, place, group, event or any other key elements in a narrative." An example of this form of framing is the controversy over the naming of the Islamic State organisation. The organisation refers to itself as *Dawlat al-Xilāfa* ("the Caliphate State") or *ad-Dawla al-Islāmiyya* ("Islamic State"), while its opponents among the Syrian opposition factions prefer to call it *Jamāᶜat al-Baġdādī* ("al-Baghdadi's Group") in a reference to its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. *Dāᶜiš* ("ISIS") is an abbreviation of its previous official name, *ad-Dawla al-Islāmiyya fī al-ᶜIrāq wa aš-Šām* ("Islamic State in Iraq and Syria"), which is also a derogatory term used by IS' opponents. The latter two labels framed by many parties and countries are aimed to mock, undervalue, and delegitimise IS' claims of establishing an Islamic Caliphate.

The aforementioned example brings about the question of rival systems of naming, proposed by Baker (ibid: 123), who admits that this proves to be challenging in translation. Competing parties and communities can adopt different names for an entity, situation, geographical area, and so on. This is done in order to promote their own narratives to legitimise social and political claims, refuting and undermining opposing claims (ibid: 124). Baker (ibid) suggests that adopting a name in this context automatically implies a denial of the other, subsequently undermining the other's narratives and claims. The naming of the Northern Syrian city of Ain al-Arab or (Kobani, for the Kurds), in which the Kurds constitute a majority of population, is used by both the Arabs and Kurds as a racial and national identification for those sharing the same views and beliefs to justify their claims of authority over the city.

Framing by labelling can also be manifested through titles of books, movies, and articles which can be employed to "(re)frame narratives in translation" (ibid: 129). Nevertheless, they are not considered part of a conflict of rival labelling in which competing parties seek to promote certain names for a particular entity, group, or place. The exploitation of titles in the narrative reframing process normally results in some changes affecting the texts themselves in consistency with the choices and views expressed in the new title chosen by the translator (ibid: 130).

Relationality as a feature of narrativity elaborated in the previous section is related to "the way in which participants in any interaction are positioned, or position themselves, in relation to each other and to those outside the immediate event" (ibid: 132). Any changes to these positions redefine the roles played by the participants and their interrelationships as well as the dynamics of the narrative as a whole and even other interlinked narratives. The

repositioning of participants pointed out by Baker (ibid) can occur through the way language is utilised to manage time, space, register, tone, and other manners of identifying *them* and *us*. Subtle, paratextual, and/or expressive changes made by the narrator or translator in the representation of these elements are cumulated, leading to a reconfiguration of the relationships between participants, such as the narrator, translator, hearer, and reader. A significant transformation is thus achieved in the perception and presentation of the *self* and *others*. These reconfigurations and transformations result in an active reframing of the narrative as well as the overall narrative which it constitutes part of (ibid). Translators and narrators can utilise two principal areas to spatially and temporally realign themselves and other participants in relation to each other and to social and political issues exposed in the narrative: *paratextual commentary*, such as footnotes, endnotes, introduction, and glossaries (ibid: 133); and *within the text* itself (ibid: 135), i.e. the main body of the narrative.

6.6 Conclusion

Narrativity and framing play a crucial role, not only in constructing reality, but also in shaping national, social and political identity. Personal, public and master narratives have proved to be an integral part of political conflict; they are exploited as accounts depicting happenings (typically in line with the agendas and ideology of the narrator) and to legitimise the actions of the self and delegitimise all what the other represents (values, beliefs, actions, decisions, etc.). Translation has always been part of this process; narratives need translation in order to circulate beyond national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, and be effective in both constructing reality and defending the self against the other in political and social conflict.

The previous chapters have striven to examine main factors contributing to the translation of political discourse, including language, politics, ideology, media, framing, and narrativity. Actual examples have been provided from the context of the contemporary politics of the Middle East, in particular the Arab Spring. Having studied the impact of these factors on the translation process, this study moves on in the next chapter to carry out a critical in-depth analysis of the political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution. Representative examples are offered backed by direct references to the theories presented in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA ANALYSIS: SYRIA AS A CASE STUDY

7.1 Introduction

The Syrian conflict has been a thriving arena for competing narratives, ideologies, and political views. This conflict also took place in the field of translation where pro-regime and pro-revolutionary translators as well as media outlets attempted, through translation, to promote certain ideologies, narratives, and political opinions. This study is proposing that translation is inevitably influenced by the political views and ideological beliefs of translators as well as media outlets publishing translated material. This influence may, at times, reach the level of manipulation. This chapter is the data analysis chapter devoted to analysing the translation of political discourse communicated during the Syrian conflict. It investigates the effect of politics, ideology, and media on translation during the Syrian revolution in particular. It also deals in some respects with the translations of the narratives produced and adopted by conflicting parties in the context of the Syrian revolution. The role of framing is significant in this regard. This study assumes that narratives of the Syrian conflict have been framed differently in translation during the process of reporting.

This chapter consists of five sections. The first section explains the data corpus, lists the sources, and elaborates on the significance of the sources chosen, stating the criteria for the selection process. The rest four sections correspond thematically to each of the four previous chapters (starting with Chapter Three, and ending with Chapter Six). Section 7.3 looks into the influence of the translators' political views on the translation. Section 7.4 investigates the effect of ideology on the translation process and the roles played by the translator as a text reader and re-writer of the target text as well as the influence of patronage. Section 7.5 examines the influence of the media on translation and the various strategies and techniques employed by media outlets to steer the outcome of the translation process. Section 7.6 analyses the data corpus from the perspective of narrative theory, exploring the ways in which competing narratives have manifested themselves in translation during the Syrian conflict.

7.2 Data and Selection Criteria

The data corpus consists of news reports, articles, statements, interviews, videos, and banners held up by protestors as well as their translations. These news items and materials are published by a wide range of news websites and newspapers, and TV channels. The source texts are published primarily via international media outlets, such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Independent*, *The Washington Post*, *The Daily Beast*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The American Conservative*, *BBC Arabic*, and *CNN*. Most of these media outlets are not directly involved in the Syrian conflict, but nevertheless provide reports and press material that have been translated by local media outlets more involved in the conflict. The translations conducted by these local media outlets are, generally speaking, ideologically steered and/or politically biased to one of the conflicting parties. They are provided by pro-regime outlets, such as *Russia Today*, *al-Manar*, *JB News*, *Sama TV*, and *Syria Now* as well as pro-revolutionary ones such as *Sasa Post* and *Orient News*.

The data corpus also includes the work of *Memri*, which is a US media organisation interested in subtitling audio-visual items published on Middle Eastern politics. *Memri*'s work has been accused of being biased to Israel as well as distorting the image of the Arabs and Muslims. Moreover, this chapter will analyse the translations provided by Free Syrian Translators and Jaish al-Islam's Press Office. Both bodies are classified as pro-revolutionary. The former is composed of civil activists and independent translators who support the revolution, whereas the latter represents a prominent anti-Assad Islamist military faction, known as Jaish al-Islam. The study will also examine the Kafranbel banners produced and held up in demonstrations by civil activists from the Syrian city of Kafranbel.

The data corpus is meant to represent the translated political discourse circulating on the Syrian revolution, thus covering the range of various political affiliations of news agencies and media outlets interested and involved in the conflict. Accordingly, the translations analysed in this study are produced by sources falling into three main categories:

1- Pro-regime forces:

   A- Pro-regime media outlets:
      - Russia Today (1 interview)
      - Syria Now (1 article)
      - Sama TV (1 article)
      - JB News (1 article)

   B- Media outlets ideologically affiliated with the Syrian regime:

- Al-Manar (1 interview and 6 articles)

2- Pro-revolutionary forces:

A- Pro-revolutionary media outlets and translation agencies:

- Orient News (1 interview)
- Sasa Post (1 article)
- Free Syrian Translators (1 article and 2 videos subtitled)

B- Pro-revolutionary discourse produced by activists and protestors:

- Kafranbel Banners (12 banners)

C- Press offices of armed revolutionary factions:

- Jaish al-Islam's Press Office (1 interview)

3- Other forces interested in the Syrian conflict:

A- Pro-Israeli media outlets:

- Memri (3 videos subtitled)

The data corpus is also meant to cover the translations of various genres of political discourse produced during the Syrian revolution. The translations analysed fall into the following genres:

1- Political interviews (4 items)
2- News reports and articles (11 items)
3- Videos subtitled (5 items)
4- Revolutionary discourse (banners carried by anti-regime protestors) (12 items)

7.3 Political Data Analysis: Translator's Standpoints

This section is devoted to analysing the data corpus in light of the theories discussed in Chapter Three. The critical relationship between politics and translation explained in Section 3.4.1 has manifested itself at various levels during the Syrian revolution, from March 2011 until now. On many occasions, conflicting parties have treated translation as a political act whereby political considerations govern the translator's choices pertaining to the material to be translated and the way the translation process is run (Alvarez and Vidal *in* Schäffner, 2007: 134). In this respect, political and ideological affiliations account for various practices connected to translation, such as determination of the text to be translated; the choice of the target and source languages; in what media outlets the translation is intended to be published

or broadcast; and determination of the identity of the translators and proof-readers (ibid: 136). These lead to changes to, and sometimes deliberate distortion of, the original message embedded in the source text.

An illustrative example of deliberate distortion of translation and the influence of political views on the translation process is the reports produced by pro-Assad news outlets on an interview conducted by *The Wall Street Journal* with Burhan Ghalioun on December 2, 2011. Ghalioun is a Syrian professor of sociology at the Sorbonne University in Paris, and served as chairman of the Syrian Opposition Transitional National Council (SNC). The interview was originally conducted in English, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published in the form of news reports by two media institutions known for their loyalty to the Syrian regime: namely *al-Manar*, a Lebanese channel run and funded by Hezbollah, and *Russia Today* (Arabic version). The news websites of both channels adopted a distorted translation of Ghalioun's interview. *Russia Today* claimed that Ghalioun clearly stated that a 'new Syria' would cut military ties with Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, whereas Nidal Hamadeh, a Lebanese journalist, published an article on the *al-Manar* website where he accused Ghalioun of distancing himself from all the resistance movements in the Arab World. He accused Ghalioun of abandoning all that was patriotic and nationalistic (referring to both Hamas and Hezbollah). The following is the excerpt from Ghalioun's interview where he talks about the relationship with Iran and Hezbollah:

> *The Wall Street Journal*: Syria currently has a strategic relationship with Iran and Hezbollah. How would a new Syrian government position itself vis-à-vis these governments? What would relations be like?
>
> *Mr. Ghalioun*: Our relations with Iran will be revisited as any of the countries in the region, based on the exchange of economic and diplomatic interests, in the context of improving stability in the region and not that of a special relationship. There will be no special relationship with Iran.
>
> *The Wall Street Journal*: Is there a sense on how the support of Hamas and Hezbollah would change?
>
> *Mr. Ghalioun*: Our relationship with Lebanon will be of cooperation, and mutual recognition and exchange of interests and seeking with the Lebanese to improve stability in the region. As our relations with Iran change, so too will our relationship with Hezbollah. Hezbollah after the fall of the Syrian regime will not be the same. Lebanon should not be used as it was used in the Assad era as an arena to settle political scores.
>
> *The Wall Street Journal:* Do you have open communication with Hezbollah or Hamas?
>
> *Mr. Ghalioun*: Many opposition members wanted to meet with Hezbollah and Iran, and present their case and explain this wasn't a foreign conspiracy. But the continued position of Hezbollah, and the negative role their media outlets played, closed this door.
>
> We do have channels with the PLO.
>
> (Ghalioun, 2011)

The Russia Today report

برهان غليون: سورية ستقطع **العلاقات العسكرية مع إيران وحماس وحزب الله** [عنوان]

قال برهان غليون رئيس المجلس الوطني السوري الذي يمثل المعارضة السورية في الخارج انه إذا تمكن المجلس من تشكيل حكومة جديدة، فانه سيقطع علاقات دمشق العسكرية مع إيران **ويوقف توريدات الأسلحة لحماس وحزب الله.**

وأوضح غليون في مقابلة مع صحيفة "وول ستريت جورنال" الأمريكية نشرت يوم الجمعة 2 ديسمبر/كانون الأول، **ان قطع العلاقات** مع إيران **وحماس وحزب الله** سيأتي في إطار إعادة توجيه السياسة السورية تجاه التحالف مع القوى العربية الرئيسية.

[Title: Burhan Ghalioun: Syria would cut **military ties with Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah.**

Burhan Ghalioun, Chairman of Syrian National Council, which represents the Syrian opposition abroad, said that if the Council managed to form a new government, it would cut Damascus' military ties with Iran **and stop arms supplies to Hamas and Hezbollah.**

Ghalioun explained in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* American newspaper, published on Friday, December 2, that **cutting the ties** with Iran, **Hamas**, **and Hezbollah** would come in the context of re-shaping the Syrian policy towards an alliance with the major Arab powers.][3]

(Russia Today, Dec 2011)

The Al-Manar TV report

تبرأ فيها [المقابلة] الرجل [غليون] **من كل حركات المقاومة في العالم العربي** وتنازل فيها عن كل ما هو وطني وقومي.

[The man [Ghalioun] distanced himself in it [the interview] **from all the resistance movements in the Arab World** and abandoned all that was patriotic and nationalistic.]

(Hamadeh, 2011)

In the original interview (in English), Ghalioun does not state that Syria would cut military ties with Hamas or any other organisation after the collapse of the regime. In fact, he does not even mention Hamas or discuss the future of any "arms supplies" to Hamas and Hezbollah. On the contrary, Ghalioun explains that the opposition, on some occasions, expressed willingness to establish a good relationship with Hezbollah, providing that the Iranian-funded Lebanese organisation ceased to support the Syrian regime. The *Russia Today* report, however, seems keen on inserting Hamas' name in Ghalioun's statement, stressing – in both the title and the body of the report – the idea that after the fall of the regime, Syria would cut [military] ties with both Hezbollah and Hamas, associating this decision with the formation of an alliance with the major Arab powers.

Similarly, *al-Manar's* journalist affirms that Ghalioun in the interview distances himself from all resistance movements in the region. This is despite the fact that Ghalioun, in the source text, refers to Hezbollah only without mentioning any other Arab organisations or groups. It is clear from both reports that *al-Manar* and *Russia Today* deliberately inserted the name of Hamas in the text in order to reach certain political ends, distorting the image of the Syrian opposition as a patriotic political force seeking a better future for the country. The reference to Hamas, a known anti-Israel resistance movement widely supported by the Arab people, is

[3] All back-translations are enclosed in square brackets and are produced by the researcher unless stated otherwise.

aimed at depriving the Syrian revolution of solid Arab public support and recognition. In addition to this, in the two reports produced by *al-Manar* and *Russia Today*, the reference to the "channels" that the Syrian opposition has with "the PLO" is omitted. This choice can be explained in the same context: an attempt by both pro-regime media outlets to present an image of the Syrian opposition as a pro-Israeli political force that opposes all the resistance movements in the region.

Al-Manar's pro-regime political views have manifested themselves in its Arabic translations of numerous English articles already published in international newspapers. The following is an excerpt from an article by the well-known British writer and journalist Robert Fisk, published on the *Independent* website on February 16, 2016. *Al-Manar* published a brief report, highlighting the main points illustrated in Fisk's article after translating it into Arabic.

The Independent report

> Syria conflict: **Damascus remains a war zone - but some families are returning** [in title]
>
> There are fewer checkpoints in Damascus, 100 women dancing the "dubkah" at a noisy hen party in one of the big hotels, convoys of trucks humming across the Lebanese border en-route to Jordan now that the Syrian army **has re-opened** the main road to Deraa. Syrians drive to Aleppo up the highway again. On Syrian television, there are action shots of **Syrian paratroopers** entering towns they had not seen for three years. And **in al-Qadam,** its streets named after ancient Arab philosophers and travellers, they are also returning … There is even a "reconciliation committee" of elders who talk to both **the army** and the Free Syrian army … In the West – apart from the refugees – we see this conflict as a geopolitical struggle. But after the Aleppo battles, it can be written that – however temporarily, however fearfully, however few – in **the streets of al-Qadam**, the people are coming home.
>
> (Fisk, Feb 2016)

The al-Manar report

> نشرت صحيفة الإندبندنت تقريراً لـ "روبرت فيسك" بعنوان **"طريق العودة إلى دمشق: اللاجئون يبدأون بالعودة مع بدء تحقق سلام هش."**
>
> حيث يصف فيسك بعض المشاهد التي تنبئ بحدوث تغيير ما، وإن كان طفيفاً، على الأوضاع في سوريا: قافلة من الشاحنات المتجهة إلى الأردن بعد أن **حرر** الجيش السوري الطريق إلى درعا، نقاط تفتيش أقل في العاصمة دمشق، ركاب يسافرون إلى حلب عبر الطريق السريع، وعلى شاشة التلفزيون صور لأفراد **قوات تابعة للحكومة** يدخلون مدنا وأحياء لم يروها منذ فترة.
>
> ويقول فيسك إن هناك لجنة مصالحة أيضا من كبار السن تحاول التحدث إلى **الجيش الحكومي** والجيش الحر لرأب الصدع بينهما، وإن بعض عناصر الجيش الحر سمح لهم بالعودة إلى الجيش.
>
> يختم فيسك مقاله بالقول "ستمر سنوات طويلة قبل أن تكتب فصول التاريخ لهذه الحرب ويكشف النقاب عن أسرارها. في الغرب ينظرون الى النزاع على أنه "جيوسياسي"، لكن بعد معارك حلب يمكن الكتابة أن **الناس بدأوا بالعودة،** حتى لو بشكل مؤقت.
>
> [*The Independent* newspaper has published a report by Robert Fisk entitled as **"The return route to Damascus: the refugees start returning with the beginning of a fragile peace."**
>
> Fisk describes some testimonies that predict the occurrence of a change of some kind, albeit rather slight, on the situation in Syria: a convoy of trucks heading to Jordan after the Syrian army **has liberated** the road to Daraa; fewer checkpoints in the capital, Damascus; passengers traveling to Aleppo on the motorway; and on the TV screen, photos of **members of government forces** entering cities and neighbourhoods that they have not seen for some time.

> Fisk says that there is a reconciliation committee of the elderly trying to talk to the **government army** and the Free Army to heal the rift between them, and that some members of the Free Army were allowed to return to the army.
>
> Fisk concludes his article by saying "there will be many years before the chapters of the history of this war are written and its secrets are revealed. In the West, they perceive the conflict as "geopolitical", but after the battles of Aleppo, one can write that **people are starting to come back**, even if temporarily.]
>
> (Al-Manar, Feb 2016)

Four main interventions in the message intended by Fisk can be monitored and marked in the translation provided by *al-Manar*. The first is the title; despite using inverted commas for the title, suggesting that this is the exact translation of the title of the original article, *al-Manar* uses a different statement as a title of the Arabic report with an entirely different message. Fisk stresses the fact that Damascus remains a warzone and points out the return of "some families" to the city. No mention was made with regards to the peace stated in *al-Manar's* translation, whether fragile or permanent. However, the title used by *al-Manar* gives the impression that Damascus is living *salām hašš* ("a fragile peace"), which encourages *al-lāji'ūn* ("the refugees") (not only some families as stated in the source text) to return to the capital. The phrase *Ṭarīq al-ᶜawda 'ila Dimašq* ("the return route to Damascus"), emphasised in the translation produced by *al-Manar*, is extremely suggestive and implies that the regime forces have secured the capital and the war there is almost over. These meanings simply exist neither in the title nor in the main body of the source text and thus represent a manipulation of the translation by *al-Manar*.

Second, Fisk states that the Syrian army "has re-opened" the main road to Daraa. However, *al-Manar* has rendered the ST term "re-opened", which is a neutral term, as *ḥarrara* ("liberated"), which refers in Arabic to regaining one's own land. This significant translation decision can be interpreted as attaching legitimacy to the military operations carried out by pro-regime forces. Third, it is noted from the translation that "Syrian paratroopers" is defined as *quwwāt tābiᶜa li-al-ḥukūma* ("government forces") and "the army" as *aj-jayš al-ḥukūmī* ("government army"). This tendency on the part of the *al-Manar* translator to add a reference to the "government" every time the Assad forces are mentioned reflects an attempt to legitimise the role of these forces on the ground. This is a technique widely used in political discourse introduced in previous chapters and known as 'legitimisation'.

Fourth, Fisk forms his opinion and shapes his views on the current military and security situation on the basis of his observations in the al-Qadam area; he refers to the al-Qadam quarter on several occasions throughout the article. However, the *al-Manar* translator seems to turn a blind eye to this important detail in the source text, avoiding reference to al-Qadam in the translation. In the conclusion of the original article, Fisk clearly states that "however

temporarily, however fearfully, however few – in the streets of al-Qadam, the people are coming home." This reference is completely dropped by the *al-Manar* translator who also chooses not to render adverbs such as "temporarily" and "fearfully". The message that the *al-Manar* translator is trying to express is that the war is almost over, not only in al-Qadam, but also in Damascus and perhaps Syria as a whole, and that the Assad army is marching to victory confidently. This message, however, cannot be seen in the source text.

A major lexical-semantic challenge faced by translators of political discourse, especially that communicated during the Syrian revolution is related to *terminology and interpretation*. As illustrated in Section 3.4.1, the disparity of political stances of translators as well as readers may result in divergent interpretations of sensitive political terminology (Schäffner, 1997b: 136). Therefore, a translator of political rhetoric-related material may translate a specific term in line with their personal political views, excluding other valid translations. There are numerous examples in the context of the Syrian revolution where translators have favoured a certain equivalent for an ST term over another, simply because this choice reflects the political views of the translator and/or the media institution they work for. An example of this case is the translation of a TV news report by *CNN* on brutal torture in Syria, broadcast on September 5, 2012. It was subtitled into Arabic by a group of pro-revolutionary Syrian translators known as 'Free Syrian Translators' (Sep 2011):

The CNN report

> Torture victim accounts match those of former torturers like this former **secret police officer**. He defected months ago and joined the **rebel Free Syrian Army**.

Arabic subtitles provided by Free Syrian Translators

> إن شهادات ضحايا التعذيب توافق تلك الشهادات لمسؤولي تعذيب سابقين، كشهادة **ضابط المخابرات** السابق هذا. لقد انشق منذ عدة أشهر وانضم إلى **الجيش الحر**.
>
> [Torture victim accounts match those of former torturers, like this former ***mukhabarat* officer**'s account. He defected months ago and joined the **Free Army**.]

The translator belongs to a pro-revolutionary group of translators that have devoted themselves to exposing the crimes committed by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people and civil activists. He uses in the example the infamous TL Arabic term *dābiṭ muxābarāt* ("intelligence officer") as an equivalent for the ST term "secret police officer". This choice reflects the translator's desire to associate certain, mainly negative, connotations to the ST term. The term *dābiṭ muxābarāt* is widely recognised by the Syrians as someone with a brutal job typically associated with torture and abuse. Such connotations would not be present if the translator chose another equivalent, such as *dābiṭ šurṭa sirriyya* ("secret police officer"). Connotations, as illustrated in Section 3.4.1, are believed to be one of the major challenges encountered by translators of political discourse, since political discourse seems to use a language that is rich in value-laden phrases and words. The significance of connotations lies

in the fact that the way they are handled by translators discloses the translator's hidden ideological views and political opinions.

Figure 12 *A CNN report on "brutal torture" in Syria subtitled by Free Syrian Translators*

The translator's pro-revolutionary political views are manifested through the translation of the ST term "rebel Free Syrian Army". The translator eliminates the word "rebel" entirely from the TT, and renders the ST term into Arabic as *aj-Jayš al-Ḥurr* ("the Free Army"). Deletion is a translation procedure used to avoid negative connotations of a particular word or idea, in this case the word "rebel" in Arabic. There are two reasons behind the translator's choice. Firstly, unlike the English-speaking audience, the Arab audience, especially the Syrians, are familiar with the Free Syrian Army. Therefore, they do not need the word "rebel" as a definition of the FSA. Secondly, and more importantly, the translator seems reluctant to attach legitimacy to the Syrian regime by describing its military opponents as rebels. This example, in fact, highlights the importance of both terminology and connotations in translating the political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution.

Another example of the influence of the translator's personal political views on translation in the context of the Syrian revolution also comes from the work of the pro-revolutionary Free Syrian Translators group. The following is an excerpt from an article by the writer Adam Taylor on the story of a newly married couple taking their wedding pictures amidst the ruins of the destroyed Syrian city of Homs. The article was published on the *Washington Post* website on February 8, 2016, and thereafter translated into Arabic by Free Syrian Translators:

The Washington Post report

> Homs may be the clearest evidence of the destruction that the Syrian civil war has wrought upon the country. The city, which is about 100 miles north of the capital, Damascus, was once the country's third-largest, with a population of more than 600,000.

However, after Homs became a **rebel** stronghold in 2011, it was hit by a military assault by **government forces**. The ensuing battle nearly destroyed Homs and left it a husk of a city.

(Taylor, 2016)

The translation produced by Free Syrian Translators

قد تكون حمص أوضح دليل على الدمار الذي أحدثته الحرب الأهلية السورية في البلاد. تلك المدينة التي تبعد نحو 100 كيلومترا شمالي العاصمة دمشق، كانت يوماً ما ثالث أكبر مدينة في سوريا، بتعداد سكاني يزيد عن 600،000 نسمة. ومع ذلك، بعد أن أصبحت حمص معقل **الثوار** في عام 2011، تعرضت لهجوم عسكري من قبل **قوات النظام الحاكم**. تسببت المعركة التي أعقبت ذلك تقريباً بتدمير حمص ولم تترك منها إلا بقايا مدينة.

[Homs may be the most evident proof of the destruction which the Syrian civil war has brought upon the country. That city, which is about 100 miles away towards the north of the capital, Damascus, was once the third largest city in Syria, with a population of more than 600,000. Nevertheless, after Homs became a stronghold of the **revolutionaries** in 2011, it was hit by a military assault by the **ruling regime's forces**. The ensuring battle nearly destroyed Homs and left it a husk of a city.]

(Free Syrian Translators, Feb 2016)

The translator's pro-revolutionary political stance is manifested in this example through two translation decisions. The first one is the use of *maᶜqal li-aṯ-ṯuwwār* ("a stronghold of the revolutionaries") as an equivalent for the ST item "rebel stronghold", which fairly literally translates into Arabic as *maᶜqal li-al-mutamarridīn*. Describing the Syrian opposition fighters as *ṯuwwār* ("revolutionaries") instead of *mutamarridīn* ("rebels") reflects a tendency on the part of the translator to present the opposition fighters in a positive light. The terminology used by Taylor, if rendered literally into Arabic, would imply that the Syrian revolution is a rebellion against what might be understood as a legitimate authority. This tendency shown by the translator is reinforced by their second intervention in the translation; the translator has rendered the term "government forces" (fairly literally translating into Arabic as *al-quwwāt al-ḥukūmiyya*) as *quwwāt an-niẓām al-ḥākim* ("ruling regime's forces"). The translator chooses a term in the TL typically referring to non-democratic political systems, instead of using the direct equivalent for the ST term, which is a more neutral label and free of negative implications in Arabic.

Accuracy is a very important quality that must be observed when producing, interpreting, and translating political discourse. The slightest change to the wording of a political text can bring about significant changes to the meaning of that text. The following is an example that illustrates this point and shows how translation choices made by translators can substantially affect the message embedded in the source text:

The New York Times article

For decades, **Syria** has refused to confirm that it has chemical weapons. Now, facing a limited strike, its position abruptly changed to: *Oh! We do have them after all! And we want to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention! We want to show them to United Nations inspectors.*

(Kristof, 2013)

The translation produced by Free Syrian Translators

لقد رفض **النظام السوري** وعلى مدى عقود الإقرار بإمتلاكه للأسلحة الكيماوية أما الأن وبعد إداركه بأنه يواجه ضربة عسكرية محتملة فقد تغير موقفه فجأة وسارع للإعتراف بإمتلاكه لهذه الأسلحة بل وأكثر من ذلك أفصح عن نيته التوقيع على إتفاقية نزع الأسلحة الكيماوية وفتح مواقعه أمام مفتشي الأمم المتحدة.

[The **Syrian regime**, for decades, has refused to confirm that it possesses chemical weapons. Now, after it has realised that it is facing a potential military strike, its stance has changed suddenly and has rushed to confess that it possesses these weapons. Even more, it has expressed its intention to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention, and opened its locations for United Nations inspectors.]

(Free Syrian Translators, Sep 2013)

This example is an excerpt from an article by columnist Nicholas D. Kristof published on the *New York Time* website on September 11, 2013. It was thereafter translated into Arabic by Free Syrian Translators. The writer discusses the Syrian decision to scrap its chemical weapons to avoid potential US airstrikes. The translator makes a very significant change to the text by replacing the ST term "Syria" with *an-niẓām as-Sūrī* ("the Syrian regime"). By utilising the technique of substitution, the translator is attempting to hold the Syrian regime, not Syria as a country or state, responsible for any foolish policies adopted in the name of Syria, especially those related to possessing chemical weapons. This intervention again reflects the translator's anti-Assad political views, mainly manifested through choosing a negative political term like *an-niẓām as-Sūrī* ("the Syrian regime") rather than *al-ḥukūma as-Sūriyya* ("the Syrian government"), or even *ad-dawla as-Sūriyya* ("the Syrian state"), to substitute for the ST term "Syria".

The revolutionary language used by the protestors across Syria during the revolution is rich in political terms that are typically *culture-bound*, *abstract*, *value-laden*, and *historically conditioned* – four characteristics introduced in Section 3.4.3. In line with Newmark (1991: 149), this means that such political terms are often deep-rooted in the source (local Syrian) culture. They indicate sophisticated concepts and contain historical references that can be obscure in terms of meaning for the target audience. The translator should therefore not take advantage by isolating them from their original context to give them new implications in line with a certain political agenda. On the contrary, the translator in some situations may have to offer further explanations that provide the target audience with the historical and cultural background information they need to capture the real meaning embedded in the source text. The following is an excerpt from a video for a demonstration organised by Syrian protestors in the Southern province of Daraa. The video was subtitled into English and published by the Washington DC-based media monitoring and analysis institution *Memri* on December 26, 2012 (Syrian Demonstration, 2012):

أوباما، بشار هو الإرهابي.
يا عالم، بسوريا ما في إرهاب.

يا النصرة، حنّا ماعاكي للموت.

[Obama, Bashar is the terrorist.
Oh World, in Syria there is no terrorism.
Oh al-Nusra, we are **with you** to death.]

English subtitles provided by Memri

Obama, Bashar is the terrorist.
Oh World, there is no terrorism in Syria.
Oh (Jabhat) Al-Nusra, we **love you** to death.

Figure 13 *A video for Syrian protestors, subtitled and published by Memri*

Memri claims that it aims to explore "the Middle East and South Asia through their media" by bridging "the language gap between the West and the Middle East and South Asia, providing timely translations of Arabic, Farsi, Urdu-Pashtu, Dari, and Turkish media, as well as original analysis of political, ideological, intellectual, social, cultural, and religious trends" (Memri, 2016). However, critics such as Brian Whitaker charge the former Israeli military intelligence officer-founded organisation of selecting certain stories for translation that "follow a familiar pattern: either they reflect badly on the character of Arabs or they in some way further the political agenda of Israel" (Whitaker, 2012). The biased and manipulated translations by Memri were also highlighted by Mona Baker (2006).

By choosing this particular video for translation, *Memri* is trying to present a negative image of the Syrian revolution, highlighting what can be seen as a contradiction on the part of the demonstrators; on one hand they are denying all terrorism accusations, and on the other hand they are showing support for Jabhat al-Nusra, which is globally labelled a terrorist group. *Memri* selects for translation a demonstration that cannot be in any way representative of the vast majority of civil demonstrations across Syria, and goes further in using inaccurate

translations for the slogans chanted by the protestors, which serve its political agenda and underlying ideological ends. The protestors, in fact, do not express their "love" towards Jabhat al-Nusra as the translation suggests, but rather they show their solidarity with this Jihadist group, taking into consideration its joint struggle against pro-Assad troops during the revolution.

The slogan chanted in the video *ḥinnā māᶜākī l-al-mawt* ("we are with you to death") is a *culture-bound, value-laden,* and *historically conditioned* expression that may seem obscure and abstract for non-Syrians who may not be familiar with the historical and cultural background of this statement. According to the culture prevalent in the Southern province of Daraa in Syria, this expression is used to demonstrate solidarity and show sympathy. It has been actually widely used by Syrian protestors to express wholehearted support for the people of various Syrian cities attacked by pro-Assad forces. However, the translation produced by *Memri* alters this gesture of solidarity against Western accusations to a show of love and passion, an inaccurate gesture by any standards. This small yet significant intervention by the *Memri* translator seems to be aimed at distorting the positive image of the Syrian revolution by associating it with terrorism and extremism.

Since the beginning of the revolution, Israel, along with pro-Israeli organisations in the West, such as *Memri*, have tried to exploit the sufferings of the Syrian people to achieve political agendas and legitimise the existence of Israel. *Memri* has been monitoring, translating, and publishing videos produced by feuding parties. The policy adopted by *Memri* is primarily aimed at achieving three main objectives: first, highlighting extremist ideological views expressed by a few military factions, and thus presenting Syrian opposition fighters in general as terrorists; second, distorting the image of the Syrian revolution as well as Arab Syrian identity; and third bringing to the surface any possible views that recognise, appreciate, or praise Israel's existence and role in the region. On many occasions, *Memri* has resorted to manipulation of the original message embedded in the source material through translation in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. The following is an excerpt from an interview with opposition activist Kamal al-Labwani carried out by *Orient News TV* on March 19, 2014, and thereafter subtitled into English and published by *Memri* on March 31, 2014 (al-Labwani, 2014):

> لا، نظام الأسد كان وسيلة اسرائيل لقمع الشعب السوري. بس هي **المعادلة مركبة على أساس** أن الشعب السوري إذا **رفعنا** عنه الديكتاتورية، رح يروح يركب ويفوت على القدس بالسيف.
>
> [No, the Assad regime was Israel's means to oppress the Syrian people. However, **this equation is based on the [assumption]** that if **we** freed the Syrian people from dictatorship, they would go and enter Jerusalem with a sword.]

English subtitles provided by Memri

> No, the Al-Assad regime was Israel's means for oppressing the Syrian people. **This was based on people's belief** that if Syria's dictatorship was lifted, the Syrian people would storm Jerusalem with swords.

Figure 14 *Kamal al-Labwani's interview with Orient News TV, subtitled by Memri*

In the video, al-Labwani openly encourages the Syrian opposition to normalise political relations with Israel. The main concern of *Memri* seems to highlight such a friendly attitude and positive gesture of a well-known Syrian opposition figure towards Israel, and more importantly to eliminate or at least elevate any indirect accusations of Israel made by al-Labwani. He had made hints alluding to Israel's support for the Syrian regime's oppressive policies against the Syrian people in an endeavour to ensure Israeli national security. Al-Labwani, here, implies that *the Israelis* (not *people* in general, as the *Memri* translator renders it) assume that if they helped to free the Syrian people from dictatorship, the Syrians would invade Jerusalem. However, the translator uses the word "people" to refer to those who adopt this assumption. By avoiding any reflection on the real intention of the speaker through translation, *Memri* is in fact trying to preserve a positive image of Israel that is not entirely approved by Mr. al-Labwani. The technique used by *Memri* is a political tool explained in Section 3.3.1. It is known in the field of political analysis as p*assive constructions*, which is aimed at avoiding explicit reference to a particular party involved in a certain activity, creating a deliberate ambiguity to serve a hidden political agenda.

In the same interview, al-Labwani calls for the reconstruction of the Syrian mentality, making historical reconciliations in the region, in particular with the Israelis (al-Labwani, 2014). He then asks the interviewer the following question (ibid):

اليوم اللي خلق على أرض اسرائيل.. أبوه وأمه إجوا **هاجروا واعتدوا** وعملوا شي.. بتحمليه مسؤولية أبوه وأمه؟

[Today, who was born on the land of Israel and whose father and mother **immigrated and aggressed** and did things – do you hold him responsible for [the acts of] his father and mother?]

English subtitles provided by Memri

A person who was born in Israel and whose parents came and did all those things – are you going to hold him responsible for what his forefathers did?

Figure 15 *Kamal al-Labwani speaking to Orient News TV – subtitles provided by Memri*

Detailed investigation into the translation reveals that the *Memri* translator chose not to render two verbs that are already existent in the source material to English, namely *hājarū* ("[they] immigrated") and *ʻiᶜtadū* ("[they] aggressed"). This was done simply because the statement made by al-Labwani condemns the acts of the first generations of the Israelis who in fact migrated from their original homeland to Palestine and reportedly committed crimes and aggressions against the native inhabitants of Palestine. Such a slight reference to self-evident facts could substantially undermine the legitimacy of the very existence of Israel. Here lies the translator's decision to delete this reference entirely and only translate the third verb *ᶜamlū šī* as "[they] did things". This is a representative example of how political stances and ideological views adopted by *Memri* can be easily traced through its translation of the material it selects for publishing and circulation.

Despite *Memri's* endeavours to present itself as a professional monitoring and production media institution, it fails to fulfil the minimum criteria of a professional press, such as objectivity and demonstration of substantial historical, cultural, and political knowledge related to current regional and international events. As illustrated in Chapter Five on media and translation, it is essential for media organisations dealing with translation of political

discourse, which is by nature rich in historical references and culture-specific elements, to be familiar with the historical background of the event covered and discussed. *Memri* has translated and published many videos from the context of the Syrian revolution. However, the *Memri* translator in the following example proves to be entirely ignorant when it comes to the modern history of Syrian politics. A representative example is a video of an interview with Syrian cartoonist Ali Farzat conducted by and aired on *BBC Arabic TV* on June 2, 2014. In the interview, which was subtitled into English and published by *Memri* on June 10, 2014, Farzat recounts the assassination attempt on him carried out by what are believed to be intelligence agents following criticism of President Assad (Farzat, 2014):

> بنص ساحة الأمويين بتضربني السيارة نفسها.. بتطلع من ورايي وبتضربني وبتوقفني بنص الساحة. الساحة هي فيها 23 دورية أمن متواجدة **من وقت اللي استلم حزب البعث في 1963**.
>
> [In the middle of the Umayyad Square, a car hits me. It comes from behind me, and hits me, and stops me in the middle of the square. This square has 23 security patrols in it **since the Ba'ath Party took over in 1963.**]

English subtitles provided by Memri

> It was in the middle of Umayyad Square that a car hit me. In that square, there have always been 23 security patrols, ever **since Hafez Al-Assad took over the Baath Party in 1963**.

Figure 16 *Syrian cartoonist Ali Farzat in an interview with BBC Arabic TV, subtitled by Memri*

As evident from the subtitles provided by *Memri*, the late President Hafez al-Assad's name has been inserted in the translation although his name is not mentioned in the source material. In his interview, Farzat only mentions the Ba'ath Party's coup in 1963. This coup was not led by Hafez al-Assad, as one can understand from the inaccurate translation. In fact, not until 1970 did Hafez al-Assad take over in Syria following a coup known as *al-Ḥaraka at-Taṣḥīḥiyya* ("the Corrective Movement"). Such a dual mistake reflects the *Memri* translator's

incompetence as well as a lack of the historical knowledge needed by a translator to tackle translation of political discourse communicated in the context of Syrian politics. It therefore exposes *Memri's* strikingly poor professionalism and credibility.

7.4 Ideological Data Analysis: Translator's Role and Patronage

This section is devoted to analysing the data corpus in light of the theories examined in Chapter Four. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, it is frequently not possible for a translator to resist cultural, historical, social, or ideological forces. Translators of the political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution have often worked under the constant pressure of these factors, subconsciously sometimes, producing a translation that is influenced by their own reading of the source text (which is, in turn, governed by the translator's previous knowledge and experience, as explained in Section 4.3.1) as well as their cognitive socio-ideological background. On many occasions, translators have also consciously chosen to carry out deliberate manipulation of the translation, and hence forced a certain ideology upon the translation as a result of their ideological affiliations or the patron's instructions. Translation can never be perceived as a neutral activity, as Hatim and Mason (1997) admit.

This research study adopts what is perceived here as a valid proposition pointed out by al-Taher (2008: 82): The decision-making mechanism in the translation process during a developing critical conflict like the Syrian revolution goes through three circles. The creation of the source text, on the one hand, is governed by the source culture, the author's ideology, and the way ideas are processed and issues are addressed by the author. The production of the target text, on the other hand, is carried out in line with three different elements too: the target culture, the translator's ideological background and the way the translator comprehends and processes ideas. These three factors, in addition to the patron's influence, are the circles that the translation process goes through before a modified, biased and ideologically steered translation is produced.

A representative example of the influence of ideology on translators and the leading role played by ideology in producing what can be considered as an ideologically steered translation in the context of the Syrian revolution is the Arabic translation of an interview conducted by *The Daily Beast* with Zahran Alloush. Alloush is the late commander of Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam), a prominent military opposition faction fighting against both pro-Assad troops and IS (Islamic State). The interview was carried out in English and was published on the *Daily Beast* website on December 15, 2015, and thereafter translated into Arabic by Jaish al-Islam's

Press Office and published on *Orient Net* at the same date. The following is a comprehensive analysis of six excerpts from the translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office:

The Daily Beast script

> TDB: In one of your prior interviews, you said that you do not have any differences with Jabhat al Nusra, the al Qaeda franchise in Syria. You said that your sharia adviser does not disagree with the sharia adviser of al Nusra. Does that mean that you have no ideological differences with **al Qaeda**?
>
> (Alloush, 2015)

The translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office

> قلتم في إحدى مقابلاتكم أن شرعييكم لا يختلف عن شرعي جبهة النصرة، هل هذا يعني أن الخلاف بينكم وبين جبهة النصرة هو خلاف مصالح وليس خلاف عقائدي؟ ما هي الفروقات العقائدية بينكم وبين **جبهة النصرة؟**
>
> [In one of your interviews, you said that your Sharia advisers are not different to the Sharia advisers of al-Nusra. Does this mean that the dispute between you and Jabhat al-Nusra is a dispute of interests, rather than an ideology? What are the ideological differences between you and **Jabhat al-Nusra**?]
>
> (Orient Net, Dec 2015)

The question asked by the *Daily Beast* journalist in the original (English) script of the interview focuses on the ideological differences between Jaish al-Islam and al-Qaeda in general, not the form of disagreement with Jabhat al-Nusra. The question is reshaped and modified by the translator of Jaish al-Islam in the Arabic script so that the extremist ideology of Jabhat al-Nusra, which is perceived by Jaish al-Islam as a rival faction with a different Islamist ideology, is highlighted and becomes the focal point of the question. Although al-Qaeda is mentioned twice in the source text, there is not a single reference to al-Qaeda in the target text while al-Nusra is mentioned three times. This modification of the message embedded in the source text is closely related to a geographically restricted local ideological conflict between al-Nusra and Jaish al-Islam. The exclusion of any reference to al-Qaeda in general aims to focus on the shortcomings of al-Nusra in particular. This technique can be regarded as an aspect of *local semantics*, one of the structures identified by van Dijk (1995a: 26), explained in Section 4.2.4. This structure is essentially associated with ideologically dominated representations of the situation as well as biased explanations provided by a specific group to legitimise the self and negatively present the others.

The translation of Zahran Alloush's answer to the previous question is significant as it reflects the translator's awareness of the culture and ideology of the target audience (Jaish al-Islam's members, supporters, and followers). It shows an attempt to modify the translation to match these expectations. Alloush's answer to the previous question comes as follows:

The Daily Beast script

> ZA: Back then, I was referring to Abu Maria al-Qahtani, one of [al Nusra's] sharia advisers. We saw that Qahtani was showing a moderate face and we wanted to encourage

those efforts. Now al Nusra has different sharia advisers and ours have many disagreements with them, ideologically and intellectually.

(Alloush, 2015)

The translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office

هذا التصريح صدر عندما كان الشرعي العام لجبهة النصرة هو أبو مارية القحطاني، **والذي اكتشفنا من خلال أطروحاته على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي أنه طالب علم محارب للتكفير وأهله وهذا ما يتمتع به شرعيونا في جيش الإسلام ثم عَزلت جبهة النصرة الشرعي "أبو مارية"** ووضعت عوضاً عنه شرعيين نتباين معهم في كثير من المسائل الفكرية والعقدية.

[This statement was made when Jabhat al-Nusra's general Sharia advisor was Abu Maria al-Qahtani. **We realised through his propositions on social media websites that he was a scholar and fighter against *takfirism* and its followers, and these are the qualities of our Sharia advisors in Jaish al-Islam. Then, Jabhat al-Nusra discharged Abu Maria** and replaced him by Sharia advisors with whom we disagree on many intellectual and ideological issues.]

(Orient Net, Dec 2015)

The translator adds a full sentence to the target text, which does not exist in Alloush's answer in the English script: "He [Abu Maria] was a scholar and fighter against *takfirism* and its followers, and these are the qualities of our Sharia advisors in Jaish al-Islam. Then, Jabhat al-Nusra discharged Abu Maria." The extra text added to Alloush's answer in the Arabic translation serves a specific function and agenda set by the translator and/or their patron (Jaish al-Islam in this instance). It aims to provide Jaish al-Islam's supporters with further reasons to disagree with Jabhat al-Nusra by praising and highlighting the good qualities of the discharged Sharia advisor of Jabhat al-Nusra, Abu Maria, as well as the Sharia advisors of Jaish al-Islam. This procedure of addition followed by the translator is also employed in the ideological conflict with Jabhat al-Nusra; the added text implies that al-Nusra's new Sharia advisors do not have the same good qualities as Abu Maria as a scholar and fighter against *takfirism* (accusing other Muslims of apostasy). It thus provides Jaish al-Islam's supporters and the Syrian population in general with a valid justification for Alloush's answer and Jaish al-Islam's attitude against al-Nusra.

The Daily Beast script

TDB: Erbin, a town in Ghouta, includes many Christians. **How do you treat the Christians in your area? Is it true that the Christians prefer Assad to the rule of the opposition?**

(Alloush, 2015)

The translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office

عربين في الغوطة الواقعة تحت سيطرتكم عدد كبير من سكانها من المسيحيين عاشوا مجاورين لأهالي الغوطة **هل كان هذا التعايش مفروضا عليكم من النظام أم تؤمنون بالتعايش السلمي وستسعون لتطبيقه دائما؟**

[Erbin is in al-Gouta, which is under your control. A large number of its population are Christians who have lived with the people of al-Ghouta. **Was this co-existence imposed on you by the regime or do you believe in peaceful co-existence and will always seek to achieve it?**]

(Orient Net, Dec 2015)

The source text in this excerpt includes two questions: one is modified by the translator and the other is completely omitted from the target text. The first question, upon modification, carries with it its answer that reflects a positive image of Alloush and his faction. Although the original question is regarding the way the Christians are treated in the areas controlled by Jaish al-Islam, the translator adopts their own reading and interpretation of the question. The question is conveyed accordingly through the use of completely different wording as an inquiry as to whether Jaish al-Islam truly believes in, and will seek to, achieve *at-taᶜayuš as-silmī* ("peaceful co-existence") with the Christians. This is an example of a key concept discussed in Section 4.3.1, namely the role of the translator as a reader of the source text who tends to interpret the source text in line with their previous knowledge and experience, which are inevitably influenced by their ideology and beliefs. In line with this proposition, the meaning of a text can be determined by the reader's understanding, which gives the translator more freedom in forming the target text without any "restrictions" imposed by the notion of loyalty to the source text and the intention of the author (Schäffner, 1998b: 238). The Jaish al-Islam translator also chooses to delete the second question from the translation, perhaps because Alloush fails to provide a direct and comprehensive answer to the question.

The Daily Beast script

> TDB: Why do many people call you a dictator? And **what is the reason behind the demonstrations** against you?
>
> (Alloush, 2015)

The translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office

> **البعض يدعي أن الشيخ زهران** ديكتاتور **حين يتعلق الأمر بانتقاده** مما جلب له **أعداء مجانيين،** هل هذا الكلام صحيح **ومن هم المتظاهرين** ضد زهران علوش في الغوطة؟
>
> [**Some people allege that Sheikh Zahran** is a dictator **when it comes to criticising him**, which has brought him **crazy enemies**. Is this correct? **And who are the protestors** against Zahran Alloush in al-Ghouta?]
>
> (Orient Net, Dec 2015)

Five points that make this translation a striking example of a translator's production of an ideologically-steered target text need to be highlighted. First, the translator renders "many people" as *al-baᶜḍ* ("some people") and chooses to use the verb *yaddaᶜī* ("allege") as an equivalent for the ST verb "call". In this form, the translation suggests that only some people are making what the target reader would perceive as (false) allegations against the interviewee and hence the interviewer asks about the reasons behind these allegations. Second, inserting the interviewee's name preceded by his religious title *šayx* ("Sheikh") in the translation of the question attaches to the interviewee an added respect that is not found in the source text.

Third, by adding the phrase *ḥīna yataᶜallaq al-amr bi-intiqādihi* ("when it comes to criticising him"), the translator seems to restrict the motivation behind people's perception of Zahran

Alloush as a dictator to him being intolerant of criticism, excluding other qualities of dictators, such as brutality and corruption. Fourth, the translator describes those who call Alloush a dictator *'aᶜdā' majānīn* ("crazy enemies") even though this phrase does not have its root in the source text. Fifth, the interviewer asks Alloush in the original script about the reason behind the demonstrations against him, not about the identity of the protestors, as the target text implies. Asking about the identity of the demonstrators, instead of the reason behind their demonstrations, suggests that these protestors are a minority that does not represent a large segment of the people in al-Ghouta. This raises doubts as to who they are and where they come from, portraying them as intruders with hidden agendas.

The Daily Beast script

> TDB: You fought ISIS in Ghouta, Qalamoun [a southern district in the Damascus region], and in northern Syria. **You lost many of your men** in the **war against ISIS**. But Western countries still do not back you or include you in any arming project. Why?
>
> (Alloush, 2015)

The translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office

> تفرغتم عدة شهور لقتال داعش وسقط لكم **شهداء** في **حرب تطهير** محيط الغوطة من داعش **مما عرضكم لهجمة شرسة من فصائل مثل تنظيم القاعدة وجند الأقصى.** لماذا قاتلتم داعش **بهذه الشراسة وعممتم تجربة جيش الإسلام ومنهجه** في قتال داعش **بنفس مقدار قتال الأسد** للشمال ومحيط القلمون إذا كان الغرب إذا **وضعكم في نفس البوتقة مع كل الفصائل الإسلامية السورية الأخرى** ولم يشملكم بأي برنامج تدريب أو تسليح؟
>
> [You spent many months fighting Isis and you lost **martyrs** in the **cleansing war** to clear the area around al-Ghouta from Isis, **which has caused a fierce attack against you by factions like al-Qaeda and Jund al-Aqsa.** Why did you fight Isis **with such ferocity**, **generalising Jaish al-Islam's experience and approach** to fighting against Isis **as much as against Assad** to include the North and the area around al-Qalamoun even though the West **put you in the same circle with all other Syrian Islamist factions** and did not include you in any arming or training program?]
>
> (Orient Net, Dec 2015)

Seven main interventions by the translator can be traced and highlighted in this excerpt. First, the translator used the TL term *šuhadā'* ("martyrs") to describe Jaish al-Islam's fighters who were killed during the battles against IS, although the interviewer in the original script refers to them by the neutral word "men". Needless to say, the Islamist ideology of the translator here has played a crucial role in this choice, aimed at dignifying the sacrifices of Jaish al-Islam, giving the men whom the faction lost in the war a sublime Islamic status. Second, the translator describes "the war against Isis" as *ḥarb taṭhīr* ("a cleansing war") despite the fact that this term does not have any trace in the ST. This choice is aimed at reflecting positive connotations on Jaish al-Islam's military operations while presenting a negative image of the role played by IS in the region.

Third, the translator in the TT inserts a relative clause that does not exist in the ST: "which has caused a fierce attack against you by factions like al-Qaeda and Jund al-Aqsa." This addition aims at revealing the moderate face of Jaish al-Islam while exposing the extremist

views of the rival Islamist factions involved in the internal ideological conflict between the Syrian opposition groups. Fourth, the translator inserts a prepositional phrase *bi haḏihi aš-šarāsa* ("with such ferocity") in the TT to add credibility to the struggle of Jaish al-Islam against Islamic State (IS).

Fifth, the translator also adds a clause to the TT that is not mentioned in the ST: "[you] generalized Jaish al-Islam's experience and approach to fighting ISIS." The purpose of this addition may be the translator's desire to demonstrate that Jaish al-Islam is an effective established organisation that has a vision, rich experience in fighting extremist groups, and a method to implement its agendas; it is able to extend its struggle against IS institutionally to various areas across Syria. Sixth, the TT includes a reference to Jaish al-Islam's war "against Assad", which does not exist in the ST. The translator seemingly wants to remind Jaish al-Islam's members and supporters that its struggle against the Assad regime is not neglected or forgotten. This reference is deeply significant as it aims to preserve the popular support of the pro-revolutionary Syrians. Seventh, the translator again uses the procedure of addition to imply that the West has put Jaish al-Islam in the same circle as other Syrian Islamist factions. This addition has an ideological function; it is employed to demonstrate to Jaish al-Islam's supporters, who are mostly Islamists, that it identifies with other Islamist factions in Syria.

The Daily Beast script

> TDB: We have seen you going to Turkey though Ghouta is under siege. Is it true that you arrange that with the regime?
>
> (Alloush, 2015)

The translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office

> زهران علوش .. نراك **وبعض شباب الغوطة** بين فترة وأخرى في تركيا **مخترقين للحصار**، هل صحيح **ما تروجه بعض التنظيمات المقربة من داعش** بأنكم تخرجون إلى تركيا بتنسيق مع النظام؟
>
> [Zahran Alloush, we see you **and some of the young men of al-Ghouta,** from time to time, in Turkey, **breaking the siege**. Are [**the stories] promoted by some of the organisations that are close to Isis** true about you getting out to Turkey in coordination with the regime?]
>
> (Orient Net, Dec 2015)

Through the translation, the translator is trying to suggest that Zahran was not alone when he exited the besieged area of al-Ghouta. Rather, he was accompanied by *baᶜḍ šabāb al-Ġūṭa* ("some of the al-Ghouta young men"). By referring to the al-Ghouta young men, the translator is trying to draw a picture of Zahran Alloush as an ordinary man surrounded by the people of al-Ghouta. The use of the expression *muxtariqīn li-al-ḥiṣār* ("breaking the siege") in the target text is quite significant, as it implies that Alloush, in fact, broke the siege imposed on al-Ghouta without making arrangements with the regime. The ideological conflict with IS arises again in this example; the interviewer asks Alloush about the truth behind certain claims about

his travels to Turkey but she does not identify the source of these claims. The translator, however, does specify the source of such claims: *baᶜḍ at-tanẓīmāt al-muqarraba min Dāᶜiš* ("some of the organisations which are close to Isis"). This intervention by the translator aims to challenge and undermine these claims, demonstrating to public opinion that such allegations are only fabricated by extremist organisations affiliated with IS, which is disliked by the majority of Syrians.

One of the ideological structures identified by van Dijk (1995a), examined in Section 4.2.4, is the *topics* or *semantic macro-propositions* of a given discourse. They are typically used to define and provide a brief description of the information found in the discourse that discourse producers believe to be most relevant, crucial, and significant. The process of topic determination can be influenced by ideological considerations. "Ingroup speakers may be expected to detopicalize information that is inconsistent with their interests or positive self-image and conversely they will topicalize information that emphasizes negative outgroup properties" (van Dijk, 1995a: 27). A representative example of this ideological structure is the determination of the title of the Arabic (translated) interview with Zahran Alloush published on *Orient Net*:

The title of the original interview

> The Rebel Commander of Damascus: Zahran Alloush, head of the Army of Islam, talks to The Daily Beast about a four-year siege, the future of Syria, and **accusations that he's just another dictator in Islamic garb.**

(Alloush, 2015)

The title of the translated interview

> علوش في مقابلة مع صحيفة أمريكية يتحدث عن **الديمقراطية** ومستقبل سوريا
>
> [Alloush, in an interview with an American newspaper, talks about **democracy** and the future of Syria.]

(Orient Net, Dec 2015)

It is important here to start by mentioning that the title of the article (target text) is chosen by Orient Net as a publishing media outlet. It is clear that title of the Arabic (translated) interview is significantly different from the title chosen for the original interview published by *The Daily Beast*. *Orient Net* tries to present Alloush as a moderate Islamist who is open about accepting democracy and discussing the future of Syria accordingly, while the title of the source text focuses on the siege imposed on al-Ghouta and the accusations that he is an Islamic dictator. The choice made by *Orient Net* to shift the focal point of the title and ignore the reference to the accusation of dictatorship is intentional and influenced by the ideology of the translator (Jaish al-Islam's Press Office) and/or the media outlet that published the Arabic translation (*Orient Net*). This is also an illustrative example of the role of patronage (discussed in Section 4.3.3), represented here by *Orient Net*, in determining the outcome of the translation process.

The influence of ideology during the Syrian revolution has been manifested through translations produced by pro-revolutionary outlets as well as translations produced by pro-Assad media institutions, such as *al-Manar*. The following is an excerpt from an article by Patrick Cockburn published on the *Independent* website on February 23, 2014, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published as a report on the *al-Manar* website at the same date:

The Independent article

> The two most important developments so far this year are the failure of the Geneva II peace talks and Saudi Arabia's replacement of its intelligence chief, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, as director of Syrian policy, with a member of the royal family notably close to the US and hostile to al-Qa'ida. The reasons for the failure at Geneva are obvious enough and so are the consequences of that failure … What is not in doubt is that the rebels have failed to overthrow the government, though the government appears incapable of defeating them. This explains our second important development of the year which is the sidelining of Prince Bandar, who, as the head of Saudi intelligence, was in charge of directing, supplying and financing the rebels.
>
> (Cockburn, 2014)

The al-Manar translation

> وذكرت الصحيفة البريطانية أن "من دلائل هذا التغيير هو **ما جرى في اجتماع قادة المخابرات في السعودية والولايات المتحدة مؤخرا والذي تم فيه** إبعاد رئيس المخابرات السعودية بندر بن سلطان عن مهمة قيادة الملف السوري واسنادها إلى وزير الداخلية المعروف بصداقته للولايات المتحدة وعداءه للقاعدة"، واوضحت أن "**سبب التغيير هو الفشل الذريع لبندر في انجاز اي شيء، وهو ما تمثل في فشل مفاوضات جنيف الأخيرة حيث كان السؤال هو لماذا يقدم النظام السوري تنازلات وهو غير مضطر لذلك.**"
>
> [The British newspaper mentioned that "one of the signs of this change is **what happened in a recent meeting of the Saudi and US intelligence chiefs whereby** Saudi Intelligence Chief Bandar bin Sultan has been discharged from the mission of directing the Syrian file; the mission was assigned to the Interior Minister, known for his friendship with the United States and hostility towards al-Qaeda," and explained that "**the reason for the change is Bandar's abject failure to achieve anything. This was represented by the failure of the recent Geneva Negotiations where the question was why the Syrian regime would make concessions while it did not have to**."]
>
> (Al-Manar, Feb 2014)

Before carrying out an in-depth analysis of the translation of this excerpt, it is worth mentioning that the *al-Manar* translator's intervention in the translation of this article is a manifestation of an ideological conflict between the Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah and the Saudis. Hezbollah follows a hard-line Shiite ideology and adheres to the orders of *al-Walī al-Faqīh* (the Guardian Jurist) based in Iran whereas the Saudis adopt a hard-line Salafist Sunni ideology. The entire Syrian war is said to be merely an aspect of this ideological conflict. The effect of ideology on the translator can be traced in this excerpt in four main areas. First, the translator refers to a meeting of the Saudi and US intelligence chiefs even though there is no such reference in the source text. The author of the original article indicates that the replacement of Prince Bandar comes as a decision made solely by the Saudi authorities, rather than as a result of a meeting held between the Americans and the Saudis, which is not even mentioned in the source text in the first place. Second, while the author does imply that the

dismissal of Prince Bandar may be a result of the development of events in Syria, he does not speak of a failure of Prince Bandar in Syria and certainly does not state directly that Bandar's "abject failure to achieve anything" (back-translated) is the reason for his dismissal as indicated in the target text.

Third, the translator establishes a direct link between what it is inaccurately rendered into the target language as the failure of Prince Bandar to achieve anything and the failure of the Geneva Peace Talks, although this link is not quite clear in the target text. Fourth, the author states that the "reasons for the failure at Geneva are obvious enough," yet his conclusion, as indicated by the translator, is that the Syrian regime was not obliged to make concessions. The translator is attempting through their biased and manipulated translation, which is primarily driven by their ideological views and political stances, to present the Syrian regime not only as strong, but also as victorious. This view does not accurately represent what the author is saying in the source text. The author does say that "the rebels have failed to overthrow the government," but he also refers to the failure of the regime to defeat its opponents. This last reference is entirely ignored by the translator, simply because it contradicts their agenda and the message they attempt to pass on to the target reader through the translation.

The translator paraphrases the source text despite using direct quotations, which technically implies that this should be a direct and accurate translation of the source text. New sentences are added in the target text; many other sentences and ideas are ignored and omitted; and the translator's own interpretation of the source text is implemented and reflected by establishing links and making conclusions that do not have their root in the source text. All these changes to the original message are made in line with the translator's ideology; they aime to achieve a certain agenda dictated by *al-Manar* as a media outlet governed by a hard-line Shiite ideology. This example supports a proposition expressed by Lefèvere (1992a: 10), introduced in Section 4.3.3, on translation and patronage. Lefèvere (ibid) emphasises the necessity to analyse translation "in connection with power and patronage, ideology and poetics," in an attempt to expose the constant efforts devoted by patrons to use translation to promote their own ideology and undermine the other's. Translation can be employed in a strategy to "maintain" specific cultures and identities and "deal with what lies outside their boundaries" (ibid).

Al-Manar, in this instance, seems to employ the strategy of subheading – one of the extra-textual strategies pointed out by Bani (2006: 43). Information that goes beyond the actual text is offered in a bid to assist the reader in comprehending the information embedded in the text. The source content is contextualised in line with the media outlet's agendas and goals. Through this strategy, the editor is able to refer to certain concepts that would stay unrecognisable if not stated in a prime position. In line with this proposition, *al-Manar's* editor

has chosen for the translated report a subheading different to the one chosen for the original article.

The Independent article subheading

> World View: Assad cannot deliver a knock-out blow, the rebels can't unite, Moscow will not back down and the West lacks a strategy.
>
> (Cockburn, 2014)

The al-Manar report subheading

> اشارت "الإندبندنت" إلى ان "النظام السوري أصبح أكثر سيطرة على الأوضاع منه في أي وقت سابق منذ بدء الحرب"، موضحة ان "رياح التغيير التى بدأت في الشرق الأوسط تغير اتجاهها حاليا على ما يبدو بعيد مفاوضات جنيف.
>
> [*The Independent* noted that "the Syrian regime has now become more in control over the situation than ever since the beginning of the war," adding that "the winds of change that started in the Middle East are seemingly changing direction after the Geneva peace talks."]
>
> (Al-Manar, Feb 2014)

Substantial differences can be spotted between the two subheadings. The *Independent* article subheading genuinely reflects the content of the article, whereas the message embedded in the subheading chosen by *al-Manar* seems to be consistent with its ideological and political affiliations. The aim of this choice by *al-Manar* is to highlight the achievements made by the pro-Assad forces, portraying the Syrian regime as victorious in the Syrian war. However, although in the subheading *The Independent* does admit that the rebels are not in a very good position, it does not highlight any victories; in fact, it clearly states that Assad is not able to "deliver a knock-out blow" despite the lack of unity which the rebels suffer from.

Another example of *al-Manar's* biased and manipulated translations of the news reports on the Syrian revolution is the intervention made by the translator in the translation of the following text. It is an excerpt from an article by Adam Entous and Rima Abushakra, published on the *Wall Street Journal* website on December 11, 2013, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published as a report on the *al-Manar* website on December 12, 2013:

The Wall Street Journal article

> The Islamic Front is a recently formed **alliance of the largest Islamist rebel groups that excludes the two main al Qaeda-linked rebel groups—the Nusra Front and the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham**—and is considered the more moderate faction among Islamist rebel groups.
>
> (Entous and Abushakra, 2013)

The al-Manar translation

> وأعادت "وول ستريت جورنال" إلى الأذهان أن "الجبهة الإسلامية" التي سيطرت على مقر "الجيش الحر"، **شكلت مؤخرا ائتلافا مع جماعتي "جبهة النصرة" و"الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام" المرتبطتين بتنظيم "القاعدة."**
>
> [The Wall Street Journal has reminded that the Islamic Front, which took over the Free Army's headquarter, **has recently formed a coalition with the two groups of Jabhat**

al-Nusra and the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, affiliated with al-Qaeda organisation.]

(Al-Manar, Dec 2013)

The al-Manar translator makes a significant intervention in the translation of the above excerpt. It is clearly indicated in the source text that the Islamic Front, which is an Islamist opposition coalition reportedly backed by Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar and fighting against pro-Assad forces, excludes both Jabhat al-Nusra and Isis. That being said, the translator states in the target text that the coalition actually includes these two al-Qaeda affiliated groups. This manipulation of the original message embedded in the source text is clearly consistent with the ideology of *al-Manar*, which strives to defame and denigrate the groups opposed to the Assad regime. This is especially the case for those that adopt a Salafist Sunni ideology, such as the Islamic Front and Jaish al-Islam, both of whom are often supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. *Al-Manar* is aware that establishing a link between the Islamic Front and al-Qaeda could deprive the former of any possible international support, thus legitimising the rule of the Assad regime as a partner in the war against terror.

Another manifestation of the ideological conflict between Hezbollah, represented by its media outlet *al-Manar*, and anti-Assad Syrian Islamist factions through translation is the translator's choices adopted while rendering the following text into Arabic. This is an excerpt from a report by Ian Black, published on the *Guardian* website on November 7, 2013, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published in the form of a report on the *al-Manar* website on November 8, 2013:

The Guardian report

The force excludes al-Qaida affiliates such as Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham and Jabhat al-Nusra, but embraces more **non-jihadi Islamist and Salafi units**.

(Black, 2013)

The al-Manar translation

يذكر أن "جيش الاسلام" تم تشكيله في سبتمبر/أيلول الماضي، وهو يضم 43 من **المجموعات المسلحة الاسلامية والسلفية**، لكنه لا يضم "جبهة النصرة" و"الدولة الاسلامية في العراق والشام" المرتبطتين بـ "القاعدة."

[It is worth mentioning that Jaish al-Islam was formed last September, and it consists of 43 **armed Islamist and Salafist groups**, excluding Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, affiliated with al-Qaeda.]

(Al-Manar, Nov 2013)

The importance of terminology in translation of political discourse is apparent in this example. The author of the original article discusses Saudi Arabia's funding of anti-Assad Islamist formations, focusing on Jaish al-Islam functioning in al-Ghouta around Damascus. Black clearly states that this newly formed faction embraces "non-jihadi" Islamist and Salafi units.

By describing the components of Jaish al-Islam as non-jihadi, the author admits that this new formation does not follow a jihadi agenda, which is defined in the West as extremist and terrorist. However, the translator seems to deliberately drop the term "non-Jihadi" in the translation, rendering the phrase into the target language as *al-majmūᶜāt al-musallaḥa al-Islāmiyya wa as-Salafiyya* ("armed Islamist and Salafist groups"). This omission is aimed by the translator at discrediting Assad's opponents, removing any reference in the text that could present a positive image of the Islamist and revolutionary factions.

The interventions made by the translators in all the aforementioned examples expose the influence of ideology on the translators' performance. Whether or not they come in the form of deliberate manipulation of the source text, they highlight the role of ideology in determining the outcome of the translation process during the Syrian revolution and the subsequent armed conflict between revolutionary and Islamist factions and the pro-Assad forces backed by their allied Shiite militias. This is also done by preferring certain TL equivalents that serve the ideological agenda of the translator and/or the patron represented by the publishing media outlet to others.

7.5 Media Discourse Analysis: Strategies and Techniques Used by Media Outlets

This section is devoted to analysing the data corpus in light of the theories examined in Chapter Five. The influence of ideology on translation has been investigated and traces of the translator's and/or publishing media outlet's ideological views have been detected in excerpts from translated political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution. It is nevertheless essential to highlight the role of the media in forcing certain political and ideological views on the translations during the revolution. Although the translation process may have gone unnoticed and remained absent in an area where the supreme concern is to deliver news to the audience, it involves procedures that may have affected the content and style of translated news items. Before a political statement, interview, or article reaches the target audience, i.e. the audience speaking a different language from the language of the media material, it often goes through a long and complicated chain of textual transformations between two or more languages. These transformations are a result of a set of processes that include initial editing, summarisation, translation into the target language, further editing, transferring into a media outlet, adaptation to the publisher's textual style, and shortening to fit in the space allocated for it by the publisher (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 9).

The role of the media in manipulating and influencing the translation of political discourse during the Syrian revolution, politically and ideologically, can be traced through the translations produced by pro-regime media outlets of political articles and reports primarily published in Western newspapers. An example of this is the work of a pro-regime news outlet called *Syria Now*. The following is an excerpt from an article by Patrick Cockburn published in English on the *Independent* website on February 13, 2016, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published in the form of a report by *Syria Now* on February 14, 2016:

The Independent article

> Their success provoked Russian military intervention on 30 September which shifted the balance of power in the war in favour of **Assad** to a degree that could only be reversed by the direct intervention of the Turkish army … **Saudi Arabia** and Turkey no longer have the arm lock over Western policy in the war that they once had, when it was assumed that **their Syrian allies** and proxies would win and **Assad** would go … **Regional powers such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qata**r failed to overthrow **Assad**, and have achieved none of their war aims. Iran and **the Shia coalition** it leads have been much more successful.
>
> (Cockburn, 2016)

The Syria Now report

> ويرى الكاتب أن التدخل الروسي قلب الموازين في سوريا لصالح **الجيش السوري** وأن هذا لا يمكن تغييره دون التدخل المباشر للجيش التركي ... ويرى الكاتب أن تركيا **وسلطات بني سعود** لم تعد لهما السيطرة السابقة على السياسة الغربية بشأن الموقف في سوريا بعد أن تبين أن **القوات الموالية لهما** ليست قادرة على الانتصار وعلى "إسقاط" **الحكومة السورية** ... وفشلت **مملكة بني سعود والنظام التركي ومشيخة قطر** في الإطاحة **بالحكومة السورية** أو تحقيق أي من أهدافهم في سوريا، بينما كانت إيران وحلفاؤها أكثر نجاحا.
>
> [The writer believes that the Russian intervention has shifted the balance of power in Syria in favour of the **Syrian army** and that this cannot be changed without the direct intervention of the Turkish army … and the writer sees that Turkey and **the House of Saud's authorities** do not have the control they enjoyed previously over the Western policy in Syria after they have realised that **their allied forces** are not able to achieve victory and "topple" **the Syrian government** … **the House of Saud's Kingdom, along with the Turkish regime and the sheikhdom of Qatar**, have failed to overthrow the **Syrian government** or achieve any of their goals in Syria, whereas Iran and **its allies** have been more successful.]
>
> (Syria Now, Feb 2016)

Three main interventions can be spotted in the translation of this extract, which reflect the political views of the media outlet that conducted the translation. First, the translation choices made by the translator express a tendency to legitimise the rule of Assad in Syria and delegitimise the pro-opposition regional forces, in particular Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar. On three occasions, the mention of "Assad" in the source text is rendered by the translator either as *al-ḥukūma as-Sūriyya* ("Syrian government") or as *aj-Jayš as-Sūrī* ("Syrian army"). This aims to emphasise the legitimacy of Assad's rule; the translator wants to say that Assad does not represent himself alone, or even a minority of the Syrians. Rather, he represents a legitimate government; his forces are in fact the official Syrian Army and must be termed and labelled accordingly in the text.

On the other hand, the translator seems keen on delegitimising the regional governments that support the opposition by indirectly questioning their legitimacy to rule their countries. "Turkey" is rendered as *an-niẓām at-Turkī* ("the Turkish regime") – a label typically associated with dictatorships and authoritarian political systems. "Saudi Arabia", in two different places, is also translated as *suluṭāt banī Saᶜūd* ("the House of Saud's authorities") and *mamlakat banī Saᶜūd* ("the House of Saud's Kingdom"). This is to say that the Saudi policy only represents the Saudi royal family and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the general population of the kingdom. The same applies to the translation of "Qatar" as *mašyaxat Qaṭar* ("the sheikhdom of Qatar").

Second, the translator chooses to omit the word "Syrian" from the ST phrase "their Syrian allies", rendering it in the target text as *al-quwwāt al-muwāliya lahumā* ("their allied forces") in reference to the opposition forces. This omission perhaps aims to question the identity of these forces, thus delegitimising the role they play in the Syrian war. This procedure adopted by the *Syria Now* translator is in fact one of the strategies identified by Gambier (2006: 14), illustrated in Section 5.7. They are employed to transform news items in line with the media outlet's guidelines and criteria. Third, in line with another strategy pointed out by Gambier, substitution, the *Syria Now* translator chooses to render the ST phrase "Iran and the Shia coalition" as *Iran wa ḥulafā'uha* ("Iran and its allies), substituting "the Shia coalition" with *ḥulafā'uha* ("its allies"). This substitution is aimed at removing an important indication to the nature and ideology of pro-Assad troops on the ground from the text in order to maintain a positive image of Assad as a secular, non-sectarian leader.

This third intervention by the translator represents one of the strategies and procedures pointed out by Loupaki (2010), explained in Section 5.8. They are often employed by translators working on the translation of texts that contain ideological elements related to conflict. This strategy aims to erase ideological conflict in the target text by removing or substituting microelements that refer to ideological conflict from the target text (ibid: 66). The translator has removed strong and tense ideological terms in the target text, neutralising them by using more general and neutral terminology.

Syria Now primarily selected this article for translation in accordance with a set of standards and principles, most of which are ideological and political. It was then represented linguistically and technically in a certain way that served the agenda of the media institution. Throughout this translated report, the editor and/or translator employs a technique identified by Shunnaq (1992: 36) as 'managing': an act of "steering" undertaken by a media outlet to employ a given story or news item in the service of a specific agenda. In order to implement this technique, the *Syria Now* translator/editor has used indirect quotation, providing

additional space for transformation of the original message. These concepts are explained and richly illustrated in Section 5.3.

Another example that highlights the effect of ideologies and agendas dedicated by media outlets on the translation of political discourse during the revolution is the work of the pro-regime Syrian news channel, *Sama TV*. The following is an excerpt from a report by Daniel Larison, primarily published on the *American Conservative* website on January 4, 2016, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published on the *Sama TV* website on January 11, 2016:

The American Conservative report

> The U.S. very mildly reproved the Saudis for their slew of executions, including the killing of the **regime critic** Nimr al-Nimr, but the Saudi government reportedly "doesn't care" if it has upset Washington with its actions … The U.S. has spent most of the last year enabling a disastrous war to **placate Riyadh and its allies**, but our reckless **client governments** are unsurprisingly never satisfied no matter how much the U.S. supports **them**.
>
> (Larison, 2016)

The Sama TV translation

> مرات قليلة تلك التي وبخت فيها الولايات المتحدة السعودية لتنفيذها سلسلة إعدامات كان آخرها إعدام الشيخ **المعارض الأبرز** للحكومة السعودية، بيد أن التقارير تظهر أن الحكومة السعودية غير آبهة أصلا إن كانت تصرفاتها تغضب واشنطن أم لا.
>
> أمضت الولايات المتحدة غالبية السنة الماضية (2015)، وهي تحاول **استرضاء الحليف والزبون السعودي** فدعمت حرب السعودية الكارثية على اليمن إلى أقصى حد، لكن ذلك لم يكن كفيلا باسترضاء أو تهدئة روع **الحكومة السعودية** المتهورة.
>
> [Only on a few occasions, did the US reprove Saudi Arabia for carrying out a series of executions, the last of which is the execution of **the most prominent Saudi government critic**. However, the reports show that the Saudi government does not care whether its actions have upset Washington or not.
>
> The US has spent most of the last year (2015) attempting to **placate the Saudi ally and client.** It has therefore supported the disastrous Saudi war on Yemen to the maximum extent. However, this never satisfied the reckless **Saudi government**.]
>
> (Sama TV, Jan 2016)

Due to the support provided by Saudi Arabia for the armed opposition in Syria, pro-regime media outlets have expressed a great hostility towards the kingdom. This hostility is manifested through two decisions made by the *Sama TV* translator in this example. First, the translator describes the Saudi government critic Nimr al-Nimr as *al-abraz* ("the most prominent") even though this definition simply does not exist in the source text. The aim here is to attach more importance and added symbolic value to the character of al-Nimr as well as his execution. This is in order to intensify the crisis and justify and promote the anti-Saudi propaganda. This decision made by the translator is consistent with Fowler's (1991: 110-5) proposition (illustrated in Section 5.4) that using evaluative adjectives and adverbs is one of the main characteristics of news articles. It is also a manifestation of a key tool of manipulation introduced in Section 5.9, primarily proposed by Gambier (2006: 10) – hyperbole as "a

rhetorical device used to highlight, intensify, and amplify selected elements of the image of reality," which are often aimed at persuading the audience in a communicative environment. Although this device is typically related to literary works, there are numerous examples where it is employed by translators of political discourse during the Syrian revolution to promote an ideological agenda and/or achieve specific political goals.

The second intervention made by the pro-regime media outlet in the translation of this excerpt is the substitution of the ST phrase, "Riyadh and its allies", with *al-ḥalīf wa az-zubūn as-Saᶜūdī* ("the Saudi ally and client"), and the ST phrase, "client governments", with *al-ḥukūma as-Saᶜūdiyya* ("Saudi government"). This apparently aims to give the impression that the problem for the US is the government of Saudi Arabia in particular, excluding the rest of the allied governments in the region stated in the source text. These governments in fact include most of the Gulf countries as well as Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco, all of which have participated, alongside Saudi Arabia in the Arab military operation in Yemen. This choice made by *Sama TV* is consistent with the strategy of substitution introduced in Section 5.7, pointed out by both Gambier (2006: 14) and Bani (2006: 42). It is employed to transform news items in line with the media outlet's guidelines and criteria. This strategy is used in this example to alter the focus and personalise the problem (ibid).

Despite a few interventions, the translator of this article generally seems to follow the strategy of 'monitoring' identified by Hatim and Mason's (1990) and Shunnaq (1992: 36), explained in Section 5.3. The translator seems to monitor, rather than manage, the message embedded in the source text, avoiding major changes to the translation. Nevertheless, the selection of this particular article for translation reflects a tendency to choose those news items that correspond with the media institution's goals, ignoring those that contradict them. The concept of selection, primarily proposed by Shunnaq (1994: 112), is explained in Section 5.3.

JB News is another pro-regime Syrian news website that conducts and publishes, in the form of news reports, Arabic translations of articles originally published by international newspapers in English or other languages. Like many other news outlets, *JB News* has employed various strategies and techniques in an attempt to influence the content of the translated news material in line with the media outlet's political and ideological goals and agendas. The following are four excerpts from an article by Robert Ellis published on the *Independent* website on February 17, 2016, and thereafter translated into Arabic and published in the form of a report by *JB News* on February 18, 2017:

The Independent article

> [I]t is three-dimensional chess with nine players and no rules, as one US strategic analyst said.

> The latest ray of light - the accord reached by the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) last week in Munich, looks to be extinguished by **Russia's bombing of hospitals and schools in northern Syria, causing dozens of civilian casualties**.
>
> (Ellis, 2016)

The JB News report

> وكتب إيليس في مقالته التي نشرتها الصحيفة الخميس أن الوضع في سوريا يذكر بطاولة الشطرنج الثلاثية الأبعاد التي يتحكم بها اللاعبون بدون قواعد، قائلاً إن مهمة مجموعة دعم سوريا تحت إشراف الأمم المتحدة في وضع حد للعنف تلقى صعوبات بسبب **التحريض العسكري من قبل أنقرة.**
>
> [Ellis wrote in his article published in the newspaper on Thursday that the situation in Syria reminds of three-dimensional chess managed by players without rules. He said that the mission of the International Syria Support Group aimed at putting an end to violence was facing difficulties due to **Ankara's military incitement**.]
>
> (JB News, Feb 2016)

The *JB News* translator seems to make one main intervention in the translation of this excerpt. Although the source text clearly states that the efforts led by the International Syrian Support Group have been "extinguished" by the Russian operation, which targeted "hospitals and schools in northern Syria, causing dozens of civilian casualties," the translator chooses to point out to *at-taḥrīḍ al-ᶜaskarī min qibal Anqara* ("Ankara's military incitement") as a key challenge facing the ISSG's mission to bring about peace in Syria. This transformation in the target text is consistent with the pro-Assad political views adopted by *JB News*. It mainly aims to present anti-Assad governments and forces, exemplified here by the Turkish army, in a negative way. On the other hand, it strives to omit any negative reference to the role played by Russia in Syria.

This technique employed by the media outlet in this example is in line with the strategy of substitution as a key strategy introduced in Section 5.7, primarily identified by Gambier (2006: 14). It aims to transform news items according to the media outlet's political views, agenda, and ideological beliefs. This choice made by the translator also reflects a tendency to eliminate a particular conflict from the text, introducing a new one. This is another strategy proposed by Loupaki (2010), explained in Section 5.8, aimed at presenting new aspects of political and/or ideological conflict in the target text (ibid: 68). This has been achieved in this instance through two procedures: omission of the reference to the negative effects of the Russian intervention, and addition of the reference to a potential Turkish military operation in Syria. This is done to neglect certain ideological/political textual units that do not adhere to or serve the media outlet's objectives and agendas, attracting the reader's attention to different opinions. A Russian-Western conflict has been eliminated in the target text while a Turkish-Western conflict has been introduced. The procedure of addition has involved a phrase bearing negative implications, *at-taḥrīḍ al-ᶜaskarī* ("military incitement").

The choice made by the translator/editor of *JB News* also represents an aspect of framing – a concept illustrated in Section 5.9, identified by Gambier (2006: 11). This technique is widely employed in news production and translation as a tool of manipulation to provide "frames of reference, or highly stereotyped representations of specific situations, to make the event accessible to the public" (ibid). The frame used in this example aims to influence the way target readers interpret not only the target text, but also the political process and the military action in Syria as a whole. The potential Turkish operation has been framed in a new context, and is therefore given a new meaning: an action that constitutes an obstacle to the political efforts of the Western and international powers in Syria.

The Independent article

> This is, in fact, President Erdogan's last bite at the apple, as his strategy of overthrowing **Bashar al-Assad's Shia-backed regime** has been thwarted by Russia's intervention.
>
> (Ellis, 2016)

The JB News report

> واعتبر الصحفي أنه حانت الفرصة الأخيرة للرئيس التركي رجب طيب أردوغان لتغيير شيء ما في الحرب السورية، إذ إن استراتيجيته في إسقاط **الحكومة السورية** باءت بالفشل بعد التدخل الروسي.
>
> [The journalist considered that this is the last chance for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to change something in the Syrian War. This is because his strategy to topple **the Syrian government** has failed after the Russian intervention.]
>
> (JB News, Feb 2016)

The translator's choice of rendering the ST phrase "Bashar al-Assad's Shia-backed regime" as *al-ḥukūma as-Sūriyya* ("Syrian government") is significant and seems to represent a general tendency on the part of the media outlet to legitimise the Syrian regime, presenting it as a legitimate, patriotic, and secular government despite its reportedly sectarian behaviour. Accordingly, the word "regime", which is associated with dictatorships and repressive political systems, has been replaced by a neutral term, *al-ḥukūma* ("government"). In addition to this, the reference to the nature and identity of the regime's allies, who are mostly Shiite, has been omitted in the target text in order to maintain the secular image of the regime and deny the ideological nature of its Shiite sectarian allied forces, such as Iran and Hezbollah. In fact, the translator's decisions and choices are not isolated. Rather, they are systematically consistent with the general political discourse adopted by pro-Assad media outlets, which actually contradicts the regime's actions and behaviour.

The strategy of omission followed here by the translator is illustrated in Section 5.7. It is identified by Gambier (2006: 14) as one of four strategies often employed to transform news items in line with the media outlet's guidelines and criteria. In this example, the translator/editor has chosen to omit a particular piece of information embedded in the source text, simply because it is not consistent with the political discourse adopted by *JB News* and

does not serve its pro-Assad political agenda. According to Bani (2006: 42), this strategy is called ‘cutting’, whereby a cultural element is omitted in line with political and ideological considerations.

This omission also serves as part of another strategy that is pointed out by Loupaki (2010), alongside three strategies and techniques often employed by translators working on the translation of texts that contain ideological elements related to conflict (Section 5.8). By omitting the reference to the Shiite support for the Assad regime in the target text, the translator erases ideological conflict in the translation. The reference is neutralised by omitting terms that carry an ideological value, such as “Shia-backed regime”. Instead, more general and neutral words are used, such as *al-ḥukūma as-Sūriyya* (“Syrian government”). The translator erases a reference to a significant aspect of the on-going ideological conflict in Syria. The aim is to present a desired image of the conflict as a conflict between Syrians and terrorists, rather than sectarian Shiites and a Sunni majority, or even an oppressive regime and freedom fighters.

The Independent article

> The most ominous threat is Turkey’s call for a cross-border operation, ostensibly directed at Isis, but **which will forestall** Kurdish plans for an autonomous administration along the Turkish border. Turkey’s plans are seconded by Saudi Arabia and its gung-ho minister of defence, King Salman’s son, Mohammed bin Salman, **who is clearly not content with just the Saudis’ war against the Houthi rebels in Yemen.**
>
> (Ellis, 2016)

The JB News report

> وبين الصحفي أن "أكثر تهديد مشؤوم أطلقته تركيا هو الإعلان عن إمكانية بدء عملية برية في سوريا لمحاربة داعش، **حسب زعمها، إلا أنها موجهة فعليا** ضد الأكراد وسعيهم إلى إقامة حكم ذاتي قرب الحدود التركية. فيما تلقى الخطط التركية تأييدا من السعودية ووزير دفاعها محمد بن سمان، الواثق من نفسه ولكن **غير الراضي فعليا عن الحرب السعودية في اليمن ضد الحوثيين**."
>
> [The journalist explained that “the most ominous threat made by Turkey is the announcement of a possibility for launching a ground operation in Syria to fight against Isis, **according to its allegation**. However, **it in fact targets** the Kurds and their endeavours to establish an autonomous administration near the Turkish border. The Turkish plans are supported by Saudi and its minister of defence, Muhammad bin Salman, who is self-confident, **yet not really content with the Saudi war in Yemen against the Houthis.**”]
>
> (JB News, Feb 2016)

The *JB News* translator has interfered in the translation of this excerpt in two different areas. First, the translator tries to question the real purpose of Turkey’s cross-border operation. Although the author himself raises these doubts in the source text, the translator seems to use extra linguistic tools to intensify this atmosphere of scepticism. The author forecasts that if the operation takes place, it will actually “forestall Kurdish plans for an autonomous administration.” However, the translator stresses that “it in fact targets” the Kurds and their endeavours to establish an autonomous administration. While the focus of the author’s

statement lies on the happening of the action in the future, the translator's statement focuses on the purpose and target of the operation. These doubts are levelled up by the translator by adding the phrase *ḥasab zaᶜmiha* ("according to its allegation"). This added phrase suggests that the Turkish statement is in fact an allegation that is to be questioned and needs verification.

Second, the translator in the last sentence of this excerpt makes a mistake in the translation, which may be seen as a deliberate manipulation of the message embedded in the source text. The ST sentence implies that Prince Mohammed bin Salman is not happy with only one war in Yemen, and that he seems willing to support the Turkish efforts to launch another one in Syria. However, the translator states in the target text that the Saudi minister of defence is not content with the Saudi war in Yemen. The inaccurate translation can be seen as an attempt by the translator to highlight what he presents as a hidden internal conflict within the Saudi government and royal family in which Prince Mohammed is not happy with the decisions made by his king regarding the situation in Yemen.

The *JB News* report uses direct quotation in this excerpt, which according to Shunnaq (1992: 36), indicates a form of monitoring where the situation is supposed to be neutrally described. However, the aforementioned interventions suggest otherwise. In Section 5.3, it is shown how the use of reporting verbs like *claimed*, *regretted*, *alleged*, and *confirmed* reflects the personal stance and opinion of the reporter (ibid: 107). In line with this proposition, the use of the phrase *ḥasab zaᶜmiha* ("according to its allegation") reflects the translator's personal standpoint and desire to impose certain meanings on the translation.

By reinforcing the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, which is already present in the source text, the translator seems to reproduce ideological conflict in the target text – a strategy identified by Loupaki (2010) as explained in Section 5.8. This has been achieved by literal importation of original lexical choices from the source text. However, the translator has attempted to intensify the conflict by using extra linguistic tools as previously illustrated. The translator also uses an *interpretative language*; the source text is not only translated, but also interpreted according to the translator's agenda, ideology, and political views. This is represented by using an *evaluative language*, such as *ḥasab zaᶜmiha* ("according to its allegation") reflecting the translator's interpretation of the text, which is ultimately influenced by their political stance.

The Independent article

> Consequently, **Prime Minister Davutoglu announced Turkey had "no immediate plans" for such an operation** despite a military build-up on the Syrian border.
>
> (Ellis, 2016)

The JB News report

وأضاف أنه **بغض النظر** عن تصريح رئيس الوزراء التركي أحمد داوود أوغلو في وقت سابق بأن أنقرة "لا تملك خططا فورية" لتنفيذ عملية برية في سوريا، **إلا أن التعزيزات العسكرية التركية عند الحدود مع سوريا، واضحة**.

[He added that **regardless of** Turkish Prime Minister Davutoglu's previous statement that Ankara "had no immediate plans" to carry out a ground operation in Syria, **the Turkish military reinforcements on the border with Syria are clear.**]

(JB News, Feb 2016)

The translator here makes a subtle, yet significant, change to the text by adding *biġaḍḍ an-naẓar* ("regardless of") to the TT. This stylistically minor change brings about a fundamental transformation in the semantics of the sentence. It alters the focus from one piece of information to another. In the source text, the focal point in the sentence is the Turkish prime minister's announcement that Turkey has no plans for a military operation. However, starting this part of the sentence with *biġaḍḍ an-naẓar* ("regardless of") shifts the emphasis to the second part as if the translator wants to attract the target reader's attention to the Turkish military build-up on the Syrian border. Less importance is attached to Davutoglu's statement, which rules out any "immediate plans" to carry out a military offensive. This reverses the pattern of foregrounding and backgrounding in the TT.

The semantic transformation in this respect can be seen as an employment of 'understatement' by the translator as a figure of speech to "intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is" (Literary Devices, 2015). The understated information here is of course the Turkish prime minister's announcement. The translator uses *biġaḍḍ an-naẓar* ("regardless of") as a tool to implement this technique. The same tool is used to apply another technique – hyperbole, which is defined by Gambier (2006: 10) as "a rhetorical device used to highlight, intensify, and amplify selected elements of the image of reality." It is often aimed at persuading the audience in a communicative environment. Hyperbole is used in this context to place an increased emphasis on the presence of Turkish military forces on the border with Syria. The employment of both understatement and hyperbole, which are introduced and explained in Section 5.9, aims to promote a certain political agenda, portraying Turkey as a threat to regional and international peace. By using understatement and exaggeration, media outlets seek to persuade the public of the truthfulness of certain claims embedded in their political discourse, urging the reader to adopt the media outlet's political views.

A comprehensive overview of the translation of the *Independent* article provided by *JB News* suggests that the text has been fundamentally recontextualised and syntactically and semantically transformed during the translation process. Since most target readers do not have access to the full article in its original English version due to obvious linguistic boundaries, they can only read a few quotes and extracts selected carefully and intentionally by *JB News* to be included in the translated report. Therefore, it is not possible for target readers to estimate

the amount of information excluded by the publishing media outlet. They do not have the privilege to read the original content in full to find out that the following two sentences, for instance, are in fact missing and have not been included in the *JB News* report (Ellis, 2016):

- The cornerstone of the accord is UN Security Council Resolution 2254 of 18 December 2015, which also demands that all parties immediately cease attacks against all civilian objects, including medical facilities and personnel.
- Foreign Minister Lavrov has stated that the main result of the accord is the confirmation of this resolution and has expressed a common determination to help alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. Unfortunately, these good intentions are undermined by actions on the ground.

These sentences have been excluded because they imply information that challenges what the media outlet is trying to achieve, contradicting the message that *JB News* is trying to pass on to the target reader. The target text is seemingly meant to expose the expected Turkish military operation as the main threat to peace endeavours in Syria. However, the first sentence emphasises the need for a ceasefire in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, whereas the Assad-allied Russian forces were carrying out deadly airstrikes against civilians and medical facilities. The second sentence also highlights the contradictions between Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's statements and the Russian troops' offensive on the ground: "these good intentions are undermined by actions on the ground." Therefore, both sentences, alongside others, are not included in the *JB News* translated report.

The target reader cannot check if the sequence of the original article has been changed or even manipulated to produce a different meaning other than the meaning intended by the author of the original article (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 7). The decisions made by *JB News* whilst translating and editing the *Independent* article are consistent with the strategy of recontextualisation pointed out by Schäffner and Bassnett (2010) as well as the strategy of reorganisation identified by Gambier (2006: 14). Both strategies, which are introduced in Chapter Five, are employed to transform news items in line with the media outlet's guidelines and criteria.

The content of the original article has been reorganised and restructured by *JB News* by redistributing the information. Certain sentences have been omitted, others have been modified, and the sequence of the story details has been reshaped. This may entail "permutation of individual lexical items, but also extensive revamps of information at a higher textual level" (ibid). The employment of this re-organising procedure aims to comply with the goals of the news organisation publishing the target text.

The three previous sections were dedicated to exposing the influence of ideological convictions and political views on the translator's decisions. They also highlighted, through

illustrative examples, the role of patronage in determining the outcome of the translation process as well as the various strategies and techniques adopted by media outlets involved in the translation of political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution. The following section will demonstrate how competing narratives have manifested themselves in translation during the Syrian conflict.

7.6 Narrative Analysis: Manifestations of Conflicting Narratives

This section is devoted to analysing the data corpus in light of the theories introduced in Chapter Six. Whatever roles people occupy in life, and whatever activities they participate in, they remain part of a conflictive environment, which they are influenced by and concurrently contribute to shaping. The Syrian revolution is considered one of the biggest conflicts in the Middle East and even the wider world. This is with regards to the number of people affected, the nations involved, and minor conflicts resulting in neighbouring countries. It has not only influenced the geographical area in which it occurs, and does not only concern itself with a certain nation, but it has also crossed political and social boarders, exerting a profound impact on a larger regional, or even the global population.

The main function of translation is to facilitate communication across linguistic boundaries. It therefore becomes an imperative aspect of the conflict, needed by opponents and disputing parties to legitimise and promote their descriptions of the conflict, while undermining the narratives adopted by rival parties. Competing popular narratives produced by the revolutionary and pro-regime forces during the conflict represent a typical example of discursive dispute at all political, ideological, and social levels. Translation has proved an integrated part of the Syrian conflict, playing a vital role in describing, shaping, and unfolding its events.

This section attempts to apply narrative theory on the discursive dispute during the Syrian revolution, examining the way translation operates in this environment of conflicting narratives. It aims to present representative examples highlighting the role of translation in shaping conflicting narratives during the revolution in light of the various types and features of narrativity. It also seeks to implement the concept of framing, discussed in Chapter Six, on the data corpus, examining the different modes of narrative framing in translation.

The narrativity of the Syrian revolution is frequently manifested in a series of banners produced and carried by a group of civil activists from the Syrian city of Kafranbel. The writings on these banners represent the demands of the Syrian revolution, reflecting anti-

Assad revolutionary views almost since the outbreak of the uprising in March, 2011. Arabic, English, and sometimes other languages, such as Russian and Turkish, are used to criticise standpoints and stances adopted by various international, regional, and local parties regarding the Syrian conflict.

The significance of these banners is that they express the Syrian revolutionary discourse, constituting a rich multi-lingual record of the intellectual aspect of the revolution. They reflect the attitudes taken by anti-Assad protestors towards the events of the Syrian uprising over five years of conflict. The English banners are not exact translations of the Arabic ones. Rather, they are meant to address an English-speaking audience in the West, thus expressing ideas and conveying messages that concern this particular audience. However, while both types of banners (English and Arabic) are manifestations of the same revolutionary discourse, they are merely formed, worded, presented, and employed differently to fulfil certain agendas in line with the interests of the Syrian revolution.

Temporal and spatial framing is one of the main aspects of framing identified by Baker (2006), expounded upon in Section 6.5. In the context of the Syrian revolution, the protestors of Kafranbel employed this form of temporal and spatial framing, choosing specific texts that depict a certain narrative, and placing them in new temporal and spatial environments. The audience is thus encouraged to make a connection between this narrative and others that may be more up-to-date even though its events actually belong to different temporal settings or take place in a different geographical area (Baker, 2006: 112).

The following are four examples of the employment of this aspect of framing by the Kafranbel activists:

Example (1) (Figure 17)

> The world foolishly makes another **Hitler** from Putin who is going to make it bleed to death.
>
> (Kafranbel Banners, Jan 2016)

Example (2) (Figure 18)

> **We had a dream** but Assad turned it into nightmare, the world was watching but never ever tried to wake us up.
>
> (Kafranbel Banners, 28 Nov 2015)

Example (3) (Figure 19)

> **We have a dream**: No fly zone – we want to live.
>
> (Kafranbel Banners, 21 Mar 2015)

Example (4) (Figure 20)

> The white House is not white anymore due to Obama's policy in Syria. It needs new **Lincoln** to whiten it again.
>
> (Kafranbel Banners, Jul 2014)

In the first example, the reader is encouraged to establish a connection between the narrative of Nazi dictator Hitler and the narrative of Russian President Putin. The narrative of Hitler, which belongs to a different geographical and temporal setting, is framed in a contemporary context. This framing is aimed at warning the West, which suffered from Hitler's brutal actions during the Second World War, of the consequences of tolerating Putin's expansionist policy in Syria and Eastern Europe. The Kafranbel activists seem to be aware of the effect of Hitler's narrative on an English-speaking audience. Therefore, they have utilised this particular narrative to draw their attention towards the Russian intervention in Syria and its dangers to American, European and global security.

Figure 17 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on January 2, 2016*

In the second and third examples, the narrative of Martin Luther King is framed to shed light on the suffering of the Syrian people. The narrative of Luther King is particularly significant to the American audience, especially with regards to the issues of equality, public freedoms, and human rights. The framing of this narrative is achieved by using Luther King's famous quote "I have a dream" to refer to the aspirations of the Syrian people for a free and secure future. This can only be achieved, according to the banners, through defending the Syrians against Assad and renforcing a "No fly zone" that would stop the regime's fighter jets from targeting the Syrian people.

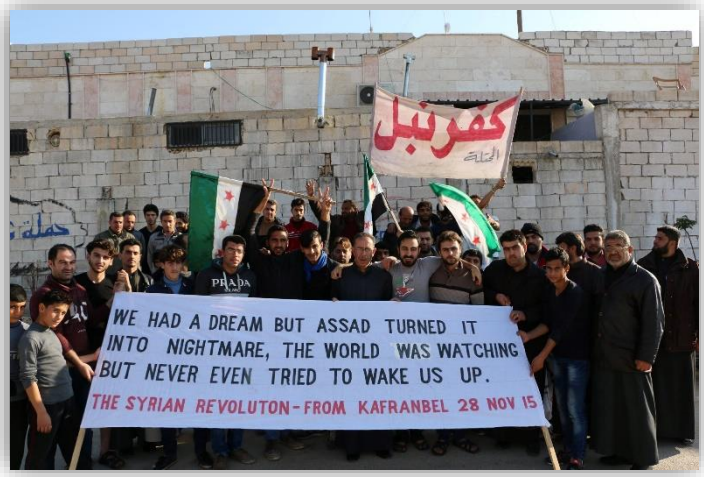

Figure 18 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on November 28, 2015*

Figure 19 *A banner carried by children from the city of Kafranbel*

The framing employed in the fourth example recalls the narrative of late US President Abraham Lincoln, a great advocate of liberation and public freedoms in American history. Faming Lincoln in today's American politics is done to expose the reluctance of current US President, Barack Obama, to defend the freedom of the Syrian people. Obama is indirectly accused of lacking in his support for their endeavours to topple the Assad regime and establish a new political system based on human rights and free political participation. The mention of Lincoln here is highly significant as it is meant to encourage the American people to put more pressure on Obama to follow the legacy of his predecessor and respect the ideals of American democracy. This could be only achieved by taking action against Assad and his regime.

Figure 20 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on July 11, 2014*

Although the previous statements are not considered to be exact translations of the Arabic banners, they constitute the English version of the same revolutionary discourse that the Arabic banners attempt to express in Arabic. Of course, there are differences in terms of wording, theme, style, and emphasis. While the Arabic banners appeal to the Syrians and other Arab nations, the themes and wordings chosen for the English banners are meant to interest an English-speaking audience and attract their attention to the Syrian cause. Narratives that are particularly significant and meaningful for the Americans and Europeans are framed differently to fulfil the agenda and objectives of the discourse producer (the Kafranbel activists).

One of the main features of narrativity introduced in Section 6.4 is *narrative accrual.* The Kafranbel banners present numerous examples of stories cobbled together to form a whole of some sort – a new narrative that sheds light on new aspects of interpretation. This allows the audience to make new discoveries regarding the perception of the stories that constitute the overall narrative. The following are four examples from the Kafranbel banners that represent cases of narrative accrual:

Example (1) (Figure 21)

> World! The less support to Syrian Free Police Forces you offer, the more power of terrorist organizations you allow.

(Kafranbel Banners, Feb 2015)

Example (2) (Figure 22)

> Killing civilians in Paris is terrorism; but what about killing civilians in Syria by Assad and Russia?

(Kafranbel Banners, 14 Nov 2015)

Example (3) (Figure 23)

> Charleston shootings are the other face of Assad massacres. Terrorism has no nationality, or religion.
>
> (Kafranbel Banners, Jun 2015)

Example (4) (Figure 24)

> A No fly zone is a must and possible where oil is, but it is a fantasy where it is to protect the Syrians for free.
>
> (Kafranbel Banners, May 2015)

In the first example, two stories are combined to form one narrative with new implications: If the international community provides more support to the armed Syrian opposition, terrorist activities will necessarily decrease. A greater degree of support offered to the Free Syrian Army leads to a growth in the power of the moderate opposition factions in Syria. This means that the FSA will become able to establish more effective control over its territories, which would limit the potentials of terrorist organisations and undermine their ability to carry out terrorist attacks.

Figure 21 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on February 21, 2015*

The banner in the second example establishes a connection between two narratives: The Paris terrorist attack and the killing of civilians by Assad's troops and their allied Russian forces. The aim is to define the latter in light of the former, as well as to interpret the former in line with the latter. The amalgamation of both narratives is highly suggestive as it implies that the killing of civilians should be described as an act of terrorism, whether it takes place in Paris or in Syria, regardless of whether it is at the hands of Islamist extremists or Assad's forces and their allies.

Figure 22 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on November 14, 2015*

Similarly, in the third example, a narrative is used to help define the narrative of the Syrian revolution. The Charleston shooting is a mass shooting that occurred at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in the town of Charleston in South Carolina, United States, on June 17, 2015. A gunman, later identified as Dylann Roof, killed nine people. Roof later admitted that he hoped that his shooting would ignite a race war in the US. This narrative is combined with the narrative of Assad's massacres against Syrians. By doing so, the latter narrative has acquired new meanings and implications for the English-speaking audience, in particular those from the United States. This in turn helps the Kafranbel activists promote their revolutionary approach while circulating the anti-Assad narrative, thus appealing for more international support for the Syrian revolution.

Figure 23 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on June 20, 2015*

The fourth example brings together two narratives that both belong to the overall story of the Arab Spring: The Syrian revolution and the Libyan revolution. However, by cobbling these two narratives together, the Kafranbel activists aim to highlight the hypocrisy of the Western powers and withdraw legitimacy from the Assad regime. The Western powers demonstrated genuine willingness to intervene in Libya to enforce a no fly zone, leading eventually to overthrowing Gaddafi. However, the very same powers have shown considerable reluctance to follow the same procedure in Syria. The banner suggests that the reason for the disparity between the two cases is that Libya is rich in oil, whereas Syria is not; the West intervenes only when oil is involved.

Figure 24 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on May 9, 2015*

The previous banners are meant to address the English-speaking audience in Europe, North America, and the rest of the world. Therefore, the combining of the aforementioned narratives with the narrative of the Syrian revolution is due to their particular significance to the Western nations. They mark certain historical events that made a difference in public life, thus influencing the cultural and political awareness of these nations. The same narratives chosen for the Arabic version of the Kafranbel banners have the same quality. The only difference is that they are meant to be familiar to, and sufficiently important to be worthy of the attention for, an Arabic-speaking audience. Both English and Arabic banners are in fact representations of the same revolutionary discourse adopted by the Kafranbel activists. Each version of the banners addresses its respective audience using the language they understand and the narratives they are familiar with. The following are two examples of narrative accrual in the Arabic banners:

Example (1) (Figure 25)

شمال حلب! قل للغزاة كان قبلكم غزاة ورحلوا، وبقيت! الكل غزاة تكالبتم على المحرر.. والأسد وحلفاءه يقصفون.

[Northern Aleppo! Say to the conquerors, before you, conquerors came and left, and I stayed! All are conquerors who cooperated against the liberated [territories], while Assad and his allies are shelling.]

(Kafranbel Banners, Feb 2016)

Example (2) (Figure 26)

"وهزي إليك بجذع النخلة"، هزّت فتساقط الرطب جنياً، وصوتنا سيهز كيانه ويهوي فاعقلوا.

[“And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree.” She did, so fresh ripe dates fell upon her. Our voice will shake its entity, so that it falls. Be wise!]

(Kafranbel Banners, Mar 2016)

The banner in the first example refers to the ancient narratives of various armies that conquered the northern countryside of Aleppo. Over the ages, Greeks, Romans, Mongols, Crusaders, Ottomans, and many other nations have invaded this area, yet they failed to settle permanently. They eventually had to retreat, leaving the land to its inhabitants. These old narratives of conquerors are cobbled with contemporary narratives of others trying to take over Northern Aleppo at the present time.

The Assad allied forces, IS troops, and a Kurdish militia known as YPG have been fighting the Syrian opposition factions, trying to occupy the northern countryside of Aleppo. The old and new narratives of conquerors are merged together to put the current conflict in a historical context, stressing the inevitable defeat of invaders. This link ensures the redefining of the current conflict in northern Aleppo, determining its results in line with similar stories from different historical settings.

Figure 25 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on February 13, 2016*

The second example unites the Quranic story of the Virgin Mary, who is, according to the Quran, asked by Allah to shake “the trunk of the palm-tree” to get fresh ripe dates for herself,

with the current narrative of the Syrian revolution. This analogy serves the concept of narrativity in this respect, allowing the narrator (the Kafranbel activists) to relate to a different narrative derived from the Quran to draw attention to certain messages directed at the Assad regime in the context of the narrative of the Syrian revolution. This sentence implies a threat made by the revolutionaries against the Assad regime; the voice of the revolution will shake the entity of the Assad regime, eventually leading it to fall. Comparing this to the Virgin Mary shaking the trunk is meant to attach as sense of holiness and credibility to the message passed on by the Kafranbel activists.

Figure 26 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on March 25, 2016*

Another feature of narrativity investigated in Section 6.4 is *causal emplotment*. This feature, which "gives significance to independent instances," overriding their "chronological or categorical order" (Somers, 1997: 82), is found in the Kafranbel banners. Specific events are linked to ensure the construction of an overall narrative. This aims to shed light on "their participation in, and contribution to, the overall meaning of the narrative" (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). The Kafranbel activists evaluate and elaborate on events by implementing causal emplotment, rather than merely stating them. This is to make a coherent comprehensible sequence that the audience can pass a judgement on out of separate events (Baker, 2006: 67). It therefore makes a set of events morally and ethically significant, carrying a semantic value that goes beyond abstract meanings embedded in the narrative.

The Kafranbel banners represent a significant source for a bilingual analytic study in this regard, even though the English version of the Kafranbel banners is not an actual translation of the Arabic one. The events forming an overall narrative for a banner are often chosen to be particularly significant for the target audience. An overall narrative, therefore, is meant to

convince the target audience, endorsing certain political and ideological views that the Kafranbel activists strongly believe in. The following are two examples of causal emplotment in the Kafranbel banners:

Example (1) (Figure 27)

لم يعد يجمعنا إلا الألم والأمل، بكت أريحا و ناحت كفربطنا و أمطر الموت موتاً و حسبنا من الحياة موتٌ.

[We only share the same pain and hope. Ariha cried, and Kafr Batna lamented. Death has generated death. Death is all that is left in life.]

(Kafranbel Banners, Dec 2015)

Example (2) (Figure 28)

USA to Assad: Your weapon is guilty (a chemical weapon is shown next to Assad).

USA to ISIS: You are guilty (a knife is shown in next to the ISIS chief).

(Kafranbel Banners, Oct 2014)

In the first example, two massacres that were carried out by the Assad regime's forces during the Syrian revolution are selected to form an overall narrative of tragedy and lack of hope. Both events selected are familiar to the Arab Syrian audience, and are linked together to draw an overall image of the narrative of the Syrian conflict. The aim is to send a message of solidarity; Syrians are facing the same tragedy, and thus they must stand united, whether in Ariha (in northern Syria) or Kafr Batna (in southern Syria), whilst suffering the brutality of the regime. The choice of these particular events to form the overall narrative presented in this banner is highly suggestive. Each of these towns belongs to a different area; combining them both together symbolises the common destiny of the Syrians.

Figure 27 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on December 5, 2015*

The second example highlights two events in the context of the Syrian conflict. The first is the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime against civilians in al-Ghouta in Damascus countryside, which reportedly resulted in 1400 deaths. The US abandoned its plan to launch

air strikes against the Assad regime as a punishment, accepting its offer to surrender and destroy its chemical weapons. The second event is the decapitations of Western captives by IS, which resulted in the US launching major military operations against the organisation in Iraq and Syria. By bringing the two events together, the Kafranbel activists are trying to expose the hypocrisy of the US towards the overall narrative of the Syrian conflict. They also encourage the English-speaking audience, who are mostly Westerners, to interpret the overall narrative of the Syrian conflict in light of what is seen as hypocritical stances taken by the US towards the two events.

Figure 28 *A banner carried by the Kafranbel activists on October 14, 2014*

One of the main forms of framing introduced in Section 6.5 is *framing by labelling*, which is described by Baker (2006: 122) as any "discursive process that involves using a lexical item, term or phrase to identify a person, place, group, event or any other key elements in a narrative." Framing by labelling can be traced in the translations of narratives circulating during the Syrian revolution. *The Guardian* has combined, in one report by Mona Mahmood (2015), six stories of people from across the divide, from rebel officers to regime supporters. The report has been translated and published in Arabic by *Sasa Post*, a news website that gives voice to anti-regime views (Sasa Post, Mar 2015). The following are five excerpts from the report and the translation that illustrate the translator's employment of framing by labelling:

(1) **War in Syria**: how my life has changed.

الجارديان: 6 حكايات من **الثورة السورية**: كيف تغيَّرت حياتي؟

[The Guardian: 6 stories from the **Syrian revolution**: how has my life changed?]

(2) We had been together since first **demo** in Damascus.

كنا معًا منذ بدايات **الثورة** في دمشق.

[We had been together since the beginning of the **revolution** in Damascus.]

(3) Um Naji, 45, supporter of the **Syrian government.**

أم ناجي: 45 عامًا، مؤيدة **للنظام السوري**.

[Um Naji, 45, supporter of the **Syrian regime**.]

(4) There were other neighbourhoods where people were starving, but the FSA did not help them because they supported the **government**.

كانت هناك أحياء أخرى تتضور جوعا، لكن الجيش الحر لم يقدم لهم الدعم لأنهم كانوا يؤيديون **النظام**.

[There were other neighbourhoods where people were starving, but the FSA did not help them because they supported the **regime**.]

(5) At home, our hatred towards the **Syrian sectarian regime** was escalating.

في المنزل، كراهيتنا تجاه **النظام الطائفي العلوي** كانت تزيد حدّة.

[At home, our hatred towards the **Alawite sectarian regime** was escalating.]

The six stories presented in the report can serve as examples of *ontological narratives*, defined in Section 6.3 as "personal stories that we tell ourselves about our place in the world and our own personal history" (Baker, 2006: 28). These stories shape and give meaning to people's lives. Even though they essentially tackle issues related to the self in the first place, they are also interpersonal and social since they are communicated to other people in a social environment (ibid). Here, they provide detailed eyewitness accounts and represent personal observations of the events of the Syrian revolution, contributing to the shaping of the mainstream public narratives adopted by competing parties involved in the Syrian conflict.

Both "war in Syria" and "demo" in the first and second examples respectively are framed as *aṯ-ṯawra [as-Sūriyya]* ("the [Syrian] revolution"). In the third and fourth examples, the Syrian "government" is labelled as *an-niẓām [as-Sūrī]* ("the [Syrian] regime"). The translator used *an-niẓām aṭ-ṭā'ifī al-ᶜAlawī* ("the Alawite sectarian regime") as a label for the Syrian regime in the target text in the fifth example. The word "Syrian" is replaced by "Alawite". These examples of labelling mainly reflect the translator's ideology and political views; they show that the translator views the Syrian leadership as a regime rather than a legitimate government, and the conflict in Syria as a popular revolution, rather than a civil war.

These examples bring about the question of rival systems of naming, proposed by Baker (2006: 123), who admits that this proves to be challenging in translation. Competing parties and communities can adopt different names for an entity, situation, geographical area, and so on. This is done in order to promote their own narratives to legitimise social and political claims, refuting and undermining opposing claims (ibid: 124). Baker (ibid) suggests that adopting a name in this context automatically implies a denial of the other, subsequently undermining the other's narratives and claims.

One of the most common forms of framing is *selective appropriation*, suggested by Baker (2006), and explained in Section 6.5. This aspect of framing is often found in news reports and is manifested through omitting and/or adding some elements of a given narrative. This

often occurs when it is told to a different audience or when rendered into a foreign language (ibid: 114). The omission and addition procedures aim to "suppress, accentuate or elaborate particular aspects" of the narrative "encoded in the source text or utterance, or aspects of the larger narrative(s) in which it is embedded" (ibid). This selective appropriation of textual items has been widely used by media outlets covering the Syrian conflict, especially when (re)publishing translated news. There are many examples where this has resulted in a diversion of the message embedded in the source version of the narrative in an attempt by media outlets to follow certain ideologies and agendas. An example of this process is a translated report published on the *al-Manar* Arabic website on May 29, 2013 (al-Manar, May 2013). The report combines translated extracts taken from a report in English by Simon Jenkins originally published on the *Guardian* website on May 28, 2013 (Jenkins, 2013). The following are a few illustrative excerpts from the report and the translation:

(1) For two years pundits have proclaimed the imminent fall of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad … Assad has not fallen. He is still there, locked in the lethal Muslim schism that resurfaced with the demise of the region's secularist dictators. These have now almost all gone: **the shah in Iran**, Najibullah in Afghanistan, Saddam in Iraq, Mubarak in Egypt, Gaddafi in Libya. They had faults in abundance, but they succeeded in suppressing religious discord, instilling rudimentary tolerance and keeping the region mostly in order. **This was in the west's interest, and the rulers, like those in the Gulf, were supported accordingly.**

وعلى مدى عامين، تكهن خبراء بسقوط وشيك لنظام الرئيس السوري بشار الأسد ولكنه حتى الآن لم يسقط، وما زالت سوريا عالقة في الصراع الذي هوت فيه المنطقة منذ رحيل الديكتاتوريين العلمانيين: حسني مبارك في مصر، وزين العابدين بن علي في تونس، وصدام حسين العراق، والقذافي في ليبيا، حسبما جاء في المقال.

هذه الديكتاتوريات، كما يرى الكاتب، كان لها أخطاء فادحة ولكنها حالت بين تفشي الصراعات الطائفية في بلدانها.

[For two years, experts have proclaimed the imminent fall of Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime, but he has not fallen yet, and Syria is still stuck in the conflict that has struck the region since the departure of the secular dictators: Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and Gaddafi in Libya, according to the article.

These dictatorships, as the writer sees, had their huge mistakes but prevented sectarian conflicts in their countries.]

(2) Prior to the Iraq war, Saddam persecuted the Shias, but their shrines were safe and intermarriage was common.

(3) These upheavals might have occurred without western intervention. The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were largely self-starting. Islamist parties often came to power, because they offered an alternative discipline to the existing regimes.

(4) Syria is at present certainly a claim on the world's humanitarian resources, to be honoured by supporting the refugee camps and aid agencies active in the area. Assad's suppression of revolt has been appallingly brutal, but he was Britain's friend, as was Saddam, long after his regime began its brutality. That is how things are in this part of the world.

(5) Pouring arms into Syria will no more topple Assad or "drive him to the negotiating table" than did two years of blood-curdling sanctions. Hague knows this perfectly well, as he knows there is no way arms can be sent to "good" rebels and not to bad ones.

ويرى سايمون جينكينز أن إمداد سوريا بالمزيد من السلاح "لن يسقط الأسد أو يدفع به إلى طاولة المفاوضات"، بل أن هذا "سيخفق في إبعاده كما أخفقت سنتان من العقوبات المشددة."

وأعرب جينكينز عن اعتقاده بأن وزير الخارجية البريطاني وليام هيغ "يعلم أنه لا توجد وسيلة للتيقن" من أن السلاح سيصل إلى أيدي المعارضين المسلحين "الطيبين" ولن يسقط في أيدي المعارضين "الأشرار."

[Simon Jenkins thinks that supplying Syria with more weapons "will not topple Assad or drive him to the negotiating table." Instead, this "will fail to expel him as the two years of strict sanctions did."

Jenkins believes that British foreign minister William Hague "knows that there is no way to ensure that the weapons will reach the "good" armed opponents, and will not fall into the hand of "bad" ones.]

Such a report falls under the category of *conceptual narratives* introduced in Section 6.3. Somers and Gibson (1994: 62-3) describe it as a type of narrative that offers explanations and analyses provided by social researchers and scholars to demonstrate and illustrate the relationship between ontological and public narratives. They expound upon the role played by these narratives in shaping social action and identity in society.

This narrative originally told by the author of the source text has not been rendered as one piece into the target language. Rather, the translator has selected certain parts to be included in the report published by *al-Manar*. This process of selection seems to serve a specific agenda, aiming to promote the pro-regime version of the narrative of the Syrian conflict at the expense of other versions. Some parts have been neglected while others modified in line with *al-Manar*'s political views. This process of selective appropriation is manifested through a number of choices made by the translator/editor of the al-*Manar* report.

The reference to Iran's former Shah in Excerpt (1) has been excluded from the Arabic translation. This may have occurred in order to avoid portraying the current Islamic regime, which took over in Iran after toppling the Shah, as part of the sectarian conflict that the Shah, according to the ST, was preventing, alongside other secular dictators named in the report, before they were all expelled. This also erases any undesired implicit praise for the role played by the Shah in Iran and the region prior to the Khomeini revolution. *Al-Manar*'s ideological and political affiliation to the *al-Wali al-Faqih* regime in Iran is apparent in this instance. This seems to be the motivation behind the translator/editor's choice to exclude the reference to the Shah from the translation.

In the same paragraph, Jenkins implies that the Gulf rulers, despite being dictators, have in fact contributed to preventing sectarian conflicts in their countries and the region. However, this reference has also been omitted by the translator. This may be because *al-Manar* has frequently accused the Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia, of adopting anti-Shiite sectarian foreign and internal policies. *Al-Manar*'s translator is trying to deliver a translation that is consistent with *al-Manar*'s Shiite ideology and editorial policy.

Selective appropriation is also manifested through omitting the reference to Saddam, who, according to the source text, ensured that the Shiite "shrines were safe and intermarriage was common," prior to the US invasion. Any positive reference to Saddam has been erased in the target text. The omission of Excerpt (2), which includes the reference to Saddam is significant and in fact matches the ideological attitudes and political standpoints of post-revolution Iran and its regional Shiite allies, including Hezbollah, who perceived Saddam Hussein as a prominent enemy.

In Excerpt (3), the author admits that the Arab Spring revolutions were spontaneous and were "self-starting" uprisings that "might have occurred without western intervention." He also seems to legitimise the advent of Islamist parties in Tunisia and Egypt, since "they offered an alternative discipline to the existing regimes." The omission of this section of the narrative offered by Jenkins has occurred most likely because these views are incompatible with the overall narrative adopted by *al-Manar*. This discourse is based on the proposition that the Arab Spring, especially with regards to Syria, is a result of a Western conspiracy against the Arab World. The *al-Manar* translator might also have wanted to erase the implicit recognition of legitimacy attached to the rival Sunni Islamist parties. Therefore, they omitted this implicit recognition embedded in the source text.

Excerpt (4) includes two concepts that are inconsistent with *al-Manar*'s editorial policy, which were thereafter omitted. The excerpt refers clearly to "Assad's suppression of revolt" and the "brutal" behaviour of his regime, hinting at his affiliation to the British. This would completely undermine Hezbollah's public narrative on the Syrian conflict, as *al-Manar* has insisted on portraying Assad as a legitimate president who is engaged in a war against terrorism. The mentions of Assad's "brutality" and "suppression" of the Syrian people's "revolt" would distort, if rendered into Arabic, the positive image of Assad that *al-Manar* tries to maintain. In addition, speaking of Assad having a special relationship with Britain contradicts the claims of Western conspiracy promoted by pro-regime media outlets.

The *al-Manar* translator selected sections of the text that suit the public narrative adopted by Hezbollah, the Syrian regime, and their allies. Only these sections that serve the media outlet's agenda have been translated and included in the translated report, while other (incompatible) parts have been excluded. Examples of the favoured parts are Excerpt (5) and most of Excerpt (1). The translator also employs another aspect of framing introduced in Section 6.5, known as *frame ambiguity*. This occurs when a sequence of events is framed differently to foster rival narratives produced by different parties (Baker, 2006: 107). It is aimed at legitimising certain actions in the context of a given conflict. The details of the narrative embedded in the source

text are re-framed and re-arranged to suit the agenda of *al-Manar*. The effect of frame ambiguity is most clearly manifested in the title of the translated report:

The title of the Guardian report

> Syria and the Middle East: our greatest miscalculation since the rise of fascism
>
> (Jenkins, 2013)

The title of the al-Manar report

> الغارديان: تزويد المعارضة السورية بالسلاح افدح خطأ منذ الفاشية
>
> [The Guardian: supplying the Syrian opposition with weapons is the hugest mistake since fascism]
>
> (Al-Manar, May 2013)

The *al-Manar* translator here has changed the definition of the situation embedded in the source text, opting for choices in the target language that match the ideology of the media outlet in line with its political affiliation, interests, and agendas. The title of the *Guardian* report (the source text) does not specify what exactly the "greatest miscalculation" of the West "since the rise of fascism" is. The author leaves it open for the reader's interpretation after reading the body of the article. He only names the geographical context in which the miscalculation occurs: Syria and the Middle East. The translator exploits this ambiguity created by the author, framing the situation differently. The supplying of the Syrian opposition with weapons becomes in the target text the hugest mistake of the West since fascism. This framing of course serves the *al-Manar* agenda, reflecting its pro-regime stance.

7.7 Conclusion

When the Syrian revolution first erupted, the protestors' strongest weapon was language. Translation has played a major role in establishing and making the protestors' demands heard by the international community. Translation has ensured that the voice of the revolution has echoed through the silence of suppression. The Kafranbel banners show that the protestors have realised the importance of reaching out to the outside world to address foreign audiences in foreign languages, expressing the demands and stances of the revolutionaries. During the Syrian conflict, competing parties utilised translation to legitimise their actions, distorting the image of their enemies. This utilisation, at times, has reached the level of manipulation of the message embedded in the source texts.

The effect of political views and affiliations on the choices made by translators is apparent in the context of the Syrian conflict. This is reflected though the translations provided by anti-

regime translation agencies such as Free Syrian Translators, as well as pro-Assad outlets such as *al-Manar* and *Russia Today*, even pro-Israeli media organisations such as *Memri*.

The translators' ideologies have manifested themselves throughout the translation process. The translator cannot be seen as a transparent mediator whose sole concern is to faithfully pass on the original author's message to the target reader. This study has shown that the translator is primarily a reader of the source text and ultimately an author (re-writer) of the target text. They shape the outcome of the translation process according to their ideology, pre-existing knowledge, and political and cultural views. The role of patronage is essential in this regard, as media outlets often have the upper hand in the translation process, thus lying down the grounds and conditions of the entire process. The influence of ideology and patronage is manifested in this study through the translations provided by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office, representing the views of an anti-Assad Sunni Islamist faction. It can also be traced in the translations provided by *al-Manar* as a pro-regime news outlet representing Hezbollah, who adopts a hard-line Shiite ideology.

Media outlets employ different techniques and strategies to ideologically and politically steer the translations of reports, interviews, and statements. The translations are aimed at serving the agenda of the publishing media outlet, presenting certain parties positively while delegitimising others. In the context of the Syrian revolution, this study has shown examples of the strategies and techniques employed particularly by pro-Assad media outlets, such as *Syria Now*, *Sama TV*, and *JB News*. The translations of international newspaper reports and articles have been manipulated to positively present the Assad regime, distorting the image of the Syrian revolution.

The role of narrativity is particularly significant in the case of the Syrian conflict; each party has pursued it to promote their own version of the conflict. Each of the conflicting parties has utilised translation to frame certain situations in their favour. This study has given examples of various forms of framing employed by revolutionary groups, such as the Kafranbel activists as well as pro-Assad media outlets like *al-Manar*. The English writings inscribed on the Kafranbel banners have represented the English version of the narrative of the Syrian revolution, establishing the vision of the protestors as well as their stances towards the events of the conflict. It has been demonstrated through illustrative examples and thorough analysis how the narratives embedded in these banners have incorporated prominent features of narrativity, as explained in previous chapters.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes an in-depth research study into the linguistic aspects of the Arab Spring, focusing on the role of language in expressing the demands of the protestors during this period, and the manifestation of translators' political and ideological views in the translation of political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring. The study assessed the influence of ideology, media, and narrativity on the translator of political discourse. This chapter gives a general summary of this research study, listing the results and findings, and explaining their significance in the field of Translation Studies. It also refers to the limitations of the study, putting forward recommendations for further research.

8.2 General Summary of the Study

Although this study primarily focused on translation-related aspects of the Arab Spring, it began by investigating the role of language in establishing and conveying the demands of the protestors during the Arab Spring. It addressed the issues of stance-taking through speaking, mass protest mobilising discourse, and online revolution. It also examined various genres of revolutionary discourse, such as slogans, chants, and humour as well as the counter-revolutionary discourse adopted by regime supporters. Examination of the language of the revolution has paved the way to a profound analysis of the translation of political discourse communicated during the Arab revolutions.

This thesis attempted to investigate the role played by translators' political views in shaping the translation choices, thus controlling the translation process. This investigation was carried out at micro- and macro-textual levels. Different political tools often employed in political discourse and its translation were covered. Critical Discourse Analysis constituted the theoretical framework of the study in this context. This study also discussed the influence of ideology on the translation process, resulting in potential modifications and manipulations of the message embedded in the source texts. It highlighted the different roles played by the translator as a reader who tends to interpret the source text according to their previously acquired knowledge, and also as an author who re-writes the text in line with their ideology

and agenda. The role of patronage is essential in this regard, as patrons often have the upper hand over the entire process of translation, editing, and publication.

The effect of media in manipulating the translations was also a focal point in this research; many media outlets employ different strategies and tools to ideologically and politically steer the political discourse at hand and its translation. These media strategies and tools were demonstrated through examples derived from the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring, and the Syrian conflict in particular. In addition to the influence of political views, ideology, and media on translation, narrativity was covered. Competing narratives manifested themselves in translation at the time of the revolutions. The data corpus included numerous examples of different features of narrativity. The study showed how these features, alongside various forms of framing, were employed by conflicting parties to promote certain versions of the narrative of the conflict.

Within the theoretical framework offered in previous chapters, the data analysis chapter attempted to analyse the data corpus derived from the political discourse communicated in the context of the Syrian conflict specifically.

8.3 Results and Findings

In the following sub-sections, I will look at five groups of results which emerged from the thematic approaches to analysis, which are developed in Chapters 2-6, and then applied to data from the Syrian revolution in Chapter 7.

8.3.1 Language into Action: Main Findings

This section aims to draw conclusions from the theoretical discussions in Chapter Two, centred on the linguistic aspects of the Arab Spring. The use of language during the Arab Spring has reflected a state of stance-taking in which protestors and civil and political activists have expressed political opinions and attitudes. These opinions are spedifically related to the Arab revolutions and the Arab authoritarian regimes and their repressive policies. In their conflict with pro-regime media outlets, the Arab revolutionaries acted as stance-takers by using language to establish their identity as advocates for freedom.

The discourse produced by the protestors of the Arab Spring was primaily a mass mobilising discourse, using language to mobilise the people. Civil and political activists who led the

protests often employed *illocution*, which is defined according to Oxford Dictionary as "an act of speaking or writing which in itself effects or constitutes the intended action" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). The goal was to engage various social classes, segments, and sects in the revolutionary action. The protestors employed *code-switching* by using a combination of formal (standard) and informal local dialectical expressions in their chants in order to appeal to wider segments of society. Pleas were also made from the protestors in cities with intense revolutionary action to inhabitants of other areas to join the uprising and start revolting against the regime. The slogans chanted by the protestors, whether in Syria, Libya or Yemen, have reflected a great deal of responsibility and tendency to appeal to minorities and all religious and racial groups with a discourse that is both tolerant and unifying. The feeling of unity was not only shared by the people within the one country, but also brought together protestors from various Arab countries, creating a massive revolution across the Arab World.

During the Arab Spring, activists took the responsibility of providing information and reporting news on different events occurring in different places across the country. That was done by using their accounts and pages on social media networks. Due to the repressive measures adopted by the Arab regimes, activists used their personal social media accounts, crearting public pages to assist the revolutionary action, organise protests, and mobilise the masses. Social media networks provided a platform to promote interaction and dialogue between activists and internet users, allowing interested users to give their opinions on various issues related to the revolutionary action. Online activists also used the internet and social media as an outlet for creative expression. Young, nameless poets shared numerous poems, verses, and short stories on Facebook and YouTube.

The protestors coined certain slogans that established and expressed their demands for political change and aspirations for democratic transformation. Examples included the famous slogan *irḥal* ("leave" or "go out") and the well-known slogan *aš-šaᶜb yurīd isqāṭ an-niẓām* ("the people demand the overthrow of the regime"), which, according to Arab blogger Suby Raman (2012), is "the central slogan of the Arab Spring". Such slogans have been "developed and re-appropriated in MSA and local dialects" in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and other countries to suit different contexts and serve the various demands of the protestors across the Arab World (Michel, 2013: 29).

The protestors chanted couplet-slogans which expressed the feeling of revolt, reflecting the goals of the revolutionaries across the Arab World. These couplet-slogans were "loud" and "sharp" at the same time (Colla, 2011). This poetry was not merely "an ornament" to the revolution, but rather a genuine "soundtrack" that composed a "significant part of the *action itself*" (ibid). Poets and chanters therefore acted as action-makers who shaped the new political

and social realisation of the Arab World. The chants were often colloquial rather than classical or standard in register. They were sung and repeated collectively by thousands of people in a unified, clear cadence," creating a tangible "sense of community that had not existed before" (ibid). They often mocked and criticised "feared public figures" such as presidents and prominent security and army officers, leaving an "immediate impact that cannot be explained in terms of language, for learning to laugh at one's oppressor is a key part of unlearning fear" (ibid).

Due to the restrictions imposed on freedom of expression and political opinion under the repressive Arab regimes, political humour was adopted during the Arab Spring as a defence mechanism against people in power who practised authority, and silenced and suppressed the nation. Humour was employed by the protestors to demand political change and criticise the ruling elites (Hassan, 2013: 554). Three elements existed in humorous discourse during the revolutions: first, a conflict between what the audience expected from a joke and what the joke actually attempted to say; second, a linguistic ambiguity with two dimensions of meaning, namely semantic and/or pragmatic meaning; and third, a punchline that concluded the joke and resolved the conflict (ibid: 552).

Protestors and activists of the Arab Spring produced and communicated revolutionary discourse but were faced with the counter-revolutionary rhetoric of the ruling regimes and their supporters. This was widely circulated by official media outlets run by the government. In some cases, businessmen who benefited from corruption and thus remained fiercely loyal to the regime, as in the case of Egypt, spread such propaganda. This counter-revolutionary discourse aimed to defame the revolution, demonise the protestors, and delegitimise the revolutionary action. However, it did not really address the essence of the problem in the Arab countries, namely the absence of free democratic life and repression of public freedoms. It did not focus on political issues or the status of public liberties, or even provide solutions to the economic problems suffered by the citizens. Instead, it employed derogatory language, sexual overtones, and unfounded accusations of receiving international support.

8.3.2 Political Discourse Analysis and Translation: Main Findings

This section aims to draw conclusions from the theoretical discussions in Chapter Three and the data analysis carried out in Section 7.3 of Chapter Seven, centred on the influence of the translator's political views on the translation process. To deal with the newly formulated political concepts generated after the outbreak of the revolutions, protestors and activists coined new words and redefined old ones. Both the regimes and pro-revolution activists have

changed the meanings of various terms, employing them in new, completely different, and often symbolic ways (Neggaz, 2013: 19). Traditional proverbs and quotations were transformed into new ones referring to the revolution's proceedings. Aiming to promote their own perception of reality, each of the conflicting parties used names with negative implications to describe the agenda of the other group while assigning positive names to their own (ibid: 26). Simple words and statements used by regular protestors circulated widely, tuning into memorable and immortal words; they defined the revolutionary action against the repressive Arab regimes and represented the protestors' aspirations for political change.

On many occasions, conflicting parties have treated translation as a political act. Political considerations have governed the translators' choices pertaining to the material to be translated and the way the translation process is run (Alvarez and Vidal *in* Schäffner, 2007: 134). In this respect, political and ideological affiliations account for various practices connected to translation. Examples include the determination of the text to be translated, the choice of the target and source languages, in what media outlets the translation is intended to be published or broadcast, and determination of the identity of the translators and proof-readers (ibid: 136). These lead to changes to and sometimes deliberate distortion of the original message embedded in the source text. This distortion is manifested in translations provided by pro-Syrian regime media outlets such as *al-Manar* and *Russia Today*.

A major lexical-semantic challenge faced by translators of political discourse, especially that communicated during the Syrian revolution is related to *terminology and interpretation*. The disparity of the political stances of both translators and readers may result in divergent interpretations of sensitive political terminology (Schäffner, 1997b: 136). Therefore, a translator of political rhetoric-related material may translate a specific term in line with their personal political views, excluding other valid translations. This study has presented numerous examples in the context of the Arab Spring and the Syrian revolution, where translators have favoured a certain equivalent for an ST term over another, simply because this choice reflects the political views of the translator and/or the media institution they work for. The work of the anti-Assad translation agency known as 'Free Syrian Translators' is such an example. This study has highlighted the importance of accuracy in translation through excerpts from translations conducted by Free Syrian Translators. They have demonstrated that translation choices made by translators can substantially affect the message embedded in the source text; the slightest change to the wording of a political text can bring about significant changes to the meaning of that text.

Since the beginning of the revolution, Israel, alongside pro-Israeli organisations in the West such as *Memri*, have tried to exploit the sufferings of the Syrian people to achieve political

agendas and legitimise the actions of Israel. *Memri* has been monitoring, translating, and publishing videos produced by feuding parties. The policy adopted by *Memri* is primarily aimed at achieving three main objectives: first, highlighting extremist ideological views expressed by some military factions, thus presenting Syrian opposition fighters in general as terrorists; second, distorting the image of the Syrian revolution as well as Arab Syrian identity; and third, bringing to the surface any possible views that recognise, appreciate, or praise Israel and its role in the region. On many occasions, *Memri* has resorted to manipulation of the original message embedded in the source material through translation in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

Brian Whitaker (2012) accused the former Israeli military intelligence officer-founded organisation of selecting certain stories for translation that "follow a familiar pattern: either they reflect badly on the character of Arabs or they in some way further the political agenda of Israel." By choosing particular videos for translation while excluding others, *Memri* has attempted to present a negative image of the Syrian revolution.

The revolutionary language used by the protestors across Syria during the revolution is rich in political terms that are typically *culture-bound*, *abstract*, *value-laden*, and *historically conditioned*. *Memri's* translators seem to have taken advantage of these qualities when rendering political terms embedded in political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution. On many occasions, they isolated ST terms from their original contexts, giving them new implications in line with a certain political agenda. They did not offer any explanations that would provide the target audience with the historical and cultural background information they needed to capture the real meaning embedded in the source text.

Despite *Memri's* endeavours to present itself as a professional monitoring and production media institution, it failed to fulfil the minimum criteria of a professional press, such as objectivity and demonstration of substantial historical, cultural, and political knowledge related to current regional and international events. As illustrated in Chapter Five on media and translation, it is essential for media organisations dealing with translation of political discourse, which is by nature rich in historical references and culture-specific elements, to be familiar with the historical background of the event covered and discussed. *Memri* has translated and published many videos circulating in the context of the Syrian revolution. However, this study has presented examples where *Memri's* translators proved to be unfamiliar with the topic they were dealing with and the historical and political context of the source text.

8.3.3 Ideology and Translation: Main Findings

This section aims to draw conclusions from the theoretical discussions in Chapter Four and the data analysis carried out in Section 7.4 of Chapter Seven, centred on the influence of ideology on the translation process. This research study has shown that it is not frequently possible for a translator to resist cultural, historical, social, or ideological forces. Translators of the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring have often worked under the constant pressure of these factors. They have produced, sometimes subconsciously, translations that are influenced by their own reading of the source texts (which is, in turn, governed by the translator's previous knowledge and experience) as well as their cognitive socio-ideological background. On many occasions, translators seem to have also chosen to carry out what can be seen as deliberate manipulations of the translation, forcing a certain ideology upon the translation as a result of their ideological affiliations or the patron's instructions. Translation can never be perceived as a neutral activity, as Hatim and Mason (1997) concede.

This research study has adopted what is perceived here as a valid proposition pointed out by al-Taher (2008: 82): The decision-making mechanism in the translation process during a developing critical conflict like the Arab Spring goes through three circles. The creation of the source text, on the one hand, is governed by the source culture, the author's ideology, and the way ideas are processed and issues are addressed by the author. The production of the target text, on the other hand, is carried out in line with three different elements too: the target culture, the translator's ideological background, and the way the translator comprehends and processes ideas. These three factors, in addition to the patron's influence, are the circles that the translation process goes through before a modified, biased, and ideologically steered translation is produced.

The influence of ideology on translation is strongly manifested in the translation produced by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office of Zahran Alloush's interview with *The Daily Beast*. Many of van Dijk's (1995a) ideological structures such as *local semantics* and *semantic macro-propositions (topics)* were employed in the translation. In addition, the analysis of the translations made by Jaish al-Islam's Press Office has highlighted the significance of the translator's role as a reader who tends to interpret the source text in line with their previous knowledge and experience, which are inevitably influenced by their ideology and beliefs. In line with this proposition, the meaning of a text can be determined by the translator's understanding as a reader of the source text, which gives the translator more freedom in forming the target text without any "restrictions" imposed by the notion of loyalty to the source text or the intention of the author (Schäffner, 1998b: 238). The role of patronage, represented

by *Orient Net* which published the Arabic translation of Alloush's interview, in determining the outcome of the translation process proves to be vital.

The influence of ideology during the Syrian revolution has also been manifested through translations produced by pro-Assad media organisations, such as *al-Manar*. *Al-Manar*'s interventions in the translations of various articles are manifestations of an ideological conflict between Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah and the Saudis. Hezbollah follows a hard-line Shiite ideology and adheres to the orders of *al-Walī al-Faqīh* (the Guardian Jurist) based in Iran, whereas the Saudis adopt a hard-line Salafist Sunni ideology. The entire Syrian war is said to be an aspect of this ideological conflict. *Al-Manar's* work is consistent with a proposition expressed by Lefèvere (1992a). Lefèvere (ibid: 10) emphasises the necessity to analyse translation "in connection with power and patronage, ideology and poetics" in an attempt to expose the constant efforts devoted by patrons to use translation to promote their ideology and undermine the other's. Translation can be used as part of a strategy to "maintain" specific cultures and identities and "deal with what lies outside their boundaries" (ibid).

This study has demonstrated that media outlets often employed the strategy of subheading – one of the extra-textual strategies pointed out by Bani (2006: 43). Information that goes beyond the actual text is offered in a bid to assist the reader in comprehending the information embedded in the text. The source content is contextualised in line with the media outlet's agendas and goals. Through this strategy, the editor is able to refer to certain concepts that would stay unrecognisable if not stated in a prime position.

The interventions made by the translators in many of the examples presented in Chapter 7 exposed the influence of ideology on the translators' performance. Irrespective of whether they came in the form of deliberate manipulation of the source text, they highlighted the key role of ideology in determining the outcome of the translation process during the Syrian revolution and the subsequent armed conflict between the revolutionary and Islamist factions, and the pro-Assad forces backed by their allied Shiite militias. This has also been done by preferring certain TL equivalents that served the ideological agenda of the translator and/or the patron represented by the publishing media outlet to others.

8.3.4 Media and Translation: Main Findings

This section aims to draw conclusions from the theoretical discussions in Chapter Five and the data analysis carried out in Section 7.5 of Chapter Seven, centred on strategies and techniques employed by media outlets to influence and shape the outcome of the translation

process. Although the translation process may go unnoticed and remain absent in an area where the supreme concern is to deliver news to the audience, it involves procedures that may affect the content and style of translated news items. Before a political statement, interview, or article reaches the target audience, i.e. the audience speaking a different language from the language of the media material, it often goes through a long and complicated chain of textual transformations between two or more languages. These transformations are a result of a set of processes that include initial editing, summarisation, translation into the target language, further editing, transferring into a media outlet, adaptation to the publisher's textual style, and shortening to fit in the space allocated for it by the publisher (Schäffner and Bassnett, 2010: 9).

The role of the media in manipulating and influencing the translation of political discourse during the Syrian revolution, politically and ideologically, has been traced through the translations produced by pro-regime media outlets of political articles and reports, primarily published in Western newspapers. These media outlets included, but were not restricted to, *Syria Now, Sama TV,* and *JB News*. They employed strategies and procedures identified by Loupaki (2010), often utilised by translators of discourse that contained ideological elements related to conflict. The first is reproducing ideological conflict in the target text; the second is erasing ideological conflict in the target text, and the third is introducing new conflicts in the target text. These strategies are aimed at increasing, toning down, or eliminating ideological content and elements related to conflict in the target text.

Pro-Assad media outlets utilised three tools of manipulation primarily pointed out by Gambier (2006): hyperbole, understatement, and framing. First, 'hyperbole' is defined by Gambier (2006) as "a rhetorical device used to highlight, intensify, and amplify selected elements of the image of reality," which are often aimed at persuading the audience in a communicative environment. Second, 'understatement' is often used by translators to "intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is" (Literary Devices, 2015). Finally, 'framing' is widely employed in news production and translation as a tool of manipulation to provide "frames of reference, or highly stereotyped representations of specific situations, to make the event accessible to the public" (Gambier, 2006: 11). These devices have been employed by pro-regime media outlets publishing translated political articles related to the Syrian conflict to promote a Shiite ideological agenda and/or achieve pro-regime political goals, urging the reader to adopt the media outlet's political and ideological views.

Both techniques of 'managing' and 'monitoring' primarily identified by Hatim and Mason (1990) and Shunnaq (1992) can be observed in the translated articles published by pro-Assad media outlets such as *Syria Now, Sama TV,* and *JB News.* The technique of 'managing' was

widely utilised by media outlets as an act of steering to employ stories and news items that tackled the Syrian conflict in the service of a pro-Assad political agenda. Indirect quotations were used to provide additional space to transform the original message. The use of reporting verbs like *claimed*, *regretted*, *alleged*, and *confirmed* also reflected the personal stance and opinion of the reporter/translator (ibid: 107). In other cases, media outlets employed 'monitoring' as a technique whereby the message embedded in the source text was maintained, avoiding major changes to the translation (Shunnaq, 1992: 36). Pro-regime media outlets implemented the aforementioned strategies and techniques through following a set of procedures pointed out by Gambier (2006) and Bani (2006), mainly substitution, omission (cutting), addition, and re-organisation.

An overall overview of the translations provided by pro-regime media outlets shows that the translated texts have been fundamentally recontextualised and syntactically and semantically transformed during the translation process. The translated reports have undergone a comprehensive process of recontextualisation, as noted by Schäffner and Bassnett (2010). Most target readers do not have access to the full article in its original version (the source text) due to obvious linguistic boundaries; they can only read a few quotes and extracts selected carefully and intentionally by the media outlet to be included in the reports. Therefore, it is not possible for target readers to know how much information the publishing media outlet has excluded. They do not have the privilege to read the original content in full to find out the missing sections in the target texts. This process of selection, proposed by Shunnaq (1994: 112) and others, is in line with a set of standards and principles imposed by pro-regime media outlets to serve Shiite ideological agendas to be consistent with pro-Assad political views.

8.3.5 Translation and Narration of Conflict: Main Findings

This section aims to draw conclusions from the theoretical discussions in Chapter Six and the data analysis carried out in Section 7.6 of Chapter Seven, centred on the manifestation of rival narratives in translation. The main function of translation is to facilitate communication across linguistic boundaries. It has therefore become an imperative aspect of the conflict, needed by opponents and disputing parties in order to legitimise and promote their descriptions of the conflict, while undermining the narratives adopted by rival parties. Competing popular narratives produced by the revolutionary and pro-regime forces during the Syrian conflict represent a typical example of discursive dispute at all political, ideological, and social levels at the time of the Arab Spring. Translation has proved to be an integral part of the Syrian conflict, playing a vital role in describing, shaping, and unfolding its events.

This study has attempted to apply narrative theory on the discursive dispute during the Syrian revolution, examining the way translation operates in this environment of conflicting narratives. It has presented representative examples that highlighted the role of translation in shaping conflicting narratives during the revolution in light of the various types and features of narrativity. It has also implemented the concept of framing on the data corpus, examining the different modes of narrative framing in translation.

The narrativity of the Syrian revolution is frequently manifested in a series of banners produced and carried by a group of civil activists from the Syrian city of Kafranbel. The writings on these banners represent the demands of the Syrian revolution, reflecting anti-Assad revolutionary views stemming back to the early days of the uprising in March, 2011. Arabic, English, and sometimes other languages, such as Russian and Turkish, have also been used to criticise standpoints and stances adopted by various international, regional, and local parties regarding the Syrian conflict.

The significance of these banners is that they express the Syrian revolutionary discourse, constituting a rich multi-lingual record of the intellectual aspect of the revolution. They reflect the attitudes taken by anti-Assad protestors towards the events of the Syrian uprising over five years of conflict. The English banners are not exact translations of the Arabic ones. Rather, they are meant to address an English-speaking audience in the West, thus expressing ideas and conveying messages that concern this particular audience. However, while both types of banners (English and Arabic) are manifestations of the same revolutionary discourse, they are merely formed, worded, presented, and employed differently to fulfil certain agendas in line with the interests of the Syrian revolution.

The themes and wordings chosen for the English banners are meant to interest an English-speaking audience, attracting their attention to the Syrian cause. Narratives that are particularly significant and meaningful for the Americans and Europeans are framed differently to fulfil the agenda and objectives of the discourse producer (the Kafranbel activists). They generally mark certain events that have made a difference in public life, thus influencing the cultural and political awareness of these nations. The narratives chosen for the Arabic version of the Kafranbel banners have the same quality. Each version of the banners addresses its respective audience using a language they understand and narratives they are familiar with. The aim has always been to legitimise the revolution, and attract international and local support for the revolution.

The data analysis reveals the employment of ‘temporal and spatial framing’ in the Kafranbel banners. The protestors of Kafranbel utilised this form of framing, choosing specific texts that depict a certain narrative, and placing them in new temporal and spatial environments. The

audience is thus encouraged to make a connection between this narrative and others that may be more up-to-date even though its events actually belong to different temporal settings or take place in a different geographical area (Baker, 2006: 112). In addition to this, many of the features of narrativity introduced in Chapter Six have manifested themselves in the banners, such as 'narrative accrual' and 'causal emplotment'. These features enabled the Kafranbel activists to promote their revolutionary approach while circulating the anti-Assad narrative, thus appealing for more international support for the Syrian revolution.

Al-Manar has also employed various aspects of framing to promote the pro-Assad version of the narrative of the Syrian conflict. *Al-Manar* has frequently implemented 'selective appropriation', pointed out by Baker (2006), by using procedures of omission and addition during the translation process. This has resulted in a diversion of the message embedded in the source version of the narrative in an attempt by the media outlet to follow a Shiite ideology and fulfil a pro-Assad agenda. Furthermore, the use of 'frame ambiguity' has been aimed at legitimising the Assad army's actions in the context of the Syrian conflict. The details of the narrative embedded in the source texts are thus re-framed and re-arranged to suit the agenda of *al-Manar*. Some of the *al-Manar* translated reports represent examples of 'conceptual narratives', suggested by Somers and Gibson (1994: 62-3).

The data analysis has shown that the pro-revolutionary media outlet *Sasa Post* has utilised a prominent aspect of framing, identified by Baker (2006: 122) as 'framing by labelling'. The six stories presented in the report primarily published by *The Guardian* (Mahmood, 2015), thereafter translated into Arabic by *Sasa Post* (Mar 2015), can serve as examples of 'ontological narratives'. These examples bring about the question of rival systems of naming, proposed by Baker (2006: 123), who admits that this proves to be challenging in translation. Competing parties and communities adopted different names for an entity, situation, geographical area, and so on. This was done in order to promote their own narratives to legitimise social and political claims, refuting and undermining opposing claims (ibid: 124). Baker (ibid) suggests that adopting a name in this context automatically implies a denial of the other, subsequently undermining the other's narratives and claims.

8.4 Evaluation and Contribution to the Field of Knowledge

This thesis contributes to the field of knowledge in a number of ways:

1- The study provides a succinct account of the Arab Spring, drawing together a range of sources and perspectives. Chapter One is intended to simply offer a political

background to the study, providing necessary information which can enable the reader to understand the historical and political framework of the data corpus. Adding to this, it thoroughly investigates the political aspects of the Arab Spring. It gives a comprehensive account of the political situation prior to the revolutions, covering many relevant areas that concern researchers of political science, such as democracy in the Arab thought, Arab civil society, full and liberalised democracy, Islam and democracy, and state of human rights in the Arab World. The discussion goes on to identify the main factors that actually led to the outbreak of the revolutions. This chapter constitutes a comprehensive study that combines all the Arab revolutions together, providing reasons, factors, and a rich record of the proceedings of the Arab Spring.

2- The study contributes to the field of Linguistics. Chapter Two looks into the language of the revolution. The significance of the study as well as the results in this respect lie in three main factors. First, it demonstrates how language can serve as a tool of profound change, developing from the level of words to the level of action, generating a new political reality in the Arab World. Second, it establishes a link between all the Arab revolutions offering examples from different Arab countries. Third, it investigates the different genres of revolutionary discourse, such as humour, chants, banners, online discourse, and so on.

3- The study significantly contributes to the field of Translation Studies (see Chapters 3-7). It attempts to implement key theories on original data derived from the Arab Spring. The translation of the political discourse communicated during the Arab Spring has not been studied at the PhD level before. This study has identified this gap and has sought to assess the translations of political texts produced on Arab Spring-related issues.

4- This research builds on existing literature by extending the scope of investigation to cover four main areas pertaining to translation of political discourse: political discourse analysis, the influence of ideology, strategies and techniques utilities by media outlets, and narrative theory. This is the first study that has analysed original data from all these four different perspectives.

5- This research draws conclusions from a large volume of data (11 data sources falling into 6 different categories – see Section 7.2), with varied genres of political discourse. This involves samples of political speeches, political articles, interviews, videos, banners, and slogans chanted during demonstrations, as well as their respective translations. The data used as examples in Chapters 2-6 are derived from the discourse

communicated during the Arab Spring and its aftermath. The data corpus analysed in Chapter Seven is exclusively taken from the Syrian revolution and the subsequent conflict.

6- The data analysis chapter of this study analyses original data from the Syrian conflict. Most of the political discourse analysed has been produced recently. This means that researchers have not yet tackled this topic in depth at PhD level. It deals with a conflict that is still ongoing, developing and unfolding before our very eyes. Therefore, the results reached may have an impact on the literature of the conflict at various levels, adding to the interpretation of the conflict. They enable the interested audience to have a better understanding of the ideologies, political views, and narratives of competing parties. This study provides the reader with an insight into the way these views, ideologies, and narratives are manifested in the translations produced by media outlets and translation agencies during the Syrian conflict.

8.5 Limitations of the Study

This study has contributed to the fields of Political Science, Linguistics, and Translation Studies in a number of ways, as illustrated in the previous section. However, there are a few limitations to the study. First, critical discourse analysis constituted an important part of the theoretical framework of this study. Researchers conducting a critical discourse analysis take upon themselves to support the oppressed against the oppressor. In line with this understanding of the mission of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study has taken the side of the protestors against the Arab regimes. Although the primary focus was on disclosing the manipulations carried out by pro-regime media outlets during the translation process, the study has equally highlighted the influence of ideological and political views on translators/patrons affiliated to both parties: the revolutionary forces and the ruling elites. This study does not claim complete objectivity when it comes to the description of some situations. The pro-revolutionary views of the researcher are manifested through adopting certain names of some events. For example, the label “revolutions” has been adopted as descriptions of the uprisings of the Arab Spring, while the label “regimes” was used to refer to some Arab governments. The personal views of the researcher can sometimes be observed throughout the discussions. The selection of certain examples as representative samples for analysis, while excluding others, can also be criticised as being governed by the agenda of the researcher. This is in fact one of the main shortcomings of Critical Discourse Analysis in general.

Second, this study has established a link between the five Arab revolutions of the Arab Spring, despite the notable differences between these revolutions at various levels. In the first six chapters, the study attempted to implement the theories on examples derived from all the five revolutions, without dealing with the fact that each revolution has specific and unique features. What would work for one revolution, may not work for another. Some revolutions turned into armed conflicts where ideology played a major role, such as in Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Others, on the other hand, remained peaceful and actually succeeded in establishing and achieving demands of democracy, political change, and human rights. The revolution in Tunisia is an example. The 25th Revolution in Egypt was completely reversed and was faced by a counter-revolution led by the army and pro-regime elites. In order to balance the broad scope of earlier chapters with a specific and detailed case-study, the data analysis chapter was devoted to investigating the translation of political discourse communicated during the Syrian revolution alone.

8.6 Recommendations for Further Research

As mentioned in the introduction, this study has pursued personal research in the field of translation of political discourse undertaken at the MA level (Haj Omar, 2011), as well as in the form of published articles (Haj Omar, 2015b). It also incorporates past efforts in investigating the translation of conflicts and the role of narrative theory in explaining transformations in translation during conflict (Haj Omar, 2015a). I aim to continue these endeavours by undertaking future research into the influence of ideology on the translation of the political discourse adopted by Islamic State (IS). In addition to this, further research can be performed into the role of the Egyptian media in manipulating the translation of political discourse following the coup led by Gen. al-Sisi. This can look into the role of patronage and censorship practised by the al-Sisi regime in producing translations that are consistent with pro-al-Sisi political views. They are aimed at legitimising the regime's actions, and demonising its opponents including the Muslim Brotherhood, the April 6 Youth Movement and other civil society movements and political opposition parties. This research looks at four different approaches to text and translation: political discourse analysis, ideological discourse analysis, strategies and techniques employed in translated media discourse, and narrative theory. In further research work, I would be interested to examine how these different theoretical approaches might be more closely integrated with one another than was possible in this thesis, with a view perhaps to producing a single overarching of the areas in question.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter has given a general summary of this thesis, presenting the key findings and general results. The findings were categorised into five groups of results which emerged from the thematic approaches to analysis developed in Chapters 2-6, and then applied to data from the Syrian revolution in Chapter 7. The chapter also highlighted the significance of the results and the contribution of the study to the field of knowledge. It was noted that this study has contributed to the fields of Political Science, Linguistics, and Translation Studies. The limitations of the study were also discussed, and recommendations were put forward for further research.

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