

Frame Labeling of Competing Narratives in Journalistic Translation

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Abstract

Studying translations during the time of conflict has gained currency in the recent decade in translation studies. One of the cases in which conflict manifests itself is in the way different countries choose to name an event or a geographical location, for example. This study set out to understand how translation of rival names and labeling was carried out in Iranian state-run news agencies. To achieve this end, English-to-Farsi translations of 4 news Websites (i.e., *IRNA*, *ISNA*, *YJC*, and *Fars News Agency*) were monitored and collected in the course of 2 weeks. Data were then analyzed based on the narrative theory approach using Baker's (2006) model. Data analysis revealed that, in 33 cases, the names or labels adopted by the English news agencies were substituted with the names endorsed by the institutions in which the translators worked. This study demonstrated that name substitution took place when Iran's national and international interests were conflicting with those of the Western news agencies including Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Syrian and Bahraini crises, Islamic values, and the sovereignty over the Persian Gulf. Findings suggest that translations cannot be thought of as neutral conduit through which totally disinterested message is relayed from one society to another. Findings are also indicative of translators' critical appraisal in both decoding and encoding processes of translating.

Keywords: Rival Names; Narrative; Conflict; Ideology; News Translation

1. Introduction

That media only represent the reality with the intention of informing people can now be called an outdated idea. During recent decades, researchers from different backgrounds have demonstrated and sometimes criticized the ideological agenda pursued by different media. (Critical) discourse analysts, for instance, have made an inventory of the techniques used in news reports and editorials to create and maintain the dominant ideologies. These techniques include, but of course are not confined to, modality, lexicalization, nominalization, passivization, overstatement, understatement, foregrounding, and so on. Lexicalization in discourse analysis (or labeling in the socionarrative theory approach) as one of the techniques in which the text producer's attitude toward a certain phenomenon, group of people, event, or a geographical location is expressed is so significant that, according to van Dijk

(1995), “the major dimension of discourse meaning controlled by ideologies is the selection of word meaning through lexicalization” (p. 259).

Researchers in different fields such as communication studies, media studies, and discourse analysis have shown how lexicalization in different media buttresses the ideologies of the text producers. Sheyholislami (2007), for instance, shows how the Iraqi Kurds in conflict with the Iraqi government are treated differently in the *New York Times* (*NYT*) when the U.S. foreign policies undergo changes. In 1988, when Iraq is a close ally of the U.S., they are represented as terrorists. In 1991, when amity gives way to animosity between the U.S. and Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi Kurds are called separationists seeking their rights. As another example, Jahedi and Abdullah (2012) reveal how the *NYT*'s coverage of Iran around the hostage crisis (1979-1980) and Iranian presidential election in 2009 depict Iran and Iranian government as a threat, anti-democrat, and extremist (for examples of lexicalization, see Jahedi & Abdullah, 2012, p. 376). Examining the editorials related to the *NYT*, van Dijk (1995) also shows how lexicalizations such as “terrorist” and “sociopath” are used to describe Muslims. van Dijk (1995), discussing lexicalizations, further mentions that calling a group of people “terrorists” rather than “freedom fighters,” or vice versa, “is not merely the nominal result of an evaluative categorization and identification, but also an ideological decision, given the political position of the speaker and her or his group” (p. 259). In a somewhat similar vein, McIntyre (as cited in Baker, 2006, p. 124), maintains that “there may be rival systems of naming, where there are rival communities and traditions, so that to use a name is at once to make a claim about political and social legitimacy and to deny a rival claim”; therefore, as McIntyre writes:

What this brings out is that in such communities the naming of persons and places is not only naming as; it is also naming for. Names are used *as* identification *for* those who share the same beliefs, the same justifications of legitimate authority, and so on.

A multitude of studies on media discourses take into account lexicalization or labeling, but there is still a paucity of research on how these lexicalizations or labels are translated from one language into another. Indeed, as Munday (2007) points out, “the vast majority of work from a critical linguistics and critical discourse perspective has been performed monolingually, primarily on English texts” (p. 199). If some lexicalizations are “ideological decisions given the political position of the speaker and her or his group,” as van Dijk (1995, p. 259) holds, it is anticipated to see incongruity of ideology in selection of labels and names, at least in some cases, in L1 and L2. However, translators are required by an unwritten law to produce the whole original and nothing but the original. This is actually one of the norms of translation that Harris (as cited in Hermans, 1999, p. 62) calls “the true

interpreter norm” or “the honest spokesperson.” The conflict arising from either observing the code of ethics of translation or upholding to translator’s ideological positioning vis-à-vis that label or lexicalization is the topic of this study. Moreover, this internal conflict seems natural to intensify when there is a conflict of interest between the source community and the target one. Conflict here is understood to be “a situation in which two or more parties seek to undermine each other because they have incompatible goals, competing interests, or fundamentally different values” (Baker, 2006, p. 166). As Biesla and Bassnet (2009) and Baker (2006) hold, conflict is one of the situations in which deviations from the L1 might increase and the choices a translator opts for and also his role become foregrounded. This research was, thus, designed to answer the following question:

- How are labels and names translated when there is a conflict between the source and target societies?

2. Literature Review

Baker’s (2006) volume can be considered as one of the first studies on translation and conflict. She elaborates on translation during conflict and on how different countries use different features of narrativity for their own purposes. An example provided by Baker (2006, 2010a, 2010b) shows that the Western party has established an institute named Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) that translates specific sort of news. This institute translates accurately but the materials they choose to translate (selective appropriation in narrative theory) and the way they frame them depict the Islamic world and Iran as hotbed of extremism and enemies of the West (for a detailed account, see Baker, 2010b). Having expounded on the typology of narratives (e.g., personal, public, professional, and meta-narratives) and the features of narrativity (e.g., temporality, relationality, selective appropriation, and casual employment; see Baker, 2006), Baker switches to framing narratives in translation. She (2008) argues that frame is a good tool of analysis to demonstrate how the same narrative can be framed in very different ways by different narrators.

Baker begins the chapter on framing in translation with the basic ethical issue the translators encounter on every assignment: to reproduce the existing ideologies or disassociate themselves from those ideologies by refusing to translate a text at all. Beyond this initial either/or choice, Baker (2006, p. 105) contends that “translators and interpreters can and do resort to various strategies to strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate”. Defining frames as “structures of anticipation, strategic moves that are consciously initiated in order to present a narrative in a certain light”, Baker defines framing as “an active process of signification by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of reality” (Baker, 2006, p. 167). Baker presents different framing features that might

be used to translate a narrative differently. These features include frame ambiguity, frame space, temporal and spatial framing, selective appropriation, framing by labeling, and repositioning of participants (Baker, 2006, pp. 105-139). This study narrows down its focus to framing by labeling defined as “any discursive process that involves using a lexical item, term or phrase to identify a person, place, group, event or any other key element in a narrative” (Baker, 2006, p. 122).

Baker further illustrates the point with an example of West Bank vs. Judea and Samaria in the context of Palestine and Israel conflict. She points out that Judea and Samaria are biblical names for some areas of Palestine, currently under Israeli occupation. She goes on to mention that “uncritical use of Judea and Samaria immediately signals the narrative location of the speaker or writer; it embeds them within a Zionist narrative whether or not they consciously subscribe to it” (2006, p. 125). Her investigation of some news items in the BBC regarding the use of two rival names mentioned above demonstrates that BBC translators and editors disassociate themselves from the Zionist narrative while staying within their prescribed frame space as journalists and translators (2006, p. 127). What the translators in this case did was that in translation of the Zionist newspapers, in addition to using Judea and Samaria, they put the West Bank in squared brackets. This shows, first, an addition on the part of the translator, and second, dissociation of the translator from the narrative in question.

Baker (2006) suggests that where frame space available translators can “insert their own critical comments and glosses at various points”; she also predicts that this idea might not be welcomed by the readers, but “it does allow the translator or interpreter to signal their position in relation to the narrative in question” (p. 128). Baker, approaching translations from a committed approach (see Brownlie, 2009), undermining the previously held ethical notions about source text fidelity points out that “simply repeat[ing] whatever name the writer or speaker uses without comment, means participating in uncritical circulation of a narrative they [translators] may well find ethically reprehensible if they stopped to ponder its implications” (2006, p. 127). In the same volume, Baker writes that:

We each make our own decisions on the ground and have to live with the consequences. The main thing to stress here is that neutrality is an illusion, and thus uncritical fidelity to the source text or utterance also has consequences that an informed translator or interpreter may not wish to be party to. (p. 128)

It is noteworthy to mention that these prescriptive statements have received criticism from some scholars including Pym (2011b).

Kuo and Nakamura (2005) investigate conflict as represented in two English to Chinese translations of Taiwan's first lady Wu Shu-chen's interview in two ideologically opposed newspapers. "People on Taiwan", Kuo and Nakamura (2005) write, "are divided by complex loyalties to Chinese and Taiwanese identities" (p. 397). This rift is also reflected in some of the news agencies with different political affiliations. For example, *United Daily News* is a pronification news agency, whereas *Liberty Times* is the proindependence one. Taiwan's first lady's interview with *The Associated Press* was translated by both newspapers. In translations, *United Daily News* opts for the "Communist China" and *Liberty Times* simply goes for "China" (when the "Communist China" is used, the reunification with the mainland China is stressed). They believe that these changes are meaningful and show Liberty Times' stress on sovereignty of Taiwan. They conclude that "these marked structural choices made by these two newspapers are not arbitrary but are well motivated by their underlying ideologies" (2005, p. 410).

Kang's (2007) case study brings under scrutiny three news stories published by the Newsweek and their translations in *The Newsweek Hankuk Pan* (a Korean language news magazine which offers both translated and nontranslated articles on domestic and international events). Kang writes that "the writer's particular social relationship to the referent is signaled via the use of certain proper names, with or without titles, kinship terms or other such markers, all of which function to characterize the referent in some way" (2007, pp. 228-229). Two examples of name change from this study suffice here (for a detailed account see Kang, 2007). Referring to Kim Jong Il, *The Newsweek* had used terms such as "the North Korean dictator" which was translated as "Chairman Kim Jong Il of the National Defense Commission" in the North Korean news magazine. Having analyzed different terms related to Kim Jong Il, Kang explains that whereas the L1 delegitimizes Kim by foregrounding his role as an oppressor of his people, the repeated use of chairman in the L2 has the cumulative effect of recognizing and legitimizing Kim's official status (p. 230). North Korea was also modified as "this desperately poor land" in the Newsweek which was substituted by a neutral term "North Korea" in the Newsweek Hankuk Pan. These minute, but of course, highly important changes in translation clearly indicate the narratives translators adhere to. Translators in the abovementioned cases disassociate themselves from the ideology governing the production of the L1. Kang comes to the conclusion that "news translation inevitably entails a reformulation of the source text in response to priorities and values relevant within the target context" (p. 240).

Bazzi, writing about the semiotic activity in a climate of conflict, offers some examples which are related to this study. As Bazzi (2009, p. 20) reports, in *Al-Manar* translations of the AFP L1 texts, names and labels such as *Israeli forces*,

Palestinian suicide bombers, and *Israeli forces killed armed militants* were replaced with *Zionist occupation army*, *Martyrs*, and *Zionist occupation army martyred resistance fighter*, respectively. These substitutions, as well as verifying the effect of ideology on translations, show how two groups of people might see an event as directly opposing each other.

Munday (2007), discussing the phraseological point of view and evaluation in naming, cites an interesting example in translation of an AFP news story into Spanish. The news story is about release on bail of Luis Posada Carriles. For Cuba, as Munday states, Posada is the person who ordered the mid-flight destruction of airline passenger plane and his release was due suspiciously to “an inexplicable ‘mistake’”; for AFP, on the other hand, Posada is accused of masterminding the downing of a Cuban jet off Barbados in 1976. The lexical chain denoting Posada in the AFP report comprises former CIA operative Luis Posada Carriles . . . the Cuban-born Venezuelan national . . . a fierce opponent of Cuban President Fidel Castro. The translated *Granma* (Spanish) text has Luis Posada . . . the most dangerous terrorist on the continent . . . this old CIA agent and FBI informant . . . the octogenarian, and describes him as a torturer and assassin for the Venezuelan secret police. Munday believes that “the difference in these referential selections is based on an overall contrasting world view underpinning the tortuous relationship between Cuba and the U.S., and in addition affects the phraseological plane of point of view” (p. 206).

The literature reviewed above confirms that translators are ideologically committed professionals. In other words, they are not neutral bystanders; instead, they actively—rather than passively—engage in translation process. They are not, in fact, subject to and servant of the narrative being translated.

3. Method

In what follows, the information pertinent to the theoretical framework, the corpus, and procedure of the study is presented.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study builds on two theories of translation: translation as decision-making process and translation as renarration, each of which will be briefly elaborated on below.

3.1.1 Translation as a decision-making process

One of the most interesting and viable theorizations of translation is done by Levý (1967/2000) who perceives translation as a decision making process. This theory still holds sway in translation studies: Munday (2012), for example, explicitly mentions decision-making as the point of departure for his volume entitled

Evaluation in Translation: Critical Points for Translator Decision Making. Pym (2010, p. 183), similarly, defines translation competence based on generating solutions and the ability to choose one from among them. From the vantage point of translation as decision-making process, there is nothing as predefined equivalence and translators, most of the time, have different alternatives to choose from. Theoretically speaking, as Levý (2000) maintains, these alternatives can range from 1-*n*. Practically speaking, however, there are a limited range of available alternatives. In such a situation, translation resembles a “GAME WITH COMPLETE INFORMATION—a game in which every succeeding move is influenced by the knowledge of previous decisions and by the situation which resulted from them” (Levý, 2000, p. 149).

When the assumption is that there is no one-to-one predetermined correlation between the L1 and L2, that is, the L2 cannot be defined a priori, every decision a translator makes can be thought of as value-laden and meaningful, particularly in the field of news translation, given its sensitivity. Therefore, these decisions and sometimes deviations from the ST can be indicators of the different factors governing the translation process and finally the product. The decisions a translator arrives at, Levý points out, “may be necessary or unnecessary, motivated or unmotivated.” He further defines motivated decisions as the ones “prescribed by the context (linguistic or extralinguistic)” (2000, p. 151). In fact, factors affecting translator’s decision making process are legion. One of the important factors that might—consciously or unconsciously—affect the translator and eventually the translation is ideology which is defined by Hatim and Munday (2004) as “a body of ideas that reflects the beliefs and interests of an individual, a group of individuals, a societal institution, and so on, and that ultimately finds expression in language” (p. 342). Likewise, Tymoczko (2010a) stressing the ideological implications of translators’ decisions writes that “translators’ choices also establish a place of enunciation and a context of affiliation for the translator and the translation. The result is that the choice in translation inevitably involves values, ethics, responsibility” (p. 8).

News translations might not be complete and accurate (see Biesla & Bassnett, 2009, pp. 62- 67) to the extent that some researchers have coined the term *transediting* to refer to it (Stetting, 1989). These alterations in news translation “are usually justified by and respond to the two related criteria of news relevance and background knowledge of the target reader” (Biesla & Bassnet, 2009, p. 64). The justifications related to the skopos, function, and relevance of the translation are not the concern of this study, and the decisions made in translation are thought of as ideologically-driven provided that they show a pattern or a trend (Farahzad, 2012;

Hatim & Mason, 1997, pp. 143-147) for which there is an extrinsic motivation (Ayyad & Pym, 2012; Pym, 2011a, p. 88).

3.1.2. Translation as renarration

This study also drew on the narrative theory as elaborated by Baker (2006) as its conceptual apparatus. Baker has applied the narrative theory to study translations during the time of conflict. Baker, following social scientists, rather than linguists, defines narrative(s) as:

The principal and inescapable mode by which we experience the world. Narratives are the stories we tell ourselves and other people about the world(s) in which we live. These stories are constructed—not discovered—by us in the course of making sense of reality, and they guide our behavior and our interaction with others. (2006, p. 169)

She also asserts that narratives “are ultimately concerned with legitimizing and justifying actions and positions in the real world” (2006, p. 11). During international conflicts, the parties involved, endeavor to generate, circulate, and reinforce their own version of narratives in order to encourage people of their own country and also of the world to espouse their ideology. Through these narratives, they not only represent the world, but also construct the world.

Baker’s work is appropriate for this study because it deals with the problems of translation during the time of conflict. This approach has some outstanding merits: it releases us from the assumptions of neutrality of translator (see Baker, 2009, 2010a) and dichotomous categorization in translation studies (e.g., foreignization vs. domestication; literal vs. free); it also brings to the fore the ethical issues (Baker, 2010a). This approach asks what kind of texts or pieces of news are selected for translation rather than others, when they are translated, what kinds of treatments (textual and paratextual) these translations have undergone, and so on.

One aspect of the strength of the narrative theory, as Baker (2010b) points out, is that:

It [narrative theory] does not encourage us to treat any specific translational choice as random, with no implications in the real world. Nor does it encourage us to treat a given choice (such as Jihad vs. ‘Holy War’) as a realization of some broad, abstract norm linked to other abstract choices such as favoring loan words or choosing to stay close to the syntactic structures of the source text. What narrative theory requires us to do instead is to think of individual choices as part of a larger mosaic that is embedded in

and contributes to the elaboration of concrete political reality. (p. 353)

3.2 *Corpus*

Because the researchers intended to examine the translation of the names and labels in narratives of the party against the Iranian policies in news agencies advocating them, the selected Websites' orientation towards the policies of the Iranian authorities must have been ascertained. Four Iranian news agencies, namely, *Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)*, *Young Journalist Club (YJC)*, *Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA)*, and *Fars News Agency* were selected for the present research.

These Websites' orientation is obvious in the kind of news they publish and also in their *about us* pages. *YJC*, for example, was established and is currently run by the political deputy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB; see "About YJC," n.d.). *ISNA* news agency has prioritized its principles as follows: (1) Islam, (2) the holy values of the Islamic Republic system, (3) the Islamic Republic Constitution, (4) Imam Khomeini's thoughts, (5) Velāyat-e Faqih, and (6) national values and interests (see "ISNA's Policy," n.d.). *IRNA* is considered to be the official Websites of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Part of the *Fars News Agency's about us* page reads "Fars is the child of Iran"; it also tells the reader that "the boundary of the agency activities is set by the [Islamic Republic] constitution and national interests" ("About Fars News," n.d.). As is obvious, all the news agencies selected for this study are, in one way or another, related to the official organizations of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In fact, these kinds of news agencies are established to distribute and reinforce the Iranian authorities' policies. Therefore, the ideologies they promulgate cannot be incompatible with those of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3.3 *Procedure*

The English-to-Farsi translations of the aforementioned news agencies were monitored from December 2, 2012 to December 15, 2012. The monitoring phase resulted in 52 L2 texts plus their L1 texts (see Table 1). The collected data were, then, juxtaposed and examined for names and labels based on the abovementioned definition of framing by labeling (see Baker, 2006, p. 122; section 2). It is worth-mentioning that, in this study, we did not focus on a specific issue or topic like the literature we reviewed above. The collected texts, therefore, covered a wide range of topics. This actually brought about examples from different contexts which, eventually, led to a better understanding of the translation of labels.

Table 1 indicates the share of each news agency in the data collected for this study:

Table 1. *Number of Translated Texts of News Agencies*

Target Agency	YJC	ISNA	IRNA	Fars	Total
Number of L2 Texts	9	16	15	12	52
Percentage	17.30	30.76	28.84	23.07	100

4. Results

The data analysis revealed 33 cases in which the names and labels given by the foreign English news agencies were substituted by the names advocated by the Iranian authorities. Table 2 indicates the name substitution observed in the collected data:

Table 2. *Name Substitution in State News Agencies*

Source Text Labels	Target Text Labels	Back Translation of Target Text Labels
Israel	رژیم صهیونیستی	The Zionist regime
Israeli-Palestinian conflict	منارعه فلسطینیان- رژیم صهیونیستی	The Palestinian-Zionist regime conflict
Jerusalem	بیت المقدس	Bayt al-Maqaddas
Israeli newspaper Haaretz	روزنامه صهیونیستی هاآرتص	The Zionist newspaper Haaretz
Israel	فلسطین اشغالی	The occupied Palestine
Israeli settler homes	منازل صهیونیستی	The Zionist homes
Israeli	صهیونیست ها	The Zionists
Tel Aviv	فلسطین اشغالی	The occupied Palestine
Israel	رژیم اشغالگر قدس	The occupying Regime of Al-Quds
The Jewish State	رژیم صهیونیستی	The Zionist Regime
The Regime [Islamic Republic of Iran]	جمهوری اسلامی ایران	Islamic Republic of Iran
Iran's Hard-line Paramilitary Force	سپاه پاسداران انقلاب اسلامی	Islamic Republic Guardian Corps
Iranian Regime	ایران / ج.ا. ایران / تهران	Iran/IRI/Tehran
Bahrain	رژیم بحرین	Bahraini Regime

Opposition [against Bahraini government]	مخالفتان رژیم آل خلیفه	Opposition again Caliph Regime
The militant Islamic group [al-Qaeda]	گروه شبه نظامی	Militant group
Jihadists [al-Qaeda]	شبه نظامیان	Militia
Jihadists	گروه های تند رو	Extremists
Islamic extremists	تندروها	Extremists
Arab spring	بیداری اسلامی	Islamic Awakening
The rebels [against Syria]	تروریست ها	Terrorists
Bashar al-Assad's regime	دولت بشار اسد	Bashar al-Assad's administration
The Syrian regime	دولت سوریه	The Syrian government
Assad Regime	دولت سوریه	The Syrian government
The regime [Syria]	حکومت سوریه	The Syrian government
The Syrian regime	حکومت سوریه	The Syrian government
Regime [Syria]	نظام کشور	Country's government
Revolutionaries [related to Syria opposition]	مخالفتان	Rebels
Friends of Syria meeting	نشست به اصطلاح "دوستان سوریه"	The so-called "friends of Syria meeting"
The Regime [Syria]	دولت سوریه	Syrian government
The Gulf War	جنگ خلیج فارس	Persian Gulf War
Gulf War	جنگ خلیج (فارس)	(Persian) Gulf War
The Gulf	خلیج فارس	The Persian Gulf

The data in Table 2 can be subsumed under the following categories: Iranian government, Syria crisis, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Islamic values, Bahrain crisis, and the Persian Gulf. Although in many cases the Iranian translators working in these agencies substituted the labels, this does not necessarily mean that in all cases the label assigned by foreign news agencies were manipulated. In some cases, the names given by the foreign agencies were retained in the Farsi L2 texts. Some examples are provided in Table 3:

Table 3. *Examples of the Same Translation*

English Source Texts	Farsi Target Texts	Back Translation
Opposition [Bahrain]	مخالفان	The same
Religious scholar [related to al-Qaeda]	کارشناس مذهبی	The same
Taliban militant	شبه نظامیان طالبان	The same
Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups	القاعده و سایر گروه های تروریستی	The same

The only exception in the analyzed data was the case of Israel which was translated as Israel in a few cases (5 cases). Zero translation was also observed. This, however, does not imply that only the names were omitted. In these cases, total paragraphs were deleted in the L2 texts. Owing to the fact that this study was a product-oriented one and that the researchers were not able to observe and/or control the extraneous factors, these cases were not counted. In other words, we cannot claim that the entire paragraph was deleted because of the names and labels included in them.

5. Discussion

Data analysis shows that translators working in the news agencies affiliated with the Iranian government changed the names and labels against the Iranian national and international interests. And, in those cases where the names were in line with the Iranian interests, the same labels were adopted. The cases of name changes are further discussed in the following.

Some of the Western countries, after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, attach negative attributes to the Iranian government such as *regime* or *Iranian regime*. As Moradi Joz, Ketabi, and Vahid Dastjerdi (2013) point out, in Persian the word *regime*, in a political sense, is used to refer to “illegitimate” and “despotic” rules and states. On the contrary, the Persian word *nezam* (meaning “government system”) has a positive connotation and is used to refer to legitimate and democratic states and rules. Describing a government as “regime” has negative connotation and implies an authoritarian kind of ruling. The Iranian translators disassociate themselves from this negative label by using labels such as *Iran*, *Islamic Republic of Iran*, and *Tehran*. Another issue related to the Iranian government is the Islamic Republic of Iran Guardian Corps (IRIGC). This paramilitary branch of the Iranian Defense Ministry was established in post-Revolution Iran to defend the Islamic values as well as the Islamic Republic itself. In one case, it was described by the negative

modifier as “hardline force.” The translator(s) did not translate this part and simply opted for IRIGC.

The most frequent change has to do with the narratives of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran have not recognized Israel as a country. They, most of the time, describe Israeli-related issues as “Zionism” which is defined by *Oxford Dictionary* (online) as “a movement for (originally) the reestablishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel.” It seems that whereas using *Israel* denotes recognition of the country, *Zionism* means the agenda of occupying the Palestinian territory. By changing *Israel* to *Zionism* and *Israeli* to *Zionist*, the Iranian translators signaled the narratives in which they are located (see Table 2). Another replacement for the *Israel* is *the occupying regime*. This shows Iran’s advocacy of Palestine and reflects the belief that Palestine is occupied by the Israelis.

Syria has witnessed crisis since 2011. On the one hand, Western countries support rebellions against the Syrian government, and on the other hand, Iran backs the Syrian government. The Iranian officials such as Hassan Rohani, the former Director of Iran’s Expediency Council’s Center for Strategic Research, has called Syria as the frontline of Islamic Resistance (“Rohani: Syria,” 2012) or Jalili, the former secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, dubbed Syria as “axis of resistance” (“Iran: Syria part,” 2012). Western media describe the Syrian government as *regime*, *Assad’s Regime*, and *the Syrian regime* and call the Syrian opposition as *revolutionaries*. But these labels were changed to *the Syrian government* and *rebels*, respectively. Even in one case where *rebels* was used as an attribute of the opposition against the Syrian government, a more negative term was used to replace it in translation, that is, *terrorists*. As Valdeón (2007) points out, the term *terrorist* “might regard the political objectives of the organization as secondary and, therefore, focus on the devastating effects of their violent actions” (p. 104). Several countries such as France and the U.S. have formed a group called Friends of Syria to exert pressure on the Syrian government to succumb. The group’s name was translated with the addition of an adjective, that is, *the so-called*. This attributive is used here “to express one’s view that such a name or term is inappropriate” (*Oxford Dictionary*, Online).

Islamic terms such as *Jihadists* or *Islamists* were used to describe extremists groups such as Al-Qaeda and the like in the original texts. The term *jihad* has its root in Islamic theology. These terms are sometimes exploited to paint a bad picture from Islam. In their study, Jahedi and Abdullah (2012) note that:

There was a tendency to explain the act of violence and terrorism with references to the religion of Islam as in *Islamic militants*, *Islamic terrorists*, *Islamic radicals*, etc. By the association of

religious aspects of the Iranian nation with negative words such as *violence*, *radicalism*, *terrorism*, and *fundamentalism*, Islam was depicted as a religion which had a direct influence in those inhuman acts. (p. 376)

In order to avoid such a negative influence and due to the fact that terms such as *Jihadists* or *Islamists*, when associated with savage acts of terror, can blemish the Islamic values, *militia*, *militant group* and *extremists* were adopted by the translators. In other words, the Iranian translators seem to agree with the L1 text producers to the extent that the terrorist groups are extremists but do not think Islam has anything to do with those groups.

Whereas Western countries see the uprisings in the Arab countries as *Arab Spring*, the Iranian authorities have called it *Islamic Awakening* (see for example, "Supreme Leader's Speech," 2014). The Iranian officials think that the uprisings in the Middle East region are the impact of the Islamic Revolution taken place in Iran about 35 years ago (see for example this article on the Islamic Revolution Document Center Website, "*Comparative Review*," 2013). This idea itself stems from the theory of cultural export of the revolution (see Jamalzadeh, 2012). The translators have, thus, preferred to use *Islamic Awakening* rather than *Arab Spring*.

The Persian Gulf is the name given by both Iranians and Iranian authorities to refer to the Iran's southern Gulf. Some Western media opt for *The Gulf* or they might refer to the Persian Gulf War as *the Gulf War*. In all these cases, the translators translated these terms as *the Persian Gulf*.

Bahrain, nowadays, witnesses some opposition movements (mainly by Shiites) against its government. Iran backs the movement. The Bahraini government cracks down hard on the protesters. Therefore, *Bahrain* in the L1 texts was translated into *Bahraini Regime*, which possesses a negative shade of meaning.

6. Conclusion

As this study indicates, the Iranian translators working in news agencies advocating the Iranian authorities' policies do not uncritically circulate the narratives against the Iranian national and international interests. This actually shows that translators, in practice, are not faithful to the L1 text contents; rather, confronted with conflicting narratives, they remain loyal to their interests and the narratives promoted by their institutions. This finding accentuates Tymoczko's (2010b) argumentation that translators do not work in a place "in between." That is, the utopian assumption that translators are neutral message transmitters who carry across the L1 message faithfully comes into question.

There is another point to be made here. We have so far discussed conscious extrinsically motivated decision-makings on the part of translators (and possibly

their colleagues), but there are some cases that the language itself does not allow for a neutral choice. That is, even if translators faithfully reproduce the labels and names existing in the L1, their translations cannot be called neutral. An example might help elucidate the point: What an Iranian calls *Bayt al-Maqaddas*, an Israeli identifies as *Jerusalem*. Encountered with the word *Jerusalem* in the English texts, the translators have two—practical not theoretical—options in Farsi: They could either transliterate it as *Orshaleem* (similar to Hebrew *Yerushaláyim*) or replace it with *Bayt al-Maqaddas*. Either of these choices is ideologically laden; the translators who favor the former or the latter subscribe to a special type of narrative. On the one hand, if they, intentionally or unintentionally, go for *Orshaleem*, they circulate the Israeli narrative; on the other hand, if they substitute it with *Bayt al-Maqaddas*, they efface the ideology of the L1 text and promote the narrative of the Muslims. The translation of names and labels, at least in such cases, appears to be an oscillation between ideologies. The choices translators opt for legitimizes or delegitimizes certain types of narratives. This, we think, supports the idea that “neutrality is an illusion” (Baker, 2006, p. 128).

Although our study is by its nature a product-oriented one, we can make some inferences about the process of translating as well (see Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013, p. 50). Back in 1969, Nida and Taber divided the process of translating into three stages: analysis, transfer, and restructuring. Albir and Alves (2009) have also summarized some of the fundamental traits of cognitive models of translation process, the first one being “the existence of basic stages related to understanding and re-expression” (p. 62). We can now deduce from the findings of this research and those of the literature reviewed above that critical evaluation is an integral part of processes in a professional setting such as newsroom because the translators, besides refusing the wholesale circulation of the narratives they had translated, replaced the labels with the ones that best served their purposes.

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