

# Competition of Discourses in Journalistic Translation: Diplomatic Negotiations in Focus

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*Received: 23/05/2015*

*Accepted: 06/12/2015*

## **Abstract**

We sought to understand whether, how, and why the translated journalistic texts related to the Iranian nuclear negotiations were manipulated. To this end, we monitored a news agency's Webpage in a time span of 46 days that began 3 days before Almaty I nuclear talks and ended 3 days after Almaty II talks. Monitoring resulted in a corpus made up of 36 target texts plus their source texts. Data were, then, approached from the perspective of van Dijk's sociocognitive theory of discourse and ideology. Findings indicated that the published texts in the name of translation, as Their voice, were exploited to emphasize in-group favoritism and out-group derogation. Linking the textual analysis to the context demonstrated that the manipulations might have intentionally been done so that the translations conformed to the narratives of resistance and independence prevailing in the country after the 1979 Revolution. Results seem to suggest that manipulated translation can be a more effective tool of manipulation because it is, most of the time, presented and accepted as proxy for what out-groups say.

**Keywords:** Journalistic Translation; Manipulation; Ideology; Discourse Analysis

## **1. Introduction**

For years, Iran has been embroiled in a series of negotiations on a conflict over its nuclear program. On the one hand, Iran asserts that its nuclear program is merely for peaceful purposes and the US, Israel, and some other European countries, on the other hand, continue their accusations against Iran, claiming that Iran is after building nuclear bombs. Pursuing what they call their legitimate right of gaining nuclear know-how, Iranians have undergone severe hardship. The world community

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has passed different kinds of resolutions and imposed sanctions on the Iranian nation because, as they say, they are suspicious about the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. The issue of such paramount importance, accordingly, has hit the headlines of many newspapers. This, in turn, has inspired some researchers to work on the linguistic reflection and construction of the issue.

The party against Iran's nuclear program owns media tycoons, bombarding the entire world with their news with the aim of persuading people that Iran is surreptitiously building some nuclear weaponry, and such a threat to international peace and security must be stopped as soon as possible. Some researchers have looked into the coverage of the Iranian nuclear program in Western news agencies (e.g., Atai & Mozaheb, 2013; Atai & Rezaie Adriani, 2009; Behnam & Moshtaghi Zenouz, 2008; Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007; Koosha & Shams, 2005; Rasti & Sahragard, 2012) and have demonstrated the partisan presentation of the issue. However, there is still a paucity of research on how these materials get translated.

The Iranian news agencies advocating Iranian nuclear program, sometimes, translate the narratives of the Western news agencies for their outlets. The questions that arise here are:

1. Are the translated texts of foreign English news agency reports about the Iranian nuclear negotiations manipulated?
2. What textual strategies are employed to manipulate the journalistic texts about the Iranian nuclear negotiations?
3. How can the manipulation strategies be explained in terms of the different ideologies governing the production of the source and target texts?

To answer these questions, we will first review the related literature. Next, because this study deals with the effect of ideology and discourse, we will elaborate on van Dijk's theory of discourse and ideology. We will also try to adapt van Dijk's theory to translating where two languages are involved. An important part of discourse analysis is contextual analysis which is dealt with in section 4. Following the contextual analysis the results of comparative textual analysis will be presented to see if and how the texts are manipulated. In the final section of the study, conclusion and discussion are offered.

## **2. Literature Review**

Translation has played a pervasive but invisible role in newsrooms (see Valdeón, 2012). Recently, translation researchers have recognized the role and started looking into the issue so much so that news translation is turned into one of "the fastest-growing fields at the present time" (Bassnett, 2014, p. 3). Although some aspects of news translation such as globalization and localization (Bielsa &

Bassnett, 2009; Orenge, 2005), evaluation in news agency (Hajmohammadi, 2005), and fieldworks regarding the process of news translation (Bani, 2006; Tsai, 2005, 2012) have been delved into, its relation to conflict has not been extensively addressed in translation studies. However, more and more attention is being paid to news translation in a climate of conflict. For reasons of space, only two studies in this area are briefly reviewed here.

Kuo and Nakamura (2005) investigate conflict as represented in two English-to-Chinese translations of Taiwan's First Lady's interview published by the *Associated Press* in two ideologically opposed newspapers in Taiwan. Their study takes into account headline change, addition, deletion, and syntactic, lexical, and stylistic changes. The data analysis reveals differences with respect to the editorial deletions and additions, syntactic and lexical variations, as well as stylistic differences in paragraph/thematic combinations. They conclude that the choices in these two newspapers "are not arbitrary but are well motivated by their underlying ideologies" (2005, p. 410).

Kang (2007) explores the reflection of the conflict between North Korea and the U.S. in translations of three news stories from the *Newsweek* into its Korean edition, the *Newsweek Hankuk Pan*. Kang limits her study to omission, addition, generalization, particularization, and reperspectivization. Kang (2007) concludes that "translation inevitably entails a reformulation of the source text in response to priorities and values relevant within the target context" (p. 240).

To sum up, the two studies reviewed above and some others including Zhang (2012), Möckli (2012), Bazzi (2009), Bulut (2012), and Chen (2009) show that conflict finds manifestation in translation, and translation can have the ability, inter alia, to instigate, perpetuate, and prevent a (potential) conflict. Translators, as these studies show, are not neutral bystanders; instead, they actively engage in translation process.

However, the studies reviewed above either analyze small sets of data or narrow down their focus on specific features of the texts. Furthermore, to our best knowledge, investigation of journalistic translation related to the Iranian nuclear issue is unprecedented. As such, in this study, we will try to fill the existing gaps, first by taking into account the controversial issue of nuclear negotiations, and second, by offering a holistic account of the manipulation strategies in 36 pairs of TTs and STs amounting to almost 45,000 words.

### **3. Method**

This study draws on van Dijk's sociocognitive theory of discourse and ideology which is elaborated on in the following section. Furthermore, the study can be called an almost synchronic product-oriented descriptive study (see Holmes,

1972/2004) with a top-down approach to shift analysis. Whereas bottom-up analysis “starts from the smaller units (usually terms, phrases, or sentences) and works up to the larger ones (text, context, genre, culture),” the top-down approach starts “from major hypotheses about why they [shifts] might exist and how they could form tendencies” (Pym, 2010, p. 68). A top-down approach, as Pym (2014) holds, “seeks *causal factors* (the reason for the shifts) that are quite different from those of the equivalence paradigm” (p. 66).

### **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

Based on van Dijk’s sociocognitive theory, ideology has three main components: social functions, cognitive structures, and discourse expression and reproduction (van Dijk, 1998). The main social function of ideologies is “the coordination of the social practices of group members for the effective realization of the goals of a social group and the protection of its interests” (p. 24). Regarding the cognitive structures, he proposes that “ideologies are the ‘axiomatic’ basis of the mental representations shared by the members of a social group. That is, they represent the basic principles that govern social judgment—what group members think is right or wrong, true or false” (pp. 24-25). In other words, “the main cognitive function of ideologies is to organize specific group attitudes” (p. 25).

A distinguishing feature of van Dijk’s theory is his account for “the vital missing link” (1998, p. 27) between discourse and ideology. In his perspective, the reciprocation of ideology and discourse is indirect; thus, he borrows the concept of *models* from psychology to cater for the missing interface between them. van Dijk (1998) posits that models which “represent people’s everyday experiences, such as the observation of or participation in actions, events or discourses” are “personal, subjective, and context-bound” (p. 27). He also reminds that although these models are personal and subjective, large parts of them are only personal instantiations of the sociocultural knowledge and group opinions formed by ideologies. Models are actually the interface between social representations including ideologies and social practices including discourses (see also van Dijk 2001, 2002, 2004). In this way, he describes how discourse production and comprehension are influenced by ideologies. Simply put, when a journalist writes a news narrative on an event, he or she has his or her own mental model—a model already imbued with ideology—which might ultimately leave its effect on the way he or she writes about that event and when the audience read the very same news discourse, again a new model is built in their minds that might affect their opinions, attitudes and, finally, their ideology.

van Dijk’s theory pertains to one language. To adapt it to translating, we borrow some concepts from Forghan-Parast’s (2007) cybernetic model of translation. In this causal-process model of translation, it is believed that translators

have two roles: translator as reader and translator as writer. In both reading and writing phases, the translator builds mental representations or “abstractions” (p. 16) which are constrained to the text. The mental representations created by the translator are influenced by different factors. Ideologies and attitudes in this model are subsumed under the internal influences that will affect decision-making during translating. Based on what has been discussed so far, Table 1 encapsulates the role of models in production, translation, and comprehension of news discourses.

It was earlier mentioned that ideology permeates different aspects of discourse production, but this does not suggest that any element in discourse is exclusively ideological. This is a problem that van Dijk (2006) calls overinterpretation of ideology. van Dijk’s resolution to circumvent the problem is that data “should never be described in isolation, but in relation to the text (cotext) as a whole and in relation to the context” (p. 129).

To fix the problem of overinterpretation in translation, scholars believe that the decisions made in translation can be thought of as ideologically driven if and when they show a pattern or trend (Farahzad, 2012; Hatim & Mason, 1997) that can be related to conscious aim and extrinsic evidence (Ayyad & Pym, 2012; Pym, 2011):

Table 1. *Models in Production, Translation, and Comprehension of Journalistic Texts*

Step Number	Description
Step 1	A journalist witnesses an event and/or studies related discourses. Here, the journalist builds his model which is affected by the underlying ideology (see van Dijk 1988, pp. 95-137).
Step 2	The journalist writes a story on the event. In this phase, the underlying ideology is instantiated in the discourses the journalist creates (see van Dijk 1988, pp. 95-137).
Step 3	The translator-as-reader engages in reading the news discourse. There might be two possible options here: (a) The text might affect the attitudes and opinions or mental model of the translator and finally his ideology or the text might be in line with translator’s ideology, and (b) translator, while reading the ST, may build a model based on the existing ideology in the target society.
Step 4	The translator-as-writer translates the news discourse. In case (a) of step 3, translator will faithfully reproduce ST message. In case (b), however, the translator might resist or intervene in circulation of the discourses he or she translates.
Step 5	The readers read the final translated text. Again, here, we can envisage two possibilities. The readers either resist accepting the model the translator has created for them or give in to that model. If the readers’ ideology is in line with that of the translator, the readers’ ideology is reinforced. It is also predictable that these discourses might ultimately affect some readers’ opinions and thoughts and finally their ideologies. The ideologies maintained and created by these discourses might coordinate the people’s behavior toward the desired goal

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of the group (see van Dijk 1988, pp. 140-148).

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### 3.2 Data Collection and Corpus

The data collection started 3 days before Almaty I nuclear talks held in Kazakhstan on February 26 and 27, 2013 and terminated 3 days after Almaty II nuclear negotiations held on April 5 and 6, 2013. The reasons for choosing this time span for the data collection were the importance of this juncture in the history of Iranian nuclear talks, expected increase in the publication of translated texts (TTs) about the issue, and the uniformity of the themes of the TTs. During the data collection phase, which lasted for 46 days, English-to-Persian translations published by Young Journalists Club (YJC) together with their respective STs were tracked and saved, resulting in a corpus composed of 36 pairs of STs and TTs (72 texts). Table 2 indicates the word counts of the STs and TTs:

Table 2. *Word Count of STs and TTs in Corpus*

STs Words	TTs Words	Total
27,651	17,701	45,352

The rationale behind the selection of YJC was the transparency of this Websites' political affiliation towards the policies of the Iranian authorities. YJC was established and is currently run by the political deputy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). The members of the YJC, who intend to be employed there, are required to take an oath, the last part of which, according to the YJC About-Us page, reads, "I swear that, following the sacrifices of the martyrs, I always strive for the independence and freedom of the Islamic nation and advocate the holy aspirations of the [Islamic] Revolution, country, and the [Islamic Republic] leader" (*our translation*). The fact that this news agency operates under the aegis of the IRIB, the head of which is directly appointed by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, can be another testament to the consistency of this news agency's policy with that of the Islamic Republic government, in general, and its nuclear strategy, in particular. The Website is available at [www.yjc.ir](http://www.yjc.ir).

## 4. Contextual Analysis

Before proceeding to the comparative textual analysis and in keeping with the top-down approach we have chosen in this study, a brief contextual analysis of the event is presented to figure out the different parties' stakes in the conflict which might, ultimately, find their way into translations. The Iranian nuclear contention began in 2002, when it was revealed that Iran was secretly enhancing its nuclear facilities. Following the disclosure, some countries stated that the program could be used to manufacture nuclear bombs. To solve the issue diplomatically, some EU

countries engaged in a series of negotiations with Iran. As a result, Iran voluntarily suspended its enrichment activities. After Ahmadinejad came to power, the suspension was called off, and the nuclear activities were resumed (Kbaroğlu, 2006, 2007) which resulted in a series of resolutions by the United Nations Security Council and unilateral and multilateral sanctions against Iran that considerably weakened its economy. Due to the economic pressures, Iran changed its stance and engaged in the negotiations to achieve a deal.

An interesting point about the nuclear issue is that despite all the severe hardship the Iranians have experienced, there seems to be an almost overall consensus over the program, both among the elites and the people. The reason, Moshirzadeh (2007) contends, is that the program has been well articulated within three discourses: independence, justice, and resistance—the very discourses that form the identity of the Islamic Revolution. However, as Moran and Hobbs (2012) hold, it seems that the Iranian authorities have so much invested in the nuclear issue that it has become a matter of prestige and nationalism for the Iranian people. This, in turn, has imposed some constraints on the decision-making in the nuclear issue, and any compromise and reconciliation would run counter to the combative narrative the Islamic Republic has created (see Moran & Hobbs, 2012).

Iran is, thus, caught in a double bind because whereas the economic effects of the international sanctions challenge the popular support for the regime's defiance of the international community, perceived capitulation to Western powers will undermine the credibility of the nuclear nationalism that has sustained the regime for much of its existence (Moran & Hobbs, 2012).

As a result of the sanctions juggernaut imposed on Iran's economy, the already ailing economy of Iran started collapsing. There are some signs of dissatisfaction not only among the ordinary people—which might lead to upheaval—but also among the elite who blame the Ahmadinejad's administration for mishandling the issue and paying the price of more than it needed (see Chubin, 2009). Iran desperately needs, at least, relief of some sanctions for some time. Nonetheless, Iran cannot instantaneously withdraw from its previous stances and given the strength of Iran's nuclear narrative and its censorial effect on decision-makers in Tehran, any concessions on the nuclear issue must occur in a context where the regime is able to save face domestically and maintain consistency with the narrative. The nuclear narrative constitutes a key source of support and legitimacy for the regime in Tehran. Consequently, the Iranian negotiators must be able to reconcile any prospective agreement with the deeply embedded nationalist theme of the narrative (Moran & Hobbs, 2012).

Against the backdrop of these brief historical and political contextual analyses, we are ready now to embark on analyzing the translated journalistic texts.

## 5. Results of Comparative Textual Analysis

Having completed the data collection, the STs and TTs texts were juxtaposed for rigorous comparative textual analysis. The analysis of STs and TTs was confined to macrosemantic information (including the headline system, which itself might be composed of super headline, main headline, and sub headline and the lead, van Dijk 1988) as well as microtextual shifts such as addition, deletion, shift of agency, different lexicalization, and so on. An exploratory approach was adopted for registering the manipulation strategies. The registered manipulation strategies could be subsumed under 12 categories. These categories are mostly borrowed from van Dijk's papers and customized for this study.

In some other cases, the categorization of different manipulation strategies is informed by the textual dimension of Farahzad's (2012) model for translation criticism which is based on critical discourse analysis. These strategies include addition, deletion, shift of agency, and shift of polarity (what Farahzad, 2012, calls positive/negative). However, the authors' application of these terms does not completely correspond to Farahzad's. The terms in Farahzad's model are adapted and, sometimes, expanded to meet the needs of this study. For example, in Farahzad's model, part-deletion of the agency or substitution of agency is not mentioned; therefore, the shift of agency in Farahzad's terminology is expanded.

Some examples of the manipulation strategies together with definitions, where necessary, and back-translations (BTs) are elaborated on in the following section. It is noteworthy that over/understatement are defined under one heading. For ease of referring to the STs and TTs, they are coded according to the date they were first displayed on YJC's Website. Thus, the first text is coded as YJC-1 and the last one as YJC-36. The URLs of the TTs and STs can be found in Appendix.

### 5.1 Manipulation Strategies and Examples

#### 5.1.1 Citation of source text agency/authority

In 21 cases, the target headlines explicitly refer to the source agencies from which the journalistic texts are translated. One might argue that the citation of the source agencies and/or political figures cannot be called ideological manipulation and propose that it functions as acknowledging the source agency. That might be right. However, when we look at the words around the source agencies or the authorities referred to in these headlines, we cannot say that the only function of mentioning these agencies and/or authorities is acknowledging the source agencies in question. The words attached to these agencies are worth consideration. Conspicuous in the target headlines is the word *اذعان* [eḏān], meaning "admission" or "confession," repeated 15 times and its synonym *اعتراف* [e'terāf] that comes in one



case. Next comes the word *توصیه* [towsieh], which means “advice” which is repeated four times. Another word used in one of the headlines is *ادعا* [eddeā], meaning “claim.”

The veracity of these target headlines aside—in terms of their relation with the STs from which they are derived—in all the cases in which the word *admission* or *confession* is used, the West *admits* that not only sanctions have no effect on the Iranian nuclear program, but also that they have provoked more motivation and eagerness among the Iranians to pursue their rights (YJC-17, YJC-19, YJC-26, YJC-30). The Western news agencies or newspapers also *admit* that Iran is a key player in the international arena (YJC-31); Iran is developing and its enemy is declining (YJC-13); the West needs to use the opportunity to negotiate with Iran (YJC-20); American and Israeli threats are illegal (YJC-21); the Almaty talks have been successful (YJC-12, YJC-15, YJC-22); the West has caved in to Iran demands (YJC-9, YJC-12); Obama bluffs about military raid against Iran (YJC-25); Iran has been successful in lifting its banking sanctions (YJC-29); America should interact with Iran on the nuclear issue (YJC-36); and, there is no evidence to verify the military dimension of the nuclear program (YJC-1).

When it comes to the word *advice*, we observe that in the translated headlines, the Western news agencies or influential people advise the US president to lift the sanctions against Iran (YJC-2) and to have direct relations with Iran (YJC-32). The world powers and the Western countries are also advised to take useful steps to reach, at least, a short-term agreement with Iran (YJC-33) and to normalize the relations with Iran (YJC-6). The word *claim* is used once when an American senator claims that all options are on the table (YJC-18). The phrase *All options are on the table* is a code to show that the Western party keeps a military strike on hand to curb the alleged military dimension of the Iranian nuclear program. Three examples of this manipulation strategy are presented in the following lines:

- (ST) Report: Sanctions may be speeding Iran's nuclear advancement

(TT) ادعان «کریستین ساینس مانیٹور»:

تحریمها باعث افزایش انگیزه و پیشرفت برنامه هسته‌ای ایران شده/لغو تحریمها تنها راه پیشرفت مذاکرات است.

### (YJC-30)

- (BT) The Christian Science Monitor's **admission**:

Sanctions have caused more motivation for and more development in the Iranian nuclear program/lifting sanctions is the only way for negotiation development.

### 5.1.2 Addition

Several cases of addition were observed in the corpus. Additions might also be used to summarize, say, a paragraph, but as van Dijk (1988) writes, “summarization is necessarily subjective. It presupposes personal and professional decisions about what information is most relevant or important” (p. 116). Two examples are offered below:

- (TT) این روزنامه آمریکایی با اذعان به بی‌اعتنایی جمهوری اسلامی ایران به تهدیدها و فشارهای دولت‌های غربی افزوده است

(YJC-17)

(BT) This American newspaper admits the Islamic Republic of Iran’s indifference to Western pressures and threats and adds that.

- (TT) حتی هانس بلیکس رئیس پیشین آژانس انرژی اتمی نیز به صلح‌آمیز بودن برنامه هسته‌ای ایران اذعان کرده و افزوده است

(YJC-20)

(BT) Even Hans Blix, the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has also admitted the peacefulness of the Iranian nuclear program and has added that.

### 5.1.3 Deletion

Deletion was the most frequent manipulation strategy in the corpus under study. Two examples are presented below.

- (ST) Those sanctions severely affected Iran's ability to export oil and carry out international financial transactions. (YJC-29)
- (ST) In exchange, the West insisted on its long-standing ‘stop-shut-ship’ demand: an immediate halt to 20% enrichment levels, shutting down of the heavily-fortified Fordo enrichment plant, shipping out of Iran's stockpile of medium enriched uranium, and a new comprehensive inspections regime, the so-called Additional Protocol (AP), covering nonnuclear facilities such as the Parchin military complex. (YJC-15)

### 5.1.4 Different lexicalization

Sometimes, lexicalizations in the STs which is a main domain for ideological expression and persuasion (van Dijk, 1995) were not retained in the TTs.

In other cases, what the foreign agencies and political figures state is translated, but, to borrow from van Dijk, “lexicalization of those arguments does not

seem to imply agreement” (1998, p. 53). Here, van Dijk talks about using the verbs *submit*, *claim*, and such like. An instance of this kind lexicalization can be found in the example below:

- (ST) US Secretary of State John Kerry **said** on Tuesday that despite sanctions imposed on Iran, the Islamic Republic continues to advance towards possessing a nuclear weapon, ABC News reported.

(TT) جان کري وزير امور خارجه آمريکا اذعان نمود که ايران علیرغم تحریم هاي وضع شده از سوي آمريکا و اروپا به پیشرفت هسته اي خود ادامه مي دهد.

#### (YJC-19)

- (BT) US Secretary of State John Kerry **admitted** that despite sanctions imposed on Iran by the U.S. and European countries, Iran continues its nuclear development.

### 5.1.5 Foregrounding

van Dijk (n.d.) writes that information that comes at the beginning of the text receives extra emphasis and control over the interpretation of the whole text. He maintains that foregrounding “closely corresponds to the ideological square that assumes in-group favoritism and out-group derogation” (p. 55). For him, headlines and leads have such a function. Here, the researchers use foregrounding in cases where part of the ST is chosen and foregrounded as the headline or lead of the TT. In some cases, other types of manipulation strategies were also integrated in the part being foregrounded.

- (ST) Iran and the US: Deadly Embrace or Suicide Pact?

(TT) آمريکا براي برقراري رابطه مستقيم با ايران تلاش نمايد/ تحریم ها کوچکترین خللي در پیشرفت برنامه هسته اي ايران بوجود نیاورده است.

#### (YJC-32)

- (BT) America should try to establish direct relations with Iran/sanctions have not disordered the development in the Iranian nuclear program even an iota.

The target headline seems to be extracted from the two sentences that have been important to the translators: (1) The ST says, “For the time being, the sanctions appear to have no positive effect on the ayatollahs running the country regarding nuclear issues,” and (2) “Secret diplomacy is surely needed.” Still, we can see that *secret diplomacy* is changed into *direct relations*, and the probability in the first sentence is changed to certainty which aims to show the ineffectuality of sanctions.

### 5.1.6 Understatement and overstatement

The rhetorical features of over/understatement may be used to function ideologically: “When information that is unfavorable to us is made less prominent whereas negative information about them is emphasized” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 29). An example can be found below:

- (ST) Iran’s economy is large.

(TT) اقتصاد ایران اقتصادی عظیم است.

#### (YJC-4)

- (BT) Iran’s economy is very large.

### 5.1.7 Replacement

In some cases, the part of the TT is so severely distorted that the manipulation does not easily lend itself to description. The manipulation strategies used in these cases are a conglomerate of different strategies. Replacement is used to cover this kind of shift:

- (ST) Everyone is saying Iran was more positive and portrayed the talks as a win.

(TT) هر کسی که مذاکرات را دنبال کرده باشد اذعان می کند که موضع ایران مثبت بوده و آن کشور پیروز اصلی این دور از مذاکرات بوده است.

#### (YJC-9)

- (BT) Everyone who has followed the negotiations admits that Iran’s stances were positive and that Iran is the main winner of this round of negotiations.
- (ST) Both Dagan and Diskin have questioned the utility of any strike on Iran.

(TT) داگان و همچنین یووال دیسکین هر دو معتقدند که حتی فکر به چنین تجاوزی نیز حماقتی بزرگ از سوی رژیم صهیونیستی خواهد بود.

#### (YJC-6)

- (BT) Dagan and Diskin both believe that even the thought of such an aggression from the Zionist regime would be a very stupid idea.

### 5.1.8 Shift of agency

In translations, sometimes, the agents “which represents who or what initiates, controls, or is responsible for the action of the verb” (Johnstone, 2008, p. 272) are ideologically altered. Shift of agency is an umbrella term that covers different forms of such a shift which might include deleting agency (removing the agent in the translation like passivization), change of agency (like substitution of

agency in the translation, for example the ST puts Iran in the agent position, but the translator puts the U.S. in that position), addition of the agency (like activation of the sentence), and in some cases part-deletion of the agency (when, for example, in the ST, the agents are Iran and the U.S., but the translation removes Iran from the agent position):

- (ST) **Iran and world powers** should focus on action steps for short-term agreement.

(TT) **قدرت‌های جهانی** بایستی برای رسیدن به توافق هر چند کوتاه مدت با ایران گام‌های موثری بردارند.  
(YJC-33)

- (BT) **The world powers** should take useful steps to reach at least a short-term agreement **with Iran**.

The translation removes Iran from the agent position and puts it in a position of beneficiary. This helps the translator manipulate the reader that Iran is negotiating from the position of strength.

### 5.1.9 Shift of polarity

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define polarity as the opposition between negative and positive. Shift of polarity happens when a positive sentence is substituted with a negative one and vice versa in the translations:

- (ST) Harsh economic sanctions have taken a serious toll on Iran's economy.

(TT) تحریم‌های شدید وضع شده علیه ایران بی تأثیر بوده اند.

(YJC-26)

- (BT) Harsh economic sanctions imposed on Iran have been ineffectual.

### 5.1.10 Shift of modalization

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the “intermediate degrees between the positive and negative poles, are known collectively as MODALITY” (pp. 147 & 618) which itself branches into modalization and modulation. Shift of modalization which was found in the corpus under study covers two degrees: “(i) degrees of probability: possibly/probably/certainly, (ii) degrees of usuality: sometimes/usually/always” (2004, p. 147):

- (ST) The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a nonnuclear-weapons member of the NPT, not only denies any intent to pursue nuclear weapons, but also declares such an intent immoral.

(TT) ایران همواره يك عضو غير دارنده سلاح هسته اي در پيمان منع گسترش سلاح هاي گشتار جمعي بوده است. جمهوري اسلامي ايران نه تنها همواره تاکيد نموده که در پس دستيابي به سلاح هسته اي نيست بلکه هميشه اظهار داشته که پيگيري اين هدف نیز امري غير اخلاقي خواهد بود.

(YJC-1)

- (BT) Iran has **always** been a nonnuclear-weapons member of the NPT. Islamic republic of Iran not only **constantly** emphasizes that it is not seeking a nuclear weapon but also **always** declares that pursuing this aim is immoral.

#### 5.1.11 Shift of tense and aspect

Baker (2011) writes that tense and aspect categories in the verbs indicate two main types of information: time relations and aspectual differences. She continues that “time relations have to do with locating an event in time. The usual distinction is between past, present, and future” (p. 108). Aspectual differences points out “have to do with the temporal distribution of an event, for instance its completion or noncompletion, continuation or momentariness” (p. 108):

- (ST) Iran stopped working on nuclear weaponization at the end of 2003 and has not resumed that work.

(TT) ایران هیچ گونه تلاشي در جهت ساخت سلاح هسته اي صورت نداده است.

(YJC-1)

- (BT) Iran has never attempted constructing a nuclear weapon.

#### 5.2 Manipulation Strategies and Ensuing Patterns

Tables 3 below tabulates the frequency count and percentage of the manipulation strategies. As shown, foregrounding is peculiar to the headlines and leads and deletion is the most frequent strategy employed to manipulate the texts. However, these figures would be more fruitful if they are accompanied with what they do, with the patterns they create. That is why Table 4 summarizes the created patterns.

As can be seen in Table 4, we were able to recognize some mutually reinforcing concatenations of manipulations that work to intensify the positive points about Us, for instance, the ineffectuality of sanctions, on the one hand, and to attenuate the negative points about Us, such as effectuality of sanctions on the other hand, which are, indeed, further evidence on the intentional and conscious nature of the decisions made during translation:

Table 3. *Frequency Count and Percentage of Manipulation Strategies*

Manipulation Strategy	Headline		Lead		Body		Subtotal	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Citation of Source Agency/Authority	21	42	0	0	0	0	21	5.81
Addition	8	16	3	9.09	60	21.58	71	19.66
Deletion	3	6	3	9.09	130	46.76	136	37.67
Shift of Modalization	1	2	0	0	9	3.23	10	2.77
Foregrounding	13	26	9	27.27	0	0	22	6.09
Shift of Agency	1	2	0	0	12	4.31	13	3.60
Shift of Tense and Aspect	1	2	1	3.03	7	2.51	9	2.49
Replacement	2	4	0	0	20	7.19	22	6.09
Different Lexicalization	0	0	17	51.51	27	9.71	44	12.18
Understatement	0	0	0	0	4	1.43	4	1.10
Overstatement	0	0	0	0	8	2.87	8	2.21
Shift of Polarity	0	0	0	0	1	.35	1	.27

Table 4. *Frequency Count and Percentage of Ensuing Manipulation Patterns*

Manipulation Pattern	Headline		Lead		Body		Subtotal	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Downplaying Concessions Iran Grants	1	2	2	6.06	18	6.47	21	5.81
Downplaying the Effectuality of Sanctions	2	4	3	9.09	27	9.71	32	8.86
Downplaying Military Dimension of the Program	5	10	2	6.06	55	19.78	62	17.17
Downplaying Military Confrontation and Threats	4	8	3	9.09	24	8.63	31	8.58
Downplaying Negative Points About the Iranian Government	1	2	0	0	28	10.07	29	8.03
Downplaying Pessimism About the Outcome of the Negotiations	0	0	0	0	14	5.03	14	3.87

Magnifying Ineffectuality of Sanctions	9	18	3	9.09	26	9.35	38	10.52
Magnifying Negative Points About the Enemy	6	12	4	12.12	33	11.87	43	11.91
Magnifying Optimism About the Negotiations	6	12	3	9.09	17	6.11	26	7.20
Magnifying Iran's Achievements	16	32	13	39.39	20	7.19	49	13.57
Magnifying Peacefulness of the Nuclear Program	0	0	0	0	16	5.75	16	4.43

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

As mentioned in section 4, ahead of Almaty talks, Iran is understandably in a bad situation, both economically and politically. Different economic indices, as a consequence of the sanctions, started their precipitous fall. Additionally, due to the economic depression, Iran's political system is in turmoil: On the one hand, the sanctions and the dissatisfaction arising from it might result in uprising; on the other hand, the officials are also displeased with the way the nuclear issue is handled. Iran, therefore, needs to engage in the negotiations seriously to achieve a deal. Inherent in these negotiations is the process of give-and-take, meaning that Iran should forego something in order to attain something else. Nevertheless, this would be translated as a sign of retreat from the Iranian people's perspectives. This retreat would run counter to the authorities' previous promises that they would withstand the pressures until they make Iran a nuclear country, and it would also render the enduring of the pressures by the people fruitless.

It is also worth-noting that, according to Moshirzadeh (2007) and Moran and Hobbs (2012), the fate of the nuclear energy program is interwoven with that of the Islamic Republic, because it is propagated as the symbol of resistance, independence, and justice—the metadiscourses that formed the Revolution and sustain it. Therefore, retreat from previous nuclear narratives might challenge the Islamic Republic itself, too. All in all, the Iranian government needs to engage in the negotiations and, in so doing, it also needs to save face and maintain consistency with the narratives it has developed.

Therefore, we can deduce that the possible military dimension of the program is downplayed possibly because Iran has always denied seeking a nuclear weapon. The Iranian government also thinks that the nuclear program is only a pretext under which its enemies can pursue their aims and do not allow it to become



a self-sufficient and independent state and, ultimately, topple the Islamic Republic. The other detected patterns can be related to the fact that Iran needs to save face: It needs to say what has been done so far was right and the shift of stance is again right. As we observed in the TTs, they did not accept the defeat (signs of budging and the concessions Iran grants), the enormous (possible) costs of the program (including the deleterious effect of the sanction and the chance of launching a military strike against the country), and the causes that led to these costs (such as Iran's lack of cooperation in the negotiations and its flawed policy regarding the nuclear program). They knew that behind the scene of these negotiations, people are worried; for that reason, they propagated optimism about the outcome of the talks. They strived to amplify the peacefulness of the program and Iran's economic power and, finally, portrayed Iran as the winner of the game.

This study not only shows that translation, at least in this corpus, is not a conduit through which apolitical disinterested message is relayed from one society to another, but also demonstrates that translation is a field in which, as Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002) put it, "discourses meet and compete" (p. xix). The findings of this research accentuate Tymoczko's (2003/2010) argumentation that translators are not situated in a place in-between. As far as this study is concerned, they are ideologically committed professionals who take side with the party for which they translate, to which they belong.

We saw that in the TTs what benefits the producers of the translation is magnified and what imperils the policies of their authorities is downplayed. The findings of this research, therefore, buttress Gentzler and Tymoczko's (2002) comment on translation:

Translation, thus, is not simply an act of faithful reproduction, but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication—and even in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways translators, as much as the creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture. (p. xxi)

Another worth-mentioning issue that can be brought up here is van Dijk's ideological square. He theorizes that discourse structures work to (n.d, p. 44):

- ✓ Emphasize positive things about Us,
- ✓ Emphasize negative things about Them,
- ✓ De-emphasize negative things about Us,
- ✓ De-emphasize positive things about Them.

As far as the YJC translation trend is concerned, we see that the final translations, by resorting to different strategies of manipulation, are seriously distorted. Translations seem to put the Iranian authorities' policies in Their mouth. It is said that translations should be full-size replicas of the STs so that they help the readers understand what others say or think. Now, if they want to propagate what they intend to, why do they employ translations? What is in the translations that they want to take advantage of? One tends to propose that this news agency exploited the fidelity expected from translations. The audience—at least, ordinary audience—expects translations to be the true copy of the original, nothing more, and nothing less. It might be safe to claim that translations as Their voice are abused to emphasize the good deeds of Us and negative points about Them. It stands to reason to say that this way, the effect of discourse might increase. In other words, it appears that it is more persuasive and encouraging when the enemy or out-groups admit Our positive values and Their negative things. This can open up new vistas for research both in discourse processing and translation studies. An example may clarify the point: Suppose an Iranian authority says that We are developing and America (They) is declining. Suppose further that the very same sentence is pronounced by a prestigious American figure. Although the first sentence conforms to the ideological square proposed by van Dijk, the second one does not. We think the effect of the second sentence on the Iranian people would be more than that of the first sentence, and that is exactly what (manipulated) translation can do because most (ordinary) people take translation to be Their voice. This must be substantiated with empirical proof, however.

Lack of triangulation is one of the limitations this study suffers from. A problem arising from lack of triangulation is that although we managed to find some manipulation patterns with extrinsic motivations, we cannot and do not claim that each and every single member of these patterns is ideologically motivated because we did not observe and/or control the extraneous variables that could have had effects on the translators and translations.

Quantification of manipulation strategies and the created patterns also proved to be cumbersome for different reasons. The first one has to do with the unit. The unit of manipulation is not unanimous in all the manipulations: In one case, an adjective is deleted; in another instance, two or three sentences are consecutively omitted. Another problem concerns the value and the effect of manipulation strategies. We cannot, for instance, think of the deletion of *inflation rate is 35%* and *inflation rate is high* as two equal manipulations. The first sentence appears to enjoy more persuasive power because it employs citing number and figure which are rhetorical devices at the disposal of the text producer (van Dijk, 1988). Acknowledging all these deficiencies, we had to have some sort of quantification in order to summarize the manipulation strategies and to demonstrate how they formed the registered patterns in the TTs.

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### Appendix

CODE	URLs	
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	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4282250/">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4282250/</a>
YJC-3	ST	<a href="http://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/the-us-and-iran-pre-negotiation-maneuvering/">http://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/the-us-and-iran-pre-negotiation-maneuvering/</a>
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YJC-4	ST	<a href="http://blogs.cfr.org/abrams/2013/02/21/are-iran-sanctions-working/">http://blogs.cfr.org/abrams/2013/02/21/are-iran-sanctions-working/</a>
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YJC-5	ST	<a href="http://www.todayszaman.com/news-308147-world-powers-to-offer-iran-sanctions-relief-at-nuclear-talks.html">http://www.todayszaman.com/news-308147-world-powers-to-offer-iran-sanctions-relief-at-nuclear-talks.html</a>
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	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4294974">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4294974</a>
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	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4295924">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4295924</a>
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	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4296229">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4296229</a>
YJC-19	ST	<a href="http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Kerry-Iran-advances-towards-nukes-despite-sanctions">http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Kerry-Iran-advances-towards-nukes-despite-sanctions</a>
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YJC-23	ST	<a href="http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/02/ahead-of-march-iran-talks-u-s-urged-to-back-possible-israeli-strike/">http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/02/ahead-of-march-iran-talks-u-s-urged-to-back-possible-israeli-strike/</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4304349">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4304349</a>
YJC-24	ST	<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/09/opinion/global/seal-the-deal-with-iran.html?_r=0">http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/09/opinion/global/seal-the-deal-with-iran.html?_r=0</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4305669">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4305669</a>

YJC-25	ST	<a href="http://www.thenation.com/blog/173299/obamas-iran-bluff">http://www.thenation.com/blog/173299/obamas-iran-bluff</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4311009">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4311009</a>
YJC-26	ST	<a href="http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-17/world/37795370_1_u-s-sanctions-u-s-embassy-iran-s">http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-17/world/37795370_1_u-s-sanctions-u-s-embassy-iran-s</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4315991">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4315991</a>
YJC-27	ST	<a href="http://www.theguardian.com/world/iran-blog/2013/mar/18/obama-sends-nowruz-message-iran">http://www.theguardian.com/world/iran-blog/2013/mar/18/obama-sends-nowruz-message-iran</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4316660">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4316660</a>
YJC-28	ST	<a href="http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323415304578368892891054884.html">http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323415304578368892891054884.html</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4318857">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4318857</a>
YJC-29	ST	<a href="http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/03/25/eu-iran-usa-idUKL5N0CH2WP20130325">http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/03/25/eu-iran-usa-idUKL5N0CH2WP20130325</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4321108">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4321108</a>
YJC-30	ST	<a href="http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/0326/Report-Sanctions-may-be-speeding-Iran-s-nuclear-advancement">http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/0326/Report-Sanctions-may-be-speeding-Iran-s-nuclear-advancement</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4321977">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4321977</a>
YJC-31	ST	<a href="http://reason.com/blog/2013/04/02/us-may-be-avoiding-sending-aid-to-syrian">http://reason.com/blog/2013/04/02/us-may-be-avoiding-sending-aid-to-syrian</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4326518">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4326518</a>
YJC-32	ST	<a href="http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/iran-and-the-us-deadly-embrace-or-suicide-pact">http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/iran-and-the-us-deadly-embrace-or-suicide-pact</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4327510">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4327510</a>
YJC-33	ST	<a href="http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0403/Iran-and-world-powers-should-focus-on-action-steps-for-short-term-agreement">http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0403/Iran-and-world-powers-should-focus-on-action-steps-for-short-term-agreement</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4327406">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4327406</a>
YJC-34	ST	<a href="http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0405/Iran-nuclear-talks-Citizen-diplomacy-would-build-trust">http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0405/Iran-nuclear-talks-Citizen-diplomacy-would-build-trust</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4328643">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4328643</a>
YJC-35	ST	<a href="http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/06/iran-nuclear-usa-idUSL5N0CT0L020130406">http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/06/iran-nuclear-usa-idUSL5N0CT0L020130406</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4330613">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4330613</a>
YJC-36	ST	<a href="http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joe-cirincione/a-long-term-strategy-for_b_3021114.html">http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joe-cirincione/a-long-term-strategy-for_b_3021114.html</a>
	TT	<a href="http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4332448">http://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/4332448</a>