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## Research Paper

# Analysis of Discursive Translation Strategies in the Rendition of the U.S. Image: Findings From FM Zarif's Twitter Diplomacy

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## Abstract

Translators are liable to leave traces of their ideological worldviews in instances of text and talk. Tapping into these entails, inter alia, the identification, and analysis of Discursive Translation Strategies, that is, devices employed (un)consciously in creating and/or maintaining certain views of reality. This study set out to explore the use of such devices in the translation of politicians' tweets. The data in this exploratory investigation included all FM Zarif's U.S.-related tweets and their Persian translations as archived on the website of the Iranian Foreign Ministry. A total of 137 tweets, spanned within President Trump's term of office, were isolated to see how, if any, their translations might have contributed to the maintenance and/or construction of the U.S. image as displayed in the Source Texts. It was found the translations added yet another discursive level to the already extant diabolical image of the U.S. in the English tweets. The Discursive Translation Strategies employed included two general categories of those contributing to a smoother rendition of the image of the U.S. to the Iranian public and those showcasing such a portrayal.

**Keywords:** Tweets; FM Zarif; Translation Strategies; Discursive Construction.

## 1. Introduction

As an age-old social phenomenon, translation has served a wide range of functions in the history of human civilization – from helping human beings share information and skills, and access exotic knowledge types and competencies, to achieving intercultural communications among people and nations (Salmani & Khalili, 2017). It seems that it has more often than not been taken for granted and assumed merely as an innocent act of rendering materials in a source language (SL) into a target language (TL). This view, however, came under fire in the second half of the twentieth century, and beginning especially with the turn of the century, scholars in the interdisciplinary field of Translation Studies (TS) have moved beyond seeing it as a mere simple (or not so simple) act of reflection and begun to deem it an act of construction, even manipulation of texts (Claramonte, 2003; Talebinejad & Shahi, 2016). Some researchers have gone in so far as to claim that all renditions are ideological, and those “Ideological aspects can be more or less obvious in texts, depending on the topic of a text, its genre, and communicative purpose” (Schäffner, 2003, p. 23). For instance, “Political and other sensitive texts are instances where ideology in its purest, or crudest, form may be at the centre of the translation process” (Munday, 2008, p. 151). Translation or interpretation of such discourses is therefore apt to leave more ideological traces than texts of a different nature, even for the less expert reader to be able to spot.

The not-so-obvious link between translation and ideology, as Schäffner (2003) puts it, is multifarious, meaning that “the choice of a source text and the use to which the subsequent target text is put is determined by the interests, aims, and objectives of social agents” (p.23). Additionally, ideological bias in translation can surface within a text at different linguistic levels, from micro-level lexico-grammatical realizations to higher-order pragmatic and discursive ones (Kuo & Nakamura, 2005). Tymoczko (2003) maintains that “the ideology of a translation resides not simply in the text translated, but in the voicing and stance of the translator, and in its relevance to the receiving audience” (p. 173). Thus, ideology



mediates reality through semiotic functioning (Jenks, 1993). In other words, "as the conscious choices made by the author direct the reader, so the conscious choices made by the translator serve to channel the reader of the TT" (Munday, 2008, p. 45).

To help identify how translators as "manipulators" (Claramonte, 2003, p. 73) are implicated in (un)consciously rendering and/or creating specific versions of reality in their translated texts, some modern-day scholars (Kuo & Nakamura, 2005) have turned to the resources of mainstream Discourse Analysis (DA) in general and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), in particular, as a highly socially-committed type of research methodology aiming at uncovering the ideologically-driven mediational role of translation.

A widely-held assumption among Critical Discourse Analysts is that most cases of social inequity have roots one way or another in language and discourse. Language mediates our experiences of the world and determines our identity formation, role assignment, and consequently resource allocation. Therefore, "CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse)" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 10). CDA, in the words of van Dijk (2009) is "problem-oriented", meaning that it focuses on "social issues and problems, such as racism and sexism or other forms of domination and power abuse, and then examines whether and how instances of text and talk are involved in its reproduction" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 11). As Hatim and Munday (2019) maintain,

When the focus changes from genre to discourse, and from Applied Linguistics to Cultural Studies, two basic research trends may be identified: one simply unsympathetic to linguistics or even to discourse analysis, the other cognisant of the contribution of discourse studies to the study of culture and translation. The latter approach may be illustrated by the work of the Canadian cultural commentator and translation theorist Donald Bruce which, while firmly grounded in Cultural Studies, has nevertheless branched out in a number of interesting ways to include discursive models and socio-political theory. (pp 192-193)

One significant instance of text and talk, blatantly implicated in the creation, maintenance, and/or reproduction of the elite ideologies but not having received due attention by scholars working within a CDA paradigm, all its heterogeneity notwithstanding, is translation and interpretation. Understandably, it could further be argued that translation both as a process or a product seeks to discursively construct given views of reality and make the public see it in specific ways. The present study has set out to redress such an imbalance to some extent by showing how political discourse in/through the act of translation might become more skewed and impartial yet. It has specifically looked at the translation of politicians' tweets – a highly charged yet condensed genre serving the goals of political figures.

Along similar lines, ideologies, as defined by van Dijk (2006), are "belief systems ... *socially shared* by the members of a *collectivity* of social actors" (p. 116). Although they are often viewed as something evil – as something to contend with or to nullify the effect thereof - they are not necessarily negative or dominant (van Dijk, 2006). There is further a cognitive side to them, that is, they are socially acquired patterns of thought and behavior. In this paper, FM Zarif's ideology refers to the political thinking shared by the government he represents in international communities. It has been pointed out by scholars of the field of international affairs (Ali, 2008; Haas, 2012) that both the U.S. and the Iranian Establishments are at an ideological war with one another – a war materialized mostly through the exploitation of political rhetoric.

### 1.1. Twitter: A Social or Political Network?

Twitter as a microblogging platform has gained unprecedented recognition not only for sharing information and news but also for giving voice to one's views of how local and international events play out in modern times. This is evident on several planes. For one thing, based on the latest statistics, only in the U.S. in 2020 approximately 78.5 million people have been twitter users (Statista, 2020), and the number is estimated to reach 96.8 million users in 2026. Secondly, major political figures across the world have turned their attention to it on an ever-increasing basis (Lee & Oh, 2012), as a forum for the expression of their adopted or favored policies on issues of interest to their own people as well as to an international audience.

Another contributing factor to the wide recognition and use of such an online social media outlet as Twitter has been "proliferation of smartphones... allowing citizens to communicate without any limitation on time or location" (Yaquib, Chun, Atluri, & Vaidya, 2017, p. 613). In the current world's political atmosphere, political figures are making

extensive use of the online media potential to promote their views and help impact the way ordinary people perceive the events in their here-and-now as well as more distant socio-political contexts (Gagarina, Shelestova, Sheinina., & Leake, 2019). Another reason why political leaders favor the platform for disseminating information of various kinds, mostly of a political or social nature, at a personal level is to achieve self-promotion (Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010), and subsequently win the support of the public.

Although social networks (especially Twitter) have been extensively exploited by Iranian politicians recently, to date, there have been no relevant published studies investigating the language and discourse of Iranian politicians in social networks. One politician, who has been quite active and vocal in this regard in his lately expired term of office, was the outgoing Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. Zarif's most English tweets have been seen as his effort to reflect the adopted policies of his country's political structure. If we take ideologies to have "*discursive manifestations*" (van Dijk, 1998, p.6), that is, if they reveal themselves in/through instances of text, talk, and communication (collectively termed *discourse* by van Dijk, 1998), one way to delve into Zarif's institutional ideology further (i.e., what promoted by the Establishment with which he is affiliated) is through looking at the tweets he has produced. Also, their translation into Persian, as done on the website of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, is expected to give more ideological weight to them. This second task has been undertaken by this investigation to help reveal how the translator(s) have sought to paint a dark picture of the country's adversaries in general and the U.S. issues in particular.

## 2. Review of Literature

Analysis of the content of tweets of influential global figures can be quite illuminating in that it directs attention to the trends in current local or international thought and the courses of action emanating from them. Twitter users and readers can see for themselves issues of pressing concern and/or interest to political actors and the relationships established between nations at different levels. However, getting to the heart of and laying bare the ideologies embedded within the messages sent through the platform as well as the modes through which they might foreground certain entities or courses at the expense of other individuals, groups, or actions have only recently been taken into account in what seems to be a piecemeal fashion (Evolvi, 2019; Kreis, 2017; Roderick, 2016). Such studies, as a glance through the existing body of literature divulges, are few and far between and are only recently beginning to surface.

It appears that the field of communication in general and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in particular have attached great weight to quantitative empirical studies exploring the effect on the audience of social networking media (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013). The genre of the tweet in particular as a modern instance of language in use has not been dealt with by discourse analysts, who are concerned above all with unravelling, at a range of interconnected linguistic levels, how tweets operate on readers and seek to mediate the reality often in hidden or subliminal ways.

A number of investigations have looked into the discursive workings of Twitter from a (mainstream/critical) discourse analytic perspective (See Åkerlund, 2020, for a notable example). Breeze (2020), for instance, researched distinctive patterns of the style used by four British politicians from a corpus-based approach to discourse analysis. Masroor, Khan, Aib, and Ali (2019) have examined the discursive strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other-representation in the political Twitter-based rhetoric of two eminent Pakistani political actors. Also, Altoaimy (2018) followed the discourses of KSA Twitter users engaged in arguing for or against women driving in the Kingdom via conducting a corpus analysis of the relevant collected tweets. In another study, Chilwa and Ifukor (2015) applied the appraisal framework to the analysis of the pro-release campaign tweets expressed in light of the kidnapping of Nigerian girls by Boko Haram and found the data exhibited a high degree of affect at the level of lexical items. This range of studies has looked at the discursive workings of tweets but not at their translations.

Translation of tweets as a political act, especially into one's local language(s), and the implications it could have for serving ideological purposes such as consensus-building, (de)legitimization, and strategic dichotomization, have seemingly attracted less attention on the part of scholars of various (inter)disciplinary orientations. This is quite surprising since, as Yang (2012) implies, the act might involve ideological considerations at every stage along the way:

Translation is never a simple procedure of producing equivalents between languages. It involves selecting materials for translation, understanding the target audience, and choosing vocabulary, tone, and style ... A translation is an appropriation and a way of framing. (p. 177)

With the above in mind, further studies are warranted on the issue of the mediational role of translation in how ideologies are introduced, created, recontextualized, maintained, and reproduced, particularly vis-à-vis the local audience in nation-states. Along similar lines, the current research can therefore be seen as an effort to add to the as-yet-emerging research on the interface of translation and ideology (Kreis, 2017; McGlashan, 2020; Maurer & Diehl, 2020; Prendergast & Quinn, 2020; Quinn, Prendergast, & Galvin, 2019), especially on the discursive and ideological workings of Twitter translation on the domestic audience. It has sought to illustrate some of the discursive and linguistic ways via which politicians try to hammer home their views of how world affairs should be deemed. In line with this and with specific reference to FM Zarif's tweets, the study has advanced the following overarching research question the answer to which will subsequently be supplied:

- How have the translator(s) of FM Zarif's English tweets possibly set out to render his political thinking into Persian? More specifically, what Discursive Translation Strategies, if any, have they employed to convey the beliefs held to the Iranian general readership?

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Data Selection and Analysis

The data for this study consists of 137 tweets posted by FM Zarif in the distance of September 2019, marking the assassination of the Iranian General Qassem Soleimani by the U.S. forces to November 2020 (due to the increasing level of political tensions), the date Trump left presidential office. The data was gathered using the tweets published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry (IFM) website. The website started to publish Zarif's English tweets in 2017, and shortly Persian translations of the original English tweets as well as those in other languages, especially Arabic, began to surface almost on a daily basis. For this study, which aims at uncovering notable discursive strategies of othering, only English tweets with references to the U.S. were set aside for analytical purposes. This was done due to the ideological gulf existing between the two countries being often realized in political rhetoric delivered through a wide range of channels.

All the translated tweets included in this study are included on the IFM website with screenshots of the original tweets in English. Moreover, there are at times instances of paratext, including explanatory introductions or intertextual extrapolations clarifying Zarif's intended messages. Such textual and pictorial pieces of information beyond the Persian translations help set the scene for and accentuate the worldviews hidden in the content of the original tweets.

The descriptive qualitative method was applied in the study. The study began with an inductive pilot analytical phase. Ten percent (N= 15) of the tweets were read and reread by the first researcher in an attempt to spot any likely notable salient linguistic features in the data. This initial stage of the study provided the researchers with nine strategies adopted by the translator(s) in delegitimizing the U.S. administration's actions taken toward Iran and the human or nonhuman entities affiliated with it. The reading of the rest of the data helped increase and develop the 9 categories into 12 ones since new instances of the use of Discursive Translation Strategies (DTSs) were found in the data set.

Scammell (2018) defines (translation) strategies as "either the overall approach taken to the translation of a text or, more usually, to the individual decisions made at the word, phrase, or sentence level" (p. 47). For this study, Discursive Translation Strategies are seen as the decisions made by the translator of certain discourses (e.g., political ones) to either build on and foreground the worldviews of the original text authorship or background them. It should further be noted that the reading and analysis of the whole data corpus were undertaken twice within a distance of two months to help the researchers arrive at and ensure a higher degree of intra-coder reliability. This procedure led to ensuring the consistency of the analysis.

As for data triangulation, the authors could not conduct interviews with translators to investigate whether strategies used in translations were applied purposefully or not. Therefore, texts were analyzed as the only material for analysis and interpretation.

#### 4. Findings

The almost simultaneous processes of selection and analysis of the data gleaned in the course of the present study, that is, FM Zarif's U.S.-related political tweets pointed to the existence of a rather wide range of DTSs deployed by the translator – whoever that human entity might have been. As it turned out, some DTSs were more salient as far as their frequency of occurrence and (multiple) functions were concerned, and others were found to be of limited use and, subsequently, left out.

As already alluded to and in keeping with the research questions, in the pilot phase of this exploratory investigation, nine categories of DTSs were spotted. The aim was for them to guide the rest of the study. Later on, three further components were identified and formulated as themes arrived at and the research ended with the recognition of an aggregate of 12 DTSs. This checklist of 12 DTSs was also used in the second reading of the whole data set to ensure greater reliability of the findings as well as clearing up any ambiguities. Overall, a total of 276 DTSs were spotted upon the completion of the ultimate data analytic process. Table 1 is a graphic display of the type and frequency of the gleaned elements:

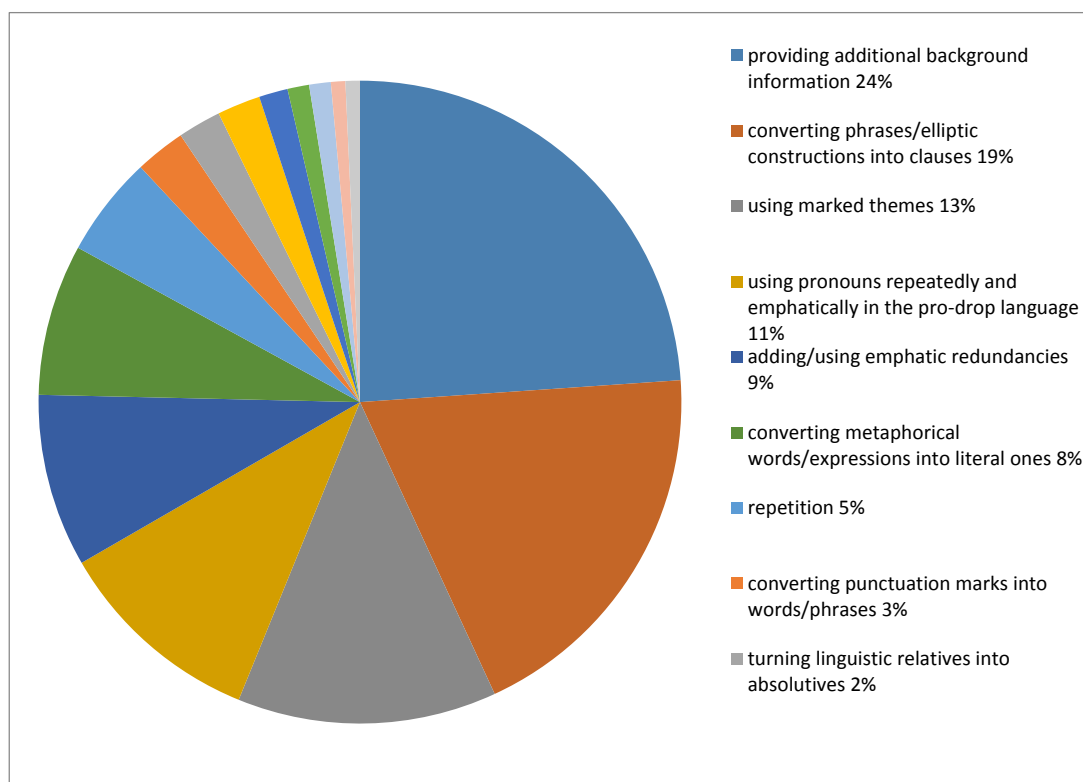


Figure 1. Type and Frequency of Discursive Translation Strategies in Zarif's Translated Tweets

The resultant 12 DTSs spotted can tentatively be divided into two groups in terms of the overarching functions they served throughout the data: those helping with a smoother transfer of the portrait of the U.S. as a hostile entity to Iran, and those highlighting such a rendition thereby more demonizing that political adversary. The first category, a detailed analysis and illustration of which will be shortly underway and entitled Functional Category A, encompasses the following (in order of frequency of occurrence):

1. provision of additional background information
2. converting phrases or elliptic constructions into clauses
3. converting metaphorical words/expressions into literal ones
4. converting punctuation marks into words or phrases

The second category, whose further discussion and illustration will be taken up along the way and dubbed Functional Category B, includes the following DTSSs (in order of frequency of occurrence):

1. using marked themes
2. using pronouns repeatedly in the pro-drop target language (i.e., Persian)
3. adding or using emphatic redundancies
4. repetition
5. converting linguistic relatives into absolutes
6. using evaluative equivalents
7. adding words/expressions of contrast
8. using explicit theme markers

### Functional Category A:

1. Provision of additional background information:

In 24% of the aggregate cases of DTSSs, the translator(s) of F M Zarif's tweet data had provided background information (not found in the original texts) presumably to help oil the wheels of the points having been hammered home. Such instances of language use are aimed at the Iranian general audience so that the job of presenting the image of the U.S. to them is facilitated and that they could keep up with the intentions of the original producers of the texts and the establishment he represented:

(1) In its last disgraceful days, designating Houthis to worsen humanitarian nightmare & warmongering lies against Iran by Pompeo show utter contempt for peace. (January 15, 2021)

در لیست [تروریسم] قرار دادن حوثی‌ها که به بدتر شدن کابوس بشردوستانه [در یمن] منجر می‌شود و دروغ‌های جنگ‌افروزانه پمپئو علیه ایران در روزهای پایانی شرم‌آور این رژیم، نشانگر بی‌اعتنایی کامل به صلح است.

In the translation of the above tweet about designating the Yemen-based group 'Houthis' and the then U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's 'lies' about Iran, the translator(s) have freely availed themselves of further background information in rendering it into Persian. As can be seen, the words and phrases *تروریسم* (terrorism) and *در یمن* (in Yemen) have been added to contextualize the geopolitical scene considered to be a bone of contention between Iran and the U.S. Another case in point is the following portion of a tweet by the former Iranian FM in whose translation the Persian phrase *در منطقه* (in the region i.e., the Middle East) has been added to reinforce Iran's frequently stated position that the U.S. is a meddling force in Iran's backyard:

(2) Aim: permanent instability to justify heinous policy. (December 2, 2018)

هدف شان هم بی‌ثباتی دائمی در منطقه برای توجیه سیاست‌های شرارت‌آمیز شان است.

2. Converting phrases or elliptic constructions into clauses:

Still in other translated tweets, instances of the use of ellipses and phrases have been turned into complete sentences with the likely aim of facilitating their reading by the Persian-speaking readership. The original producer of the texts has been deprived of such resources due to the space limitation one encounters in producing and posting a tweet on Twitter (i.e., the maximum number of characters allowed which amounts to 140 ones). Apart from tweet no. 1 mentioned above, the following case also typifies such a DTSS:

(3) MORAL & PRAGMATIC imperative. (March 23, 2020)

این الزامی اخلاقی و عملگرایانه است.



This DTS accounts for 19% of the whole strategies employed by the translator(s) with regard to the U.S.-related data.

### 3. Converting metaphorical words/expressions into literal ones:

Another strategy used by the translator(s) to render the U.S. image into Persian apparently unproblematically and seamlessly is to provide the ideas surrounding it in as a literal way as possible. To achieve this, in several cases (8% of the total DTSs), metaphorical constructions (whether at the level of words or phrases) have been translated without recourse to processing the two semantic domains involved in the comprehension of metaphors, that is, a literal and metaphorical one:

(4) What else will it take for the global community to wake up & smell the consequences of appeasing the bully? (June 11, 2020)

دیگر چه اتفاقی باید بیفتد تا جامعه بین‌المللی بیدار شود و تبعات سیاست مماشات با زورگویان را درک کند؟

In this example, the metaphorical verb *smell* has been translated literally as *درک کردن* (= understand) probably to help the reader proceed with the rest of the tweet post and not make a pause or become distracted.

### 4. Converting punctuation marks into words or phrases:

In just three percent of the total number of Discursive Translation Strategies in the data, punctuation marks and other signs (e.g., plus sign) have been turned into textual forms, that is, words or phrases, to facilitate the rendition of the portrayal of the U.S. to the public. In the following excerpt from a tweet, the dash punctuation mark has been converted textually as *و* (= and). Also, the colon sign has been rendered into Persian as the verb *است* (= is):

(5) Solution to this deficiency: mustering will to forge independent path – not parroting absurd US claims & requests INCONSISTENT with JCPOA. (September 24, 2019)

راه حل این نقیصه، عزم خود را جزم کردن برای شکل دادن مسیری مستقل است؛ و نه تکرار طوطی‌وار ادعاها و درخواست‌های ایالات متحده که با برجام همخوانی ندارد.

## Functional Category B:

### 1. Using marked themes:

The technical word 'theme' in the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) paradigm refers to the part of a clause that acts as a point of departure (i.e., sets the scene for the rest of the clause) and guides the flow of discourse. A theme represents "the speaker's angle on what is being talked about" (Martin, 2004, p. 258). In a clause of a statement kind, an unmarked theme is considered to be a participant (i.e. a human or nonhuman entity involved in a process one way or another). If an element other than a participant starts a clause such as an adverbial phrase, it is considered to be a marked theme. With regard to the translated tweets, one notices the insertion of marked themes (13%), especially those of urgency, at the beginning of clauses where in the original English tweets an unmarked one has been used by FM Zarif:

(6) Even President Trump's former Secretary of State now confirms what we have long pointed out: ... (September 21, 2019)

اکنون، حتی وزیر امور خارجه سابق رئیس‌جمهور ترامپ هم آنچه را که ما از مدت‌ها پیش مورد اشاره قرار دادیم، تأیید می‌کند: ...

In this specific case, the translation has begun with the marked theme *اکنون* (= now), thus making the point made the sound more urgent in the eye of the Iranian public to take heed of. This injection of a sense of urgency showcases the ideological dichotomy of us-them and, in this particular instance, seeks to demonize the U.S. image more intensely and starkly. Similarly, in the following brief extract from another tweet, the same marked theme as mentioned above (absent in the original English tweet) has been inserted at the beginning of the translated line of the tweet:

(7) And the world is watching whether the new leaders will abandon disastrous lawless bullying of outgoing regime – and accept multilateralism, cooperation & respect for law. (November 8, 2020)

و/کنون دنیا نظاره گر است که آیا رهبران جدید، روش مخرب، ضدقانون و قلدرمابانه رژیم در حال رفتن را کنار خواهند گذاشت و چندجانبه گرای، همکاری و احترام به قانون را بر خواهند گزید.

## 2. Using pronouns repeatedly in the pro-drop target language (i.e., Persian):

One way English and Persian are different is in their potential to maintain or drop pronouns. In English, a sentence must almost always have a nominal as a subject. In Persian, it can be quite freely left out and speakers are able to retrieve it if necessary. Persian in this regard is considered to be a 'pro-drop language' (Soheili, 2017) (Spanish is another case in point), whereas English is technically referred to as a 'non-pro-drop language'. Additionally, the repetition of the same pronoun in consecutive sentences is considered to be an instance of redundancy. With this in mind, there are a number of cases (11% of the total DTSs) where the same pronouns have been rendered into Persian without considering the mostly pro-drop nature of the language. This has an emphatic effect contributing more to the dichotomizing of the two countries. In the following example, the two pronouns ما (= we) and وی (= he) have been either rendered into Persian or have been added where they could more readily and naturally have been left out in the pro-drop Persian language:

(8) @realdonaldtrump just admitted what we all knew: US troops in Syria to “have the oil”.

Also, that Russia, Syria, & Iran can fight ISIS, confessing, “Iran hates ISIS”. (February 25, 2020)

دونالد ترامپ به چیزی اعتراف کرد که ما همه می دانستیم: نظامیان آمریکایی برای این در سوریه هستند که نفت را بردارند. وی همچنین با اعتراف به این که ایران از داعش متنفر است، پذیرفت که سوریه، روسیه و ایران می توانند با داعش مبارزه کنند.

## 3. Adding or using emphatic redundancies:

In nine percent of all the cases of DTSs in the data analyzed, one can witness redundancy springing from the provision of a word of similar meaning besides the equivalent given. In other words, a pair of semantically related words are inserted in lieu of a single item in the source text. Such redundancy is commonly observed in Persian and seems to be an integral part of the language but its occurrence can give more weight and strength to the semantic load of words, and by extension, the point hammered home by the author. In the following extract, the word *suffocate* has been redundantly rendered into Persian using the pair of words خفه و سرکوب (= suffocate and suppress, respectively) joined using the connecting word و (= and):

(9) 67 years ago, today, US/UK tried to suffocate Iranian people's demand for dignity in a coup overthrowing their elected government. (August 18, 2020)

۶۷ سال پیش در چنین روزی، آمریکا/انگلستان تلاش نمودند تا مطالبه ملت ایران برای کرامت را با کودتایی که به سقوط دولت منتخب آن‌ها منجر شد، خفه و سرکوب نمایند.

## 4. Repetition

Still in five percent of the occurrence of all the DTSs in the data, the reader comes up with the repetition of the same linguistic form in Persian laying more emphasis on the issue raised especially regarding the U.S. functioning in the political arena. The following illustrates this in the translation of a tweet through the use and repetition of Persian yes-no-question-marker آیا:

(10) Have you EVER seen such a sea of humanity in your life, @realDonaldTrump?

Do you still want to listen to the clowns advising you on our region?

And do you still imagine you can break the will of this great nation & its people? (January 6, 2020)

آقای ترامپ! آیا در عمر خود چنین دریایی از انسان‌ها را دیده‌اید؟ آیا هنوز می‌خواهید به مشورت‌های دلقک‌هایی که به شما درباره منطقه ما مشورت می‌دهند گوش کنید؟ آیا هنوز تصور می‌کنید می‌توانید اراده این ملت بزرگ و مردمش را بشکنید؟



5, 6, 7, & 8. converting linguistic relatives into absolutes/ using evaluative equivalents/ adding words or expressions of contrast/ using explicit theme markers: In approximately 6 percent of the occurrence of all the strategies employed by the translator(s) of the English tweets posted by the former Iranian foreign minister, one notices the above sparingly used yet highly effective DTSs. These, as the following examples indicate, have the effect of intensifying the portrayal of the U.S. as a rogue regime in the eyes of Iranian politicians – an image that is to be carried over and highlighted to the Iranian public:

(11) US Navy can't seem to find its way around our waters. (April 16, 2020) (deleting the hedging expression *seem to* be in the Persian translation thereby rendering the U.S. Navy's inability to find its way in absolute terms)

نیروی دریایی آمریکا نمی تواند راهش را در آبهای ما پیدا کند؛

(12) ... they're bizarrely urging Iran's full compliance. (July 8, 2019) (translating the adverb *bizarrely* negatively into *به شکل مضحکی* (= blatantly) in the Persian translation)

آنها به شکل مضحکی خواهان پایبندی کامل ایران به برجام هستند.

(13) We're still here, and standing tall. (January 5, 2020) (addition of word of contrast *ولی* (= but) not present in the original tweet)

ولی ما همچنان با سربلندی این جا هستیم.

(14) Deeds matter most. (November 8, 2020) (addition of Persian theme marker *این* (= This is ...) to the beginning of the translated text)

این اقدام و عمل است که بیش از همه چیز مهم است.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

Having adopted a specific type of Critical Discourse Analytic procedure in this study, labeled the identification and analysis of Discursive Translation Studies (DTSs) here, we aimed at displaying mediational strategies deployed by the politically-oriented translators in showcasing the courses of action they wish to be taken by the insiders as well as demonizing the beliefs held and actions adopted by the outsiders. To this end, the Persian translations of 137 U.S.-related tweets produced by the former Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif were juxtaposed with their original English tweets with an eye to spotting traces of the ideological thinking of the said texts' translator(s). Our findings revealed the specific strategies used by translators which showed their efforts to convey messages intended by Mohammad Javad Zarif.

After qualitative analysis, a total of 12 different linguistic strategies were inductively arrived at and formulated as codes (i.e., DTSs) aiming at either rendering more smoothly an already diabolical view of the U.S. or adding more flesh to its bones. To help fulfill the first function and perhaps help the Iranian audience better relate to the issue, the translator(s) availed themselves mostly of the two most frequent DTSs of provision of additional background information as well as converting phrases and elliptic constructions into clauses (respectively accounting for 25% and 19% of all the cases of DTSs in the data). To help further with this, metaphorical words and expressions were rendered literally into Persian, among other things. These strategies were applied to help readers grasp the messages intended by tweets.

Concerning the second goal, which is accentuating the already dark and stark image of the U.S., more frequent DTSs of using marked themes, using pronouns repeatedly in Persian (although it belongs to the pro-drop languages of the world, i.e., languages habitually deleting pronouns), and adding emphatic redundancies, inter alia, were shown to have been used by the translator(s) of F M Zarif's tweets. Such strategies were definitely effective in conveying messages close to the target language audience too.

A closer and more thorough look at the findings of the present study confirms the existence of and supports the apparent effect of 'audience design' (Bell, 1984) on the Persian rendition of the tweets analyzed. The renditions provided are target-based and functionalist. The translating entity has sought to flesh out the already negative image of the U.S. in

the eyes of the Iranian politicians by highlighting some attributes thereby making the Iranian general readership buy into that image more readily. To help strengthen such a position held and typified by F M Zarif, the translator(s) have used a variety of discursive strategies mostly to emphasize the morally illegitimate functioning of the U.S. in the world's political arena and the Iranian political scene, in particular. This finding that the translator(s) of the tweets have been ideologically motivated to mediate the already stark view of the U.S. to the Iranian audience is in line with the findings of the study by Kuo and Nakamura (2005) in that "news media in general present diverse versions of the news story to accommodate their ideologies to different kinds of audiences" (p. 411). It is notable to say that whereas the said authors came up with different translation strategies in their work, including addition, deletion, syntactic and stylistic variation, they found the Chinese translation of an English interview with the then Taipei's First Lady as an act of 'rewriting' in the reports of two newspapers with alternative pro-unification and pro-independence ideologies. This strategy is quite understandable as translators need to convey the views held by politicians in a way close to target language readers' world views and understanding. In fact, every language is interwoven with its specific cultural themes and schemes. Therefore, proper translation should be done by considering these themes.

The results of the study also point out that the translator's 'voice' (Munday, 2008) is highly congruent with that of the author (i.e., F M Zarif's) in that the translation strategies, adopted and realized in the form of the linguistic and paratextual choices made, are apparently meant to help convey and even underwrite the image of the U.S. administration depicted in the ST. This is logical and "The implication for translation is that cultural words and concepts are utilised in the target text (i.e. the technique of foreignisation) to allow the clear demarcation of each cultural group." (Naudé, 2004, p.55). Translators responsible for rendering political tweets have sufficient knowledge regarding the intricacies of doing a correct translation.

The findings of the current investigation, alongside those of much of the work reported herein, contribute more to and even shed fresher light on our understanding that ideology leaves its not yet-so-obvious imprint on instances of text and talk, monomodally or multimodally, and that similar practical research is still needed to unearth the myriad strategies employed by the producers of text – be it writers or translators/interpreters – in giving a skewed view of how actors function and how events play out in actual practice in the political arena.

The findings have implications for translation courses as well as courses on media discourse. Instructors can provide examples of such tweets to familiarize students with different strategies to translate political texts. In addition, pragmatic aspects of political tweets can be analyzed to give us a clear picture of these language instances as well as their interpretation. Further research can investigate readers' understanding of such tweets and compare it with the intended meaning of translators/politicians. This can be done through think-aloud protocols which would be relevant and effective.

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