Translation and News Making: A Study of Contemporary Arabic Television

Aljazeera Case Study

By
Ali Darwish

A Thesis Submitted
In Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Creative Industries Faculty
Queensland University of Technology
March, 2009
I certify that the thesis entitled *Translation and News Making: A Study of Contemporary Arabic Television* submitted for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* is the result of my own research, conducted during the period 2005-2008, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Signed

______________________________

Ali Darwish

Date 21 March 2009

© Copyright by Ali Darwish, 2009

All Rights Reserved.
## Contents

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tables and Figures</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Illustrations, Translations and Typographical Conventions</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications from the Research</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface Mediated Realities: The Twilight Zone</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Why Contemporary Arabic Television?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media effects</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediated reality in Arab satellite television</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The case of Aljazeera</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language choices</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation mediation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television presentation as multimodal mediated social transaction</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showcasing Aljazeera</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Research</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions and hypotheses</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research objectives</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Definitions</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Structure and Organization</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 Mediating Cultural Change</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite television</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aljazeera: the taboo-breaker</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Showcase</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation, Culture and Television</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Cultural Change</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural change or acculturation? .............................. 58
Framing Aljazeera ............................................................ 61
How Aljazeera scooped the world ......................... 67
The Aljazeera phenomenon .............................. 70
Losing Arab hearts and minds ................................ 72
Aljazeera challenges the world .......................... 75
Media under pressure ............................................. 76
Voices from the void: the new Arab public .............. 79
Fourth Estate or Fifth Column .............................. 81
Out of control: the taming of the shrew ................. 84
Mission Aljazeera ............................................................. 86
News, Language, Translation and Culture ............... 88
Translation mediation and downstream reporting .... 90
The making of Arab news ....................................... 93
The Role of Translation in the Media .................... 100
Translating memes and mismemes ...................... 101
Conclusion .............................................................. 105
Gaps in the literature ............................................ 106

Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework and Research Model 111

Aims .............................................................. 112
Overview ........................................................ 113
A Multimodal Conceptual Framework .................. 115
Multimodality and multimodal analysis .............. 117
Methods .......................................................... 119
Philosophical assumptions ................................ 121
Design of the Study ........................................... 123
The case study .................................................. 124
Data Collection .................................................. 125
Coding of programs ........................................... 127
Sampling Procedure .......................................... 128
Data Analysis ...................................................... 129
Analysis methods ............................................. 129
Mediated discourse analysis ................................ 130
Sources and Logistics ......................................... 131
Research Model ................................................. 132
Translation analysis model ................................ 132
Rationale and assumptions ................................ 133
Elements of the model ...................................... 137
Implications ..................................................... 137
Using the research model .................................. 137
How the Model Works ....................................... 138
Model Categories .............................................. 139
Direct matching translation ............................... 141
Identitive and equative translation ..................... 142
Interventional techniques ................................. 144

Contents
Chapter 4 Translating the News

Aims ................................................................................ 163
Overview........................................................................... 164
The role of translation in mediated realities ............... 166
Translation in the News .................................................. 166
Situationality and affinities ...................................... 172
Translating the News ...................................................... 176
Information Sources ..................................................... 180
News Translation as Reframing .................................. 183
Ethics of Mediating News .............................................. 186
Translation-mediated framing .................................. 190
Language of the News and the Illusion of
Modernity ................................................................. 190
Reframing the Already Framed .................................. 192
Framing Reality ......................................................... 194
News Frames and Translation Frames ....................... 195
Semantic framing ..................................................... 197
Truth in News Translation .............................................. 198
Applying the three-tier model .................................. 200
Conclusion ...................................................................... 204

Chapter 5 Framing Realities in Arabic News

Aims ................................................................................ 208
Overview........................................................................... 209
Epistemic Knowledge versus Linguistic
Knowledge ........................................................................ 210
Translation-induced metaphoric shift ....................... 211
Waking the dead and dormant metaphors ............... 213
Metaphoric imperialism ............................................ 219
Metaphor, collocation and the clash of domains 225
Metaphor and genitives ............................................ 227
Reductive and Summative Metaphors ....................... 230
Euphemism, dysphemism and socio-cultural
circumlocution ......................................................... 232
Verticality .................................................................... 234
Sensory-perceptual epistemic inference .................. 236

Contents
Deictic inference ...................................................... 237
Sources of Influence and Normalization ................. 238
Framing through Quotatives ........................................... 239
Conclusion ...................................................................... 241

Chapter 6 Mediating Live Broadcasts 245
Aims ........................................................................ 246
Overview ..................................................................... 247
What is Simultaneous Interpreting? ......................... 247
Impact of Live Television on Simultaneous
Interpreting ................................................................ 248
Model rationale and rules ........................................ 255
Simultaneous Interpreting Models ......................... 259
Research into simultaneous interpreting ................. 260
Conference interpreting ........................................ 260
Telecast simultaneous interpreting .......................... 262
Relay telecast simultaneous interpreting ................. 265
Time-critical, Real-time Communication ....................... 266
Interpreting Mediation at Arabic Satellite
Television ................................................................ 268
Research Design, Data and Methods ....................... 269
Scope and limitations ............................................. 269
Technical and operational problems ........................ 270
Analysis and Discussion ........................................... 272
Information integrity ................................................ 273
Linguistic integrity .................................................. 274
Communicative integrity .......................................... 274
Interpreting and the rhetorical situation ................... 278
Modes of Operation .................................................. 279
Expository simultaneous interpreting ..................... 280
Rhetorical simultaneous interpreting ..................... 281
The interpreter’s role within the communication
process ................................................................ 282
Conclusion and Recommendations ...................... 285

Chapter 7 Summary and Conclusions: The Taming of the Shrew288
Aims ........................................................................ 289
Overview ..................................................................... 290
Aljazeera: from zero to pharaoh ......................... 291
Summary ..................................................................... 294
Research Findings ................................................... 298
Research analysis .................................................... 299
Implications ............................................................... 299
Conclusion .................................................................. 300
Beyond the news ...................................................... 301

Contents
Contents

The ten year itch ...................................................... 302
A sense of superiority: outshining the master.......... 305

References 308

Index 389
Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1— Inventory of Major Publications about Aljazeera and Arab Media (1993 -2007) ................................................................. 63
Table 2— Program codes ........................................................................ 127
Table 3— Coding of research model .......................................................... 128
Table 4— Example of Translation Discourse Analysis template (developed for the research) ............................................................ 131
Table 5— Cat and Mouse Metaphor Application ........................................ 223

Figures

Figure 1— Interlocking Translation, Culture and Television .................. 55
Figure 2— Books published about Aljazeera 1990 - 2007 ....................... 63
Figure 3— A basic model of news flow in a monolingual environment ......................................................................................... 91
Figure 4— A basic model of mediated news reporting .......................... 91
Figure 5— Downstream reporting model .............................................. 93
Figure 6— The Multimodal nature of television .................................... 118
Figure 7— Multimodal theoretical framework ....................................... 122
Figure 8— A multimodal three-tier translation model .......................... 136
Figure 9— Translation Model Categories ............................................ 140
Figure 10— Direct matching and interventional techniques ................. 141
Figure 11— Interventional techniques ................................................. 145
Figure 12— Contexts of the translation event (source: Darwish, 2003) .... 169
Figure 13— External variables ............................................................ 170
Figure 14— Internal variables ............................................................. 171
Figure 15— The Five Precepts of Journalism ...................................... 184
Figure 16— The seven standards of translation (Darwish, 2003) .......... 185
Figure 17— Iran Bans CNN or Translation Error [Source: Bloomberg, January 16, 2006] ................................................................. 202
Figure 18— Pictorial Representation of Epistemic Reality (Picasso, Girl before a Mirror) ................................................................. 210
Figure 19— Smoking Gun Metaphor: the terms that are related to the meaning of the metaphor ......................................................... 212
Figure 20— Dyadic Simultaneous Interpreting-Driven Communication in Conference settings .......................................................... 261
Figure 21— Triadic Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting-Driven Communication ................................................................. 263
Figure 22 - A Basic Model of Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting ........... 264
Figure 23 - A Typical Example of RSI Rendition ................................ 278
Figure 24 - Translation (Interpreting) Interface in Bilingual Communication ..................................................................................... 279
Figure 25—Duality and Centrality of the Simultaneous Interpreter’s Role ......................................................................................... 283
Figure 26—Globalization Process of News Media (source: developed for this research by the author) ................................................. 303

Tables and Figures
Acknowledgements

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us!

— From To A Louse, Robert Burns

I would like to acknowledge the help of the following individuals who have contributed to the realisation of this thesis.

I would like to thank my principal supervisor, Emeritus Professor Alan Knight, for his support, guidance and encouragement, for his stimulating discussions of my work and for his constructive reviews of this thesis. I would also like to thank my associate supervisor Dr Lee Duffield for his meticulous and incisive reviews of my work. I am indebted to both of them for helping me in making this work a reality. I am also grateful to Emeritus Professor John Dekkers for his valuable comments on the early drafts of this thesis. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Greg Hearn, Associate Professor Leo Bowman, and Assistant Professor Michael Meadows for their valuable comments on my final work.

I would like to thank my family, especially Sheila, Alya and Ayman, and my friends for their support and encouragement. My special thanks go to Professor Roger Bell, Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, Dr Zubaidah Ibrahim-Bell, Dr Pilar Orero, and Dr Hassan Mustapha for their support and encouragement, and Iman Riman for inspiring persistence and perseverance.

Ali Darwish

Melbourne, February 2009
Abstract

Arabic satellite television has recently attracted tremendous attention in both the academic and professional worlds, with a special interest in Aljazeera as a curious phenomenon in the Arab region. Having made a household name for itself worldwide with the airing of the Bin Laden tapes, Aljazeera has set out to deliberately change the culture of Arabic journalism, as it has been repeatedly stated by its current General Manager Waddah Khanfar, and to shake up the Arab society by raising awareness to issues never discussed on television before and challenging long-established social and cultural values and norms while promoting, as it claims, Arab issues from a presumably Arab perspective. Working within the meta-frame of democracy, this Qatari-based network station has been received with mixed reactions ranging from complete support to utter rejection in both the west and the Arab world.

This research examines the social semiotics of Arabic television and the socio-cultural impact of translation-mediated news in Arabic satellite television, with the aim to carry out a qualitative content analysis, informed by framing theory, critical linguistic analysis, social semiotics and translation theory, within a re-mediation framework which rests on the assumption that a medium “appropriates the techniques, forms and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real” (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 66). This is a multilayered research into how translation operates at two different yet interwoven levels: translation proper, that is the rendition of discourse from one language into another at the text level, and translation as a broader process of interpretation of social behaviour that is driven by linguistic and cultural forms of another medium resulting in new social
signs generated from source meaning reproduced as target meaning that is bound to be different in many respects.

The research primarily focuses on the news media, news making and reporting at Arabic satellite television and looks at translation as a reframing process of news stories in terms of content and cultural values. This notion is based on the premise that by its very nature, news reporting is a framing process, which involves a reconstruction of reality into actualities in presenting the news and providing the context for it. In other words, the mediation of perceived reality through a media form, such as television, actually modifies the mind’s ordering and internal representation of the reality that is presented.

The research examines the process of reframing through translation news already framed or actualized in another language and argues that in submitting framed news reports to the translation process several alterations take place, driven by the linguistic and cultural constraints and shaped by the context in which the content is presented. These alterations, which involve recontextualizations, may be intentional or unintentional, motivated or unmotivated. Generally, they are the product of lack of awareness of the dynamics and intricacies of turning a message from one language form into another. More specifically, they are the result of a synthesis process that consciously or subconsciously conforms to editorial policy and cultural interpretive frameworks. In either case, the original message is reproduced and the news is reframed.

For the case study, this research examines news broadcasts by the now world-renowned Arabic satellite television station Aljazeera, and to a lesser extent the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) and Al-Arabiya where access is feasible, for comparison and crosschecking purposes. As a new phenomenon in the Arab world, Arabic satellite television, especially 24-hour news and current affairs, provides an interesting area worthy of study, not only for its immediate socio-cultural and professional and ethical implications for the Arabic media in
Notes on Illustrations, Translations and Typographical Conventions

Unless otherwise stated, all illustrations and English translations in this thesis have been developed by the author specifically for this research.

Several spellings of the name Aljazeera have been used in the literature about Aljazeera (for example, Aljazeera, al-Jazeera, Al Jazeera). The official typographical version of the name is Aljazeera. Consequently, to ensure consistency throughout this thesis and minimize distraction, the spelling Aljazeera is used throughout. Where the name occurs in direct quotes, this spelling is also used.

Arabic versus Arab television
In this thesis, Arabic television refers to television broadcasting in the Arabic language and not necessarily owned by Arabs as opposed to television owned by Arabs broadcasting in other languages. A good example of the former is Aljazeera, which is owned by the Arab ruling family of Qatar and Al-Hurra, which is owned by the US government. A good example of the latter is the English language channel Aljazeera English.

On the use of the first person
Conventionally, academic writing has had a preference for the use of the third person to refer to the author of the work in an attempt to give a tone of objectivity to writing. References such as “the researcher”, “the author” and “the experimenter” abound in academic writing. In many other instances, the passive voice is used and abused—things happen on their own without an agency. It is known in psychology that when one refers to
oneself in the third person, chances are that such reference indicates the presence of a psychological disorder. Consequently, in the interest of clarity and effective communication, throughout this thesis, where reference is made to the conductor of this research, the first person singular is invariably used.

Abbreviations

The following table provides a list of key abbreviations used in this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Stands for…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Arab Radio and Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT</td>
<td>Audiovisual translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBC</td>
<td>Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>Middle East Broadcasting Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Special Broadcasting Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLRM</td>
<td>Search, locate, retrieve and match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSI</td>
<td>Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBI</td>
<td>Vertical Blanking Interval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following publications have been generated from the present research.


The grey street is empty
And everything is desolate and dreary;
It’s only four in the afternoon;
The old folks sitting around the fireplace;
And drinking tea without sugar,
As they embrace the sudden brunt of the evening cold;
The years slowly take me back
As I grow distant and old, out of tune;
Beyond the brief memories of today
And beyond the raindrops falling on my window pane
As I gaze through at the wet and cold empty street—
Strangely colourless and eerie—
To a November rainy day in Beirut,
The pain in my heart intensifies as I pine for you;
With sorrow intense and acute;
Everything is full of life over there!
O! My first love!
My sleepless beautiful city!

— Wishaw, Scotland, May 1981

I had been watching CNN and the BBC on Cable and satellite television since 1990 when the first Gulf war broke out. During that war, embedded reporters, with restricted access to military operations, were allowed to cover the war. From my knowledge of the Arab world, its history, politics and culture, it was all too obvious that these networks were reporting one-sided, biased and fragmented versions of reality.

While I had access to local Arabic radio and newspapers and I had produced Arabic programs for the Australian Special Broadcasting...
service (SBS), I had no access to Arabic satellite television. My Scottish wife then and I and our two little children arrived in Australia from England in 1989 and I had been living in an entirely English-speaking world for more than two decades since I left my homeland Lebanon. While I had been working as a professional translator, interpreter and media analyst since 1975, holding formal postgraduate qualifications in translation and linguistics and achieving scholarship in Arabic writing and translation, that period of my life characteristically lacked daily interactions with my home culture. I was completely isolated from anything Arab or Arabic, except for the texts I translated, the news reports I analyzed, and the Lebanese dishes I occasionally cooked for my family.

On CNN, I watched the second Intifada (uprising) in Occupied Palestine in 2000 and saw the two planes hitting the twin towers in New York live on 11 September 2001 and followed the kneejerk and sometimes frenzied reporting that ensued. Then in 2002, I had my first glimpse of Aljazeera satellite television, and the experience was that of both ambivalence and curiosity. From the start, there was something strange about Aljazeera. It was not just the western style of presentation or uncontrolled and uncensored footage of violence that drew my attention. It was more so the language itself. There was something curious and more systematic about the expressions that were for me unmistakeably direct translations from English. The more I watched Aljazeera, the more I became convinced that translation played a critical role in framing news, intentionally or unintentionally, and I wanted to find out how translation mediation reframed constructed realities. Now that I had access to both western and Arab media, I could compare and contrast the style and content of reports of the same events almost concurrently and detect variations and deviations.

Apart from curiosity, I have had a long interest in the media. I have previously conducted a study of the practices and standards of the SBS
Arabic radio, and in 1998, I set up my own online website, dedicated to translation and the media, boasting 62 articles and research papers about translation and Arabic media by 2007. In 2004, I published a paper in both Arabic and English titled *How Arabic Translators Frustrated America's War on Global Terrorism*. This paper examined the Arabic translation of surrender leaflets dropped on Iraq during the invasion of 2003 and the role of American psyopers (psychological operator) in designing these leaflets for the Iraqi audience. This paper was followed by a number of lengthy articles and papers about the role of translation in the Arabic media culminating in the publication of two award-winning books: *Language Translation and Identity in the Age of the Internet, Satellite Television and Directed Media* (2005), and *The Book of Wonders of Arabic Blunders in Journalism, Politics and Media* (2007).

The first book sought to develop a critical awareness of the interplay of language, translation and identity in Arabic media and the accelerated superficialization of human expression and experience. It touched upon important linguistic and sociocultural aspects of this phenomenon and sought to explain the reasons for the strong tendency to imitate foreign linguistic patterns. It examined the role of Arabic satellite television and the Internet in reinforcing specific usages and in accelerating the process of change, linguistically, socially and culturally.

The second book presented a pungent critique of Arabic translation standards in journalism, politics and the media and examined the social and cultural impact of Arabic satellite television on modern Arab societies! It explored various aspects of Arabic usage and incisively examined the critical role satellite television was playing in establishing and promoting expressions that not only violated language norms and standards and introduced cultural mismemes but also defied logic in language.
These books grew out of a serious interest in examining a curious phenomenon that is today sweeping the Arab world, where mass media is once again playing a critical role not only in reporting the news but also in shaping events and influencing public opinion, and where reporting and news manipulation often overlap.

I have also worked in film subtitling and dubbing and in media analysis for major news organizations for several years, and I have specialized in translation and cross-cultural communication. I have taught translation theory and practice at Australian universities, including seven years at RMIT (2000-2007), and have acted as official examiner for NAATI, The National Authority for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters, from 1990 to 2002. This experience has enabled me to combine the perspectives of the professional translator, the educator and the assessor.

In addition to the two books already mentioned, I have also published several books on translation and cross-cultural communication. These include The Translator’s Guide (2001), The Interpreter’s Guide (2003), and The Transfer Factor (2003). I have also published Australia’s first-ever international refereed journal of translation studies, Translation Watch Quarterly from 2005 onwards. In 2007, in recognition of my contribution to translation and cross-cultural communication, I received the prestigious Gibran’s International Literary Award for my books and achievements in linguistics, translation and media studies.

This current doctoral research, presented here, is a natural progression of these foundational attempts at examining translation, the phenomenon of Arabic satellite television and the role of translation in reframing news reports.

Ali Darwish
Melbourne, March 2009
Chapter 1
Why Contemporary Arabic Television?

From television, the child will have learned how to pick a lock, commit a fairly elaborate bank hold-up, prevent wetness all day long, get the laundry twice as white, and kill people with a variety of sophisticated armaments.

— Russell Baker, columnist and author (1925- )

Overview

As Arabic satellite television gains ever-increasing prominence in the Arab region and internationally, its role as a controversial catalyst in the process of democratization and as an influential agent of social, cultural and political change in the region becomes all the more important in a rapidly changing world of democracy, globalization and shifting allegiances. Relying primarily on translation of news and other program contents from English and conducting program production in English and or French, Arabic satellite television stations are causing a cataclysmic change in Arabic language patterns and cultural representation. Fragmentation of reality, reporting that adopts the viewpoint of the source, which is largely in English, and translated documentaries that retain the format, discourse and perspectives of the original are all contributing to language displacement in various areas of social life in the Arab world. Now flooded with foreign and franchised programs targeting the young and disfranchised generations—with more that 300 satellite television channels bombarding the viewers.²

The role Aljazeera is playing as a serious news and current affairs network in reframing the news through translation mediation is one that has not been examined in the literature. The effects of such mediation are
not fully understood by journalists and reporters, who often find themselves working through local translators and what Palmer and Fontan (2007) call *fixers*.³

This thesis examines the role of translation at Arabic satellite television in the reconstruction of reality, the socio-cultural impact of translation mediation on news making, and the process of reframing news through translation of news already framed or actualized in another language. The main argument in this thesis is that translation mediation reframes news reports already framed in one language through the arrangement of translation-mediated news artefacts. Framing in this sense must be understood as making specific meaning mainly through selection and exclusion and reframing as reproduction of meaning through the application of another frame through similar mechanisms.

The best way to substantiate the assertion that translation mediation reframes a framed message is to examine cases in which translation mediation routinely occurs as part of news making and where examples of accepted translation can be analysed and challenged. So in making this assertion, examples of reframing are derived and analysed from a corpus of news broadcasts from Aljazeera, the case study.

**Media effects**

The overwhelming rationale for most research into television according to Corner (1999)⁴ has been anxiety about its influence. This anxiety is compelled by concerns about the effects of mass media on modern democratic societies and the protection of free choice from external influences that shape both individual and public opinion. The reason is probably not too obvious to ordinary viewers and consumers of mass media, but as Gerbner (1999) puts it, “most of what we know, or think we know, we have never personally experienced. We live in a world erected by the stories we hear and see and tell”⁵ where “exposure to mass media creates and cultivates attitudes more consistent with a media conjured
version of reality than with what reality actually is” (Pierce, 2000). The magnificence of the human mind lies largely in its ability to construct images and worlds from artefacts and fragments through the use of patterns and schemas to build previously unseen or unexperienced three dimensional images in a complex system of meaning and perception. The nature of the media is such that a new reality is created through ongoing fragmentation of reality and rearrangement of fragmented constructs where the viewer’s mind plays a crucial role in the reconstruction of reality. As Restak (1995:3-4) argues, no creature, including human beings, can ever know any other “reality” than the representations made by its brain. “These representations, in turn, depend upon the brain’s organization, which differs from one creature to another and, in our own species, from person to person” (Restak, 1995:4).

With these concepts in mind, the effects of media on the behaviour of individuals and communities have received serious scholarly attention in a wide range of disciplines. The aim has been to understand the psychological, social, cultural, economic and political impact of media effects and their implications, not only for democratic and relatively stable societies but also for developing countries and volatile regions—where new mass communication technologies, out of step with the rhythms and speed of development, are causing more rapid and irreversible changes to the social, cultural and political systems of communities. In the absence of political and civic institutions that are able to carry the change forward by translating into action the outcomes of public debate and the values that are developed or transformed through mass media, the ensuing change is bound to be reduced to hollow rhetoric or to develop into disenchantment and a greater sense of alienation.

This chapter aims to situate the research in the context of the current debate about the effects of television in general, the growing interest in the phenomenon of Aljazeera Arabic satellite television in particular, and
as a necessary outgrowth of that undertaking, the role of remediation in reframing broadcast messages at Aljazeera.

Mediated reality in Arab satellite television

In the Arab world, satellite television has been received with a euphoric surge of hope for change, liberation and empowerment, as has been debated in various forums and publications. It has been causing cataclysmic social and cultural change across the entire region, with more than 430\textsuperscript{8} television channels offering a staggering range of imported, cloned or locally produced programs. These programs include an endless list of subtitled and dubbed Mexican soap operas, copycat and franchised reality TV entertainment programs, documentaries and current affairs, talk shows, children’s programs, religion, music and so on. The majority of Arab audiences are watching game shows, music videos, and reality television,\textsuperscript{9} while their young children are left unsupervised or in the care of foreign maids (a phenomenon that has dramatically increased in many parts of the Arab world in part due to women entering the visible\textsuperscript{10} white-collar work force in large numbers in the last decade). These children are being imbibed with alien social and cultural values and models that have been cause for concern for educators and parents alike, in certain quarters of exporting countries (see Gerbner, 1999 and Stossel, 1997). Cartoons and animations that glorify violence and “make pain seem painless”\textsuperscript{11}, and depict explicit sex and gender relationships, extramarital affairs and alternative lifestyles, are now the daily staple of a broad base of young Arab viewers. As Stossel (1997) puts it, parents, including those in the Arab region, “no longer have the opportunity to teach their children about the birds and the bees gradually, in a manner they consider appropriate; everything is exposed—so to speak—to kids all at once. The old system of moral socialization breaks down”.\textsuperscript{12} Without parental guidance and taken out of their social and cultural contexts, these dubbed animations are constructing new realities for these children, with translation playing a
critical role in the social and cultural detachment of the original meanings from their contexts. Without sounding standoffish or prudish, it is not unusual today to hear animated characters on Arab television talking to each other in the following manner.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{quote}
\begin{quote}
“Stop chasing other people’s wives! I saw you flirting with my wife asking her to a dance!”
\end{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{quote}
“O Dear! What is that mark [hickey] on your neck? Let me get some medicine to remove it”.
\end{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{quote}
“I am sure my father has left my mother for his secretary. He will never come back after today.”
\end{quote}
\end{quote}

In this complex Arab region, two opposing currents have been pulling communities apart in two opposite directions: (1) regimes strengthening their hold on their people through greater emphasis of national identity, sovereignty, autonomy and rivalry and (2) a transnational undercurrent of aspired unity of some sort at the grassroots motivated by persistent regional troubles and a religious ‘awakening’ that seems to translate into violence and sanguine confrontations. In this socio-political environment, these television channels span political and geographic boundaries, cross-fertilize ideas and concepts and accelerate the rate of political galvanization, compelling governments to devise ways to counter the sudden onslaught of satellite television and to combat calls for reform and political and social freedom.

In this regard, Alterman (2005) observes, albeit with a degree of naiveté about the supposed or implied monolithic nature of Arab views in the pre-Aljazeera era, that the governments of the Middle East are losing their stranglehold on their publics. In the “age of media plenty”, as he calls it, “any notion that there is a single ‘Arab line’ on a matter of interest is demolished nightly on Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya and a host of other stations. It is fascinating to see how different the new generations growing up in this environment are from their elders: so much more questioning of their identities, so much more individualistic, so much more impatient” (37). But to make an early point, there has never been a \textit{single Arab line} ever

\textit{Chapter 1}

\textit{Why Contemporary Arabic Television?}
on any matters of interest, and one would get the impression that Alterman is referring to North Korea, or some other totalitarian regime, and not about the Arab world, which is known at least to its own inhabitants as a cauldron of opposing and contradictory ideas and views.

For decades, the Arab world has been polarized between Pan-Arabism and western-backed conservatism, to leave it at this high level, which has translated into armed conflicts and wars in various parts of the region and has polarized societies and communities within the same country. Without getting into the historical and political aspects of this complex region, people, in varying degrees and in a variety of guises where despotic regimes for instance did not allow freedom of speech and expression, talked and argued and discussed and marched and rallied and fought with one another over the full spectrum of issues and views in their homes, schools, universities and so on. That they did not have Aljazeera to air these argumentations and views publicly does not mean that such diversity did not exist, and it is naive and simplistic to believe that Aljazeera and the Arab media are doing this.

Even the notion of public sphere, which seems to be the catchphrase of the day, is arguably misinformed and at best misunderstood as far as the region is concerned. However, whether this exaggerated trend which Alterman is referring to is going to lead to a renewed sense of transnational identity within a new pan-Arab framework or a further sense of alienation and disfranchisement is something that cannot be predicted at this point. What is certain, however, is that the media are playing a critical role in bringing to the fore diversity of opinions, reshaping and redefining social and cultural values and encouraging dissension in an unbridled manner. It is not a smooth and easy process. In established democratic societies, there are rules for debate and protocols that lead to productive outcomes. Take these away, and you end up with stampedes, riots and civil unrest. The New York City Blackout of 1977 is a poignant
example of the law of the jungle, just when electricity went out, as a worst case scenario. In its most benign form, guests shouting over one another in a talk show, or viewers calling vox populi forums to air their grievances and frustrations with their regimes and political events, clipped and censored, in undemocratic countries or countries gradually transitioning towards democracy, are like tilting at windmills.

The case of Aljazeera

One satellite television that stands from the crowd in effecting change through mediation of reality is Aljazeera. Making its debut in 1996 with uncensored political programs, this Arabic language satellite network is said to have sent a shockwave across the Arab world, which up until then had not been used to such a confrontational, no-holds-barred approach to political or public debate on television. Hailed as the best thing ever to have happened to the Arab world in recent times, Aljazeera has been seen by many observers as an agent for democracy and change in the Middle East. Aljazeera has been considered “one of the most important de facto Arab political parties” (Hafez, 2005). Nonetheless, after a decade of exaggerated publicity and intense public debate of almost every taboo subject and a daily staple of dramatic violence that immediately resonates in real-life situations in hotspots everywhere in the Arab world, Aljazeera is now seen to have failed to deliver on its promised reform and openness. While it continues to rake up controversial issues, Aljazeera has reached a disappointing anticlimax—beaming conflicting images and narratives to an Arab world thrown into chaos and turmoil and disenchanted viewers trying to make sense of a skein of contradictions, dissonance and disarray that gnaw at the social fabric of consumer societies, where unemployment is one of the highest in the world and illiteracy rates are higher than the international average, with more than 60 million adults illiterate, the majority of whom are women, and the looming crisis of food shortage seriously threatening the stability of the region.
A possible explanation for this bathos is that Aljazeera acts as a stress relief, or as Zayani (2005) puts it, “plays the role of preventative medium and an outlet for the disfranchised public, thus providing a safety valve in what may be described as a suffocating atmosphere in Arab countries” (9). This palliative role however is seen in a more sinister light by those who subscribe to the notion of conspiracy theory and other observers less so inclined but not so gullible as to believe in the wholly altruistic motives of Aljazeera. In the larger context, Aljazeera is seen as part of the efforts of its sponsor, the state of Qatar, to normalize relations with Israel and the West at large, and the contrast between what Aljazeera portrays and the presence of the United States Central Command a few hundred meters away from its headquarters in Doha is a constant reminder of this contradiction that adds fuel to its nebulous role. Antagonists do not miss a chance to point this out at every occasion when Qatar is thrown into the debate about political and social reform in the region. On this point, Gambill (2000)\(^1\) confirms that sponsoring Aljazeera has helped Qatar achieve a level of regional and international influence greatly disproportionate to its military and economic strength. However, like many observers, Gambill puzzles over the precise function of Aljazeera as an instrument of Qatari foreign policy. He maintains:

“decisions as to the content of the station’s news coverage and the participants in its televised political forums do not appear to be influenced by specific foreign policy objectives. If there is a cornerstone to Qatar’s foreign policy, it is its development of friendly ties with all countries of the region (including Iraq, Iran and Israel), an objective that does not appear at first glance to be easily compatible with sponsoring a satellite news station that broadcasts interviews with their political dissidents, reports on their human rights abuses, and open debates on their religious practices”\(^2\)

However, as noted in the previous section and elsewhere in this thesis, Aljazeera in this instance “can stir up anger, but not anger of the kind that can be sublimated by voting a local politician out of office, let alone by changing a government. In that sense, there has always been something
artificial about it, as if it had taken up residence in a realm of pure theory” (Bernhard, 2006:2).21

The Arab world is changing dramatically on the political, social, cultural and economic levels. Recent events in Iraq, Occupied Palestine and most recently Lebanon are precursors of such dramatic and irreversible change. In a typical, simplistic and curious Orientalist vein, Alterman (2005) observes that the process by which the Arabs will move into the Twenty First Century will be messy, perplexing and sluggish and will suffer setbacks. But what is most exciting to him is “the creativity that these changes are unleashing. There is no guarantee that young Arabs’ future will be better than their past, but the tools at their disposal to help make it so are more powerful than those of their parents, and their grandparents before them” (42). Undoubtedly, Arabic satellite television is one such tool that is effecting irreversible change in the social system and in the identity and outlook of modern Arabs. The role of translation mediation of imported programs as well as home-made ones, as will be explored in this thesis, cannot be underestimated in the process of reconstructing mediated realities.

Statement of the Problem

The fast rise to fame (or notoriety, depending on the point of view) of Aljazeera in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States has raised awareness in both the academic and professional domains to a new media phenomenon that has been endemically spreading across the Arab world.

Before then, there had been very little interest in the diffusion of Arabic satellite television despite the serious changes the numerous television channels beamed at the region had been introducing to the culture, identity and social values of the Arabs. The sudden impact of Aljazeera’s broadcasting of the Bin Laden tapes has motivated academics, media
analysts and political commentators to examine this phenomenon, taking a special interest in the political, social and cultural aspects of Aljazeera. Aljazeera has been criticized for its graphic coverage of victims of violence and war, and has been regarded with suspicion by both Arab and western commentators. On the one hand, it has been seen as the CNN of the Arab world and as a shill for terrorists, on the other. In this regard, Johnson and Fahmy (2008) report that “Aljazeera has been praised for its hard-hitting and independent style of journalism, its refusal to regurgitate the official line of Arab government officials and its commitment to accuracy and balance while at the same time showing an Arab perspective on the news” (Johnson and Fahmy, 2008:338). Examining Aljazeera’s credibility, they confirm the view that Arab governments and US officials regard Aljazeera as an unreliable or dangerous source of information.

**Language choices**

In a less malevolent light, Aljazeera has been seen as a bull in a china shop. It has been accused of flouting journalistic ethics by showing uncensored images of war, dead American soldiers in Iraq, and western hostages about to be executed. It has also been criticized for presenting an array of programs that have been bombastic, defiant and irresponsible, tackling taboo subjects and issues deemed culturally, religiously and politically sensitive. As an Arabic-language television network, Aljazeera has adopted a high variety of Arabic often referred to by western linguists as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), in contrast to the low variety or colloquial Arabic, which has been predominantly used by other Arabic satellite television stations, particularly on entertainment channels. As Riman and Darwish (2008: 190-191) observe, the colloquial variety of Arabic has been spreading in the Arabic media throughout the Arab world and Aljazeera is now aware of its critical role as a standardization medium of Arabic. However, the influence of English is so critical in this standardization process since, as alluded to at the beginning of this
chapter, Aljazeera relies primarily on translation of news and other program contents from English. Therefore, this aspect must not be underestimated in the current climate of global political uncertainties and in light of the change that languages are undergoing, due to the influence of the English language, which is claimed to have been the result of the cultural dimensions of its use which “have altered key words and concepts, such as freedom, justice, and truth…” (Zournazi, 2007: 1-2). This alteration makes mediating “corrupt” concepts corrupt both the original message and the mediated one.

Translation mediation

However, seemingly forgotten in all of the commotion about the effects of Arabic satellite television is the role and impact of translation mediation or information re-mediation in actually translating and transforming social and cultural values through television. Scanty research into the effects of translation on reframing the original messages has been carried out despite the large body of literature in both Translation Studies and Media and Communication Studies. Only in the last couple of years has interest in this phenomenon begun to develop. At the very basic level of description, translation always involves transformation and transformation intrinsically results in transmutation of the original message.

In Arabic television, the focus of this study, in particular, translation performs two functions at two different levels: translation proper; that is the translation of discourse from one language to another; and translation as interpretation in a broader sense of the word. In Arabic television, or generally in receptor languages and cultures, the second level of “translation” is actualized through a process of re-mediation.

This dual function of translation at the text level and at the social and cultural level of transfer involves interpretation and adaptation of the dynamic forces of narrative, metaphor, meaning and semiosis of salient and inconspicuous characteristics to create a reality based on re-creation
and reconstruction of already constructed realities. Given that the bulk of programs broadcast by Aljazeera and other Arabic television stations is transmitted and translated from other languages, mainly English, translation plays a major role in repackaging programs and reframing reality. How meanings are produced or rather reproduced in television has a great deal to do with how language is used and how visual signs are framed and interpreted. The tenuous and dialectical relationship between the original sign in the source language and its replica in the target language on the one hand and the way both the original sign and its replica are interpreted at various stages of reproduction and reception by both reproducers and viewers on the other is also a process of primary and intermediate interpretation of interpretation where narrative forms and images assume meanings, which are inevitably and by their ontic nature necessarily different from the original meanings which the original signs were intended to convey. One could argue that translation at both levels is to a large extent a process of disturbance, dislocation and violation of the original signs—the symbolic, iconic and indexical signs—and relocation and transplantation of these signs in another language and culture for another reader, or viewer in this instance, to interpret and respond to in order to make meaning of the reconstructed narrative forms and images.

The process entails re-mediation and repurposing of the original artefacts into a new intermediated reality where these signs may not necessarily correspond in type to their original counterparts. A symbolic sign for example, may not translate into a symbolic sign of the same nature or at all or an indexical sign in the source may not be indexical in the target. For example, the indexical link between terrorism and Islam or war and democracy in western media and the metaphorical production and reproduction of these signs may not necessarily be the same in the intermediated versions. Such incongruence leads to cognitive dissonance and tension between the sign and the viewer’s perception of the

Chapter 1

Why Contemporary Arabic Television?
indexicality of the sign that is resolved only through rationalization, normalization and change of perception of the sign. In other words, while there are no pregivens as far as the interpretation of meaning of these signs goes, there are givens as far as the signs are concerned. This is driven by the distinction between the ontic nature of things and their epistemic reality. When those two do not match, cognitive dissonance occurs, which languages remedy by shifting to metaphor as a means of rationalization, normalization or changing the perception of the sign. The process of semiosis may differ from person to person, in terms of the symbolic, iconic and indexical relations of signs. However, no communication can take place without conventional agreement within any speech community about the meaning of words or signs that refer to things. Our communication would not be possible without it.

Television presentation as multimodal mediated social transaction
According to Harris (2004:19), our relationship with the media is so profound because it responds to a deeper understanding of our psychological needs and in many respects contributes to our psychological development and confirms that the bulk of social research on media has been more focused on television than on other forms of media. Television as an audiovisual medium may be regarded as a mediated social transaction that takes place between the presenter and the viewers through multimodalities. This may be understood in terms of a basic psychological definition of transaction as “a behavioural event or aspect thereof the essential nature of which is captured by interactions between the actor, other individuals involved and the environment”\textsuperscript{22} and transactional communication theories which emphasize “the importance of social context as a determinant of communicative outcomes”\textsuperscript{23}. It might be argued that this definition of transaction does not apply to television since transactional communication is a simultaneous two-way process and television is a one-way communication process. It can be counter-argued,
as I do in this thesis, that this view of transactional communication is confused with interactive communication and that if we are to assume that the media have effects on the behaviour of viewers, such assumption rests on the notion that television is a mediated transaction that takes place within a specific timeframe. This notion of transaction is important in determining how television positions itself vis-à-vis the viewers and vice-versa.

In television that relies on foreign language sources for its packaging, translation is inextricably intertwined with the multimodalities of the audiovisual representation. As de Ruiter (2004) contends, language remains the primary form of communication, even in multimodal systems and that “language can encode and transmit complex information that is very hard, if not impossible, to express in non-linguistic modalities” (1). Consequently, a study of the role of language in television must accord an important central role to translation, and since translation provides the framework for both the discourse and the representation, I will address it at various points of my discussion of the various aspects of Arabic television. Translation as a rewriting process recreates an original text written in a source language in another form in a target language, which may introduce new forms and concepts. “All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way […] Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is also the history of literary innovation, of shaping power of one culture upon another.” (Zlateva, 1993:vii). She also argues that rewriting “can also repress innovation, distort and contain” (ibid). In this sense, it can also be argued, as I do in this thesis, that translation is a process of simplification; where such rewriting suspends the rhetorical properties of the target language in favour of those in the source language. Consequently, alien rhetorical features that only work in the source language are introduced to the target language. These features largely do
not have the same rhetorical effects as in the source, and the introduction of new genres is merely a by-product of such a simplification process and not the result of a greater design of ideological manipulation except perhaps in the adoption of a translation strategy conducive to such results.

**Purpose of the Study**

This research *Translation and News Making: A Study of Contemporary Arabic Television* has sought to examine the social semiotics of translation mediation in Arabic satellite television, with a special focus on Aljazeera. “No process of thinking occurs without a cause”\(^{25}\). One of these causes, according to Carroll (1964), is motivation, and the motivation for studying social semiotics of translation mediation in Arabic satellite television lies in the detection if the stark dissonance between what is known about language and cultural behaviour and what is being transmitted by Arabic television that calls for closer examination of this phenomenon.

“A language is a socially institutionalized sign system. It is the result of centuries of gradual development and change at the hand of many generations of speakers, but at any one point in history it exists as a set of patterns of behavior learned and exploited in varying degrees by each member of the speech community in which it is used” (Carroll, 1964: 8).

However, the widespread saturation and unprecedented speed of dissemination of translation-mediated information content is accelerating the development process, causing the deinstitutionalization of a sign system and introducing a new set of behavioural patterns that are changing the social and cultural tapestry of Arab communities. Moreover, as Baker (2006) confirms, translation is not a by-product, a consequence of social and political developments, or a by-product of the physical movement of texts and people. It is rather an integral part of the very process that makes these developments and movements possible in the first place (Baker, 2007:6). Consequently, translation mediation plays a fundamental role in shaping and reshaping social reality.
This thesis examines three aspects of translation-mediation (or remediation) at Arabic satellite television: translation, telecast interpreting and voiceover and subtitling. These aspects are analyzed in terms of the extent of framing and reframing they cause the original message to undergo.

**Significance of the Study**

So significant is the emergence of Aljazeera that never has a media phenomenon attracted so much attention in recent history, in both the academic and professional worlds. From the moment Aljazeera aired the Bin Laden tapes in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, there has been a flurry of academic and professional activities seeking to understand this new curious phenomenon of Arabic satellite television and more specifically Aljazeera and to place it in the context of a region long regarded with suspicion and contempt in many quarters of the West—a perception that has been perpetuated by the media itself. Several books, articles and research papers have been published about Arabic satellite television, and various inquisitive studies have been undertaken in western universities, by westerners and Arabs alike—researchers in media and communication, political science and cross-cultural anthropology, in the first instance, have looked at the social, political, economic and cultural aspects and impact of Arabic media, particularly Aljazeera (for example, Zayani, 2005; Sakr, 2001; Lynch, 2006; Tatham, 2006; El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2002; Miles, 2005; Darwish, 2005; Qusaibaty, 2006; Zayani and Sahroui, 2007).

Some of the books that have been published in recent years bear the hallmarks of politically motivated or propaganda-propelled campaigns by outsiders to the language and culture of the Arab region, or by starry-eyed insiders, climbers and sycophants, barely scratching the surface of this important phenomenon that is set to change the region forever if it hasn’t already. An interesting point to note here is that almost all the studies that
have been published about Aljazeera and contemporary Arab satellite television and media in general have been written by Arabs living abroad or by foreigners. Ironically, while Aljazeera was the first home-based satellite television channel to broadcast to the entire Arab world and beyond and while its controversial programs had caused daily ruffles to Arab governments and agitated conservative sections of the Arab society, the discovery of Aljazeera, academically and professionally happened at the hands of Arabs and academics in the west.

As a social phenomenon, Aljazeera is claimed to have been able to change not only the way news and current affairs are reported, but also how the Arabs see themselves in relation to the rest of the world. But Aljazeera has been accompanied by a flood of satellite television channels that are no less significant in shaping public opinion and changing social and cultural values. Yet the main focus of analysts and observers remains trained on Aljazeera and to some extent its rival Al-Arabiya, which for a variety of reasons does not have the same appeal or impact as Aljazeera does.

Underlying this phenomenon is the role of translation in bringing Aljazeera to the viewers and the social semiotics of the multimodalities of Arabic television. Obvious is the combination of words, voice, body language and visual effects to produce television news, but not so easily discerned is the role of translation in the remediation process of news artefacts created or produced in another language into the language of broadcasting. There are hardly any studies conducted on the effects of translation on news reporting at large and on Arabic television and more specifically Aljazeera.26 Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests a causative relationship between translation and two modalities of news presentation at Aljazeera: (1) news reporting and (2) interpretation.
Showcasing Aljazeera

Not only are other Arab networks emulating Aljazeera, but also undoubtedly, in less than ten years, Aljazeera has become etched into the consciousness of the Arabs and has become an integral feature of their daily life. Naomi Sakr (2001) reports that “surveys conducted in Saudi Arabia and the UAE have shown a high proportion of respondents watching television for more than three hours a day, with those on lower incomes spending most time in front of the screen” (6). The pattern is most likely the same in other parts of the region, with Aljazeera ranking highest on the remote control scale. Moreover, social and political movements in the Arab world have realized the vital role the media can play and the significance of Aljazeera in exerting pressure on governments and influencing domestic and international public opinion. The year 2005 has been regarded as the year of the media in the Middle East. The non-violent demonstrations and popular civic action that took place in post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe in the first half of the decade and which spread in 2005 to parts of the Middle East have been described by media and political commentators as colour revolutions. The Purple Revolution in Iraq (purple inked fingers), the Blue Revolution in Kuwait and the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon were three social manifestations of social and political reform movements in the Middle East that were in many respects played out for the cameras of regional and western cameras. What is peculiar about the demonstrations in Kuwait and Lebanon is their appeal to the international community and more specifically the western world, particularly the United States, through the use of slogans and placards written in English.

Limitations of the Research

The research focuses mainly on broadcasts by Aljazeera Arabic channel, as the case study of this research. Bearing in mind that a case study method usually focuses only on one case and makes inferences and is
often criticised for its inability to offer grounds for “establishing reliability or generality of findings”\textsuperscript{27}, this research is aided by a limited contrastive analysis of LBC, Al-Arabiya, Abu Dhabi TV and Al-Manar, especially as access to these and other satellite channels became feasible, particularly through live television streaming on the Internet.

According to Bachor (2000)\textsuperscript{28}, a fundamental requirement in reporting case studies is to conduct the case study in a way that enables the result to be communicated to the reader. Consequently, the reader should be able to determine the nature of the argument from the evidence presented, and how and why the conclusions were made. “The evidence must follow convincingly and - when the purpose of the presented case is to move beyond description to explanation- should allow the reader to determine the basis upon which any generalization(s) are being advanced” (Bachor, 2000). In conducting the present case study, a set of guidelines were drawn up. These guidelines are discussed in \textit{Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Research Model}.

One of the limitations of this study is the lack of access to Aljazeera’s internal processes or to process documentation—if any—that might shed light on how news is packaged through translation. Consequently, the analysis focuses mainly on content analysis of programs and informal communication with media professionals. As Gamal (2007) confirms, “experience over the past fifteen years has shown that a large number of state-owned and privately-owned television channels are reluctant to show, let alone share their “Subtitler Manual”. The same problem exists in the privately-owned media production companies that offer subtitling services” (86).\textsuperscript{29} This observation also extends to other areas of translation work at these channels.
**Research Questions and hypotheses**

This research addresses the fundamental problem of translation mediation in Arabic television. Taking Aljazeera as the focus of its case study, this research examines how Aljazeera satellite television employs translation frames to report the news. This problem can be hypothesized as follows:

*Translation mediation reframes the original message.*

This hypothesis is situated within the framework of framing theory, which posits that “an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 103). The hypothesis poses the following research questions:

RQ1  How does translation reframe the news?

RQ2  How does the multimodality of television affect translation-mediated reframing of news?

**Research objectives**

The research objectives, which are driven by the research questions, are to:

- Undertake a review of the literature on translation studies, mass communication and the phenomenon of Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television to:

  1. Identify existing research in the area of study to determine gaps in the main body of knowledge relevant to the research topic; (RQ1)

  2. Identify and critique contemporary research approaches to translation studies associated with news production in order to develop a theoretical framework within which a
research operational model can be utilized to examine the process of news translation; (RQ1)

3. Examine the main arguments that have been put forward in relation to Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television to determine their credibility and reliability and the validity of their premises and conclusions about Aljazeera’s role as a mediated-news provider. (RQ1)

4. Determine the elements of translation-mediated reframing in Arabic satellite television in order to understand how reframing is actualized in Arabic news. (RQ1)

5. Examine the nature of multimodal translation-mediation as opposed to other modes of translation mediation. (RQ2)

- Develop and utilize a translation model in the assessment of translation-mediated news discourse, based on the analysis of data, in order to:
  
  1. Determine why and how reframing occurs in translation. (RQ2)

- Use a case study approach to examine:
  
  1. The translation process within the context of television news production; and (RQ2)
  
  2. The effects of translation on the reframing of news in the context of Arabic satellite television. (RQ2)

The research was motivated by the striking peculiarities of language usage in Arabic newscasts and translated news reports mainly at Aljazeera and comparatively at other television networks such as AlArabiya, LBC and Al Manar (as this became later available for as short period on the Internet) on the one hand and the semiotic dissonance of packaged programs on the other. These two aspects of modern Arabic television are

Chapter 1

Why Contemporary Arabic Television?
extraordinarily alien to both the language and culture and are curiously interrelated.

The main research method employed is qualitative content analysis of primary data recorded over a period of two years with additional on-going recordings of programs identified in the research as contributory or consolidating factors. This analysis is carried out within a critical interpretive framework that provides a structured method of inquiry consisting of identification, observation, critical analysis and interpretation and allows a meaning-centred critical approach to mediated cultural changes. According to Munhall (2006:441)\textsuperscript{30}, when critical theory is employed within an interpretive framework, its primary goal is to tease out the hidden or overlooked meanings or practices that bind experience to the social world rather than social change as such. In this context, television may be seen as a critical representation of cultural change. Additionally, within this interpretative framework and following Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) and Bell (2001), social semiotics analysis of the visual communication of television, was employed in order to describe the semiotic resources and perform content analysis of the visual images in terms of values, variables and modality.

**Special Definitions**

**Cultural dependency**

Cultural dependency relates to the properties of text that are culture-bounded. These properties reflect the social attitudes and mores and intellectual perspective of those who speak the language of a certain culture.

**Downstream reporting**

Downstream reporting is defined here as news reports originating in English mainly by news providers and translated into other languages locally by news monitors, translators and editors, or translated by translators working at or for these news providers.
Intermediation
In the context of this study, intermediation is the act of intervening between the source text and target text through translation. For a source text to become comprehensible in a target language, it must go through translation mediation.

Remediation
Bolter and Grusin (2000) have argued that “a medium is that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real” (66). Remediation according to them is reform in the sense that media reform reality itself. It is not that media merely reform the appearance of reality. It is rather that "virtual reality reforms reality by giving us an alternative visual world and insisting on that world as the locus of presence and meaning for us" (61).

Native form
Native form refers to the form of the original text or discourse.

Thesis Structure and Organization
This thesis is organized in the following manner.

Chapter 1: Why Arabic Satellite Television. This chapter introduces the thesis.

Chapter 2: Mediating Cultural Change. This chapter reviews landmark publications about Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television. It critically reviews the literature that has been produced about Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television in the last ten years. It also examines the current theories, and models of translation that have relevance to the present research, with the aim to gain insight into these theories and models and to identify relevant arguments and shortcomings with respect to the impact of translation on news making and on the social semiotics of television.
Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Research Model. outline the conceptual framework and methodology employed in addressing the research questions and to describe the theoretical framework in which the research is grounded. It outlines the methodology employed in this research and describe the theoretical framework in which the research is grounded. This chapter also describes the methods used for data collection, sampling and analysis.

Chapter 4: Translating the News. This chapter examines the strategies and approaches utilized in translating the news at Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite television networks and their impact on framing news stories.

Chapter 5: Framing Realities in Arabic News. This chapter presents a discussion of the salient features of translation-induced reframing of Arabic news explored in this research, along with the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 6: Mediating Live Broadcasts. This chapter examines the simultaneous interpreting in the delivery of live broadcasts at Aljazeera.

Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusions: The Taming of the Shrew. This chapter summarizes the research, discusses its implications and presents conclusions derived from the research.

References provides a list of publications referred to in the thesis either directly or indirectly.

Index provides a quick reference to key topics discussed in the thesis.

Notes

1 In reference to Arabic language television as opposed to Arab-owned television broadcasting in other languages.


3 Fixers are used in situations where reporters working for CNN, BBC and other western networks do not speak the local language. These reporters work within a monolingual model of news reporting as
opposed to the downstream reporting model (discussed in this thesis) that relies on translation for news reports derived from western sources that are in turn reliant on translators/fixers for primary information gathering. Consequently, this does not apply to Aljazeera since it uses bilingual and multilingual correspondents who speak Arabic paired with English, French, Spanish, Urdu, Farsi, etc.


10 The majority of Arab women in the work force are “invisible women”, according to Nadia Hijab (2000). “Most of these “invisible” women worked in agriculture or other family-run businesses, in the domestic economy or elsewhere in the informal sector” (42).


14 It a well known fact that the west has backed conservative regimes such as Saudi Arabia and other Arabian Gulf countries against political and popular movements in the Arab world working for greater Arab unity and unification. The establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the early seventies by the two leading conservative Arab kingdoms of Morocco and Saudi Arabia was aimed at undermining the Pan-Arab movement led by Egyptian president Nasser, pitting Islam against Arab nationalism.

15 It is interesting to note that looting has not been observed as a phenomenon in war- or disaster-stricken countries in the Arab world. In the Lebanese civil war that lasted more than twenty years, for example, no mass looting was ever witnessed or reported. War lords may have organized pillaging for their own gains and individuals may have stolen bits and pieces of property from destroyed homes, but mass looting was never recorded. In times of civil unrest, protesters may have destroyed property, but they never looted as witnessed in New York or Los Angeles. This is a social phenomenon that deserves a study of its own right. The only recorded exception is the looting that took place in Baghdad during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Even then, looting was perpetrated by prisoners who were freed by Saddam shortly before the invasion began.


Chapter 1

Why Contemporary Arabic Television?
Chapter 1

Why Contemporary Arabic Television?


20 Ibid.


Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change

It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end.
— Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519)

In this chapter:
- Aims
- Overview
- The Showcase
- Translation, Culture and Television
- Mediating Cultural Change
- Framing Aljazeera
- Fourth Estate or Fifth Column
- Mission Aljazeera
- News, Language, Translation and Culture
- The Role of Translation in the Media
- Conclusion
Aims

The aim of this chapter is to present a critical review of the literature that has been produced about Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television in the last ten years in order to tease out the main arguments that appear in the current debate of this mediated social and cultural phenomenon in the Arab world.

This chapter consists of two major sections: one section dealing with the literature specific to Aljazeera and another covering translation theories, methods and models relating to mediated news reporting.

The aim of this chapter is thus to review the landmark publications that have examined Aljazeera to identify the main arguments and the gaps in the literature in relation to the centrality of translation in news reporting in Arabic television. In examining the current theories, and models of translation that have relevance to the present research, this chapter aims to gain insight into these theories and models and to identify relevant arguments and shortcomings with respect to the impact of translation on news making of television.
Overview

As alluded to in the previous chapter, the main argument of this research is that translation mediation reframes news reports already framed primarily in English language, through translation-mediated news artefacts gathered and constructed by news reporters on location or by news editors back in the network offices. The literature that has examined the role of framing in the media barely deals with the role of translation mediation in constructing and/or reconstructing news reports. Only recently has interest grown in studying the effects of translation on news reporting. Palmer and Fontan (2007) for example, examine the role of translators/fixed in providing information to journalists operating in Iraq. News reporting consists of several information relays that intervene between the events and the journalists who report them, and Palmer and Fontan (2007) examine only one aspect of information relays or intervention: the role of the translators/fixed who work alongside western media workers, particularly in Iraq since the Anglo-US invasion of 2003. However, translation mediation extends beyond this initial stage of information relay to encompass the entire process of news reporting and production, especially in non-western media networks, and more specifically the Arabic satellite television Aljazeera.

In this chapter, I will review some of the literature in three areas related to the present research: (1) Aljazeera and transnational television; (2) translation mediation theories; and (3) news reporting models.

Satellite television

With the diffusion of transnational television worldwide in the last two decades, issues relating to identity, cross-cultural interactions, globalization, dominance and control and a broad range of social, political, economic and cultural ramifications have been raised both in the public arena and in the academic world. The dramatic appearance of
Aljazeera on world stage in the mid nineties with its exclusive coverage of the gulf war and airing of the Bin Laden tapes in December 2001 instigated a number of studies in government and professional circles and in academia aiming to understand the effects of a liberal pan-Arab news network on Arab viewers, and its implications for political, social and cultural change. Numerous articles and papers and several books and doctoral dissertations have been published. Some of these are characteristically sycophantic in nature—a description which might allow readers to understand the motivations behind the sudden surge in publications about Aljazeera and Arab media in general and might lead to acknowledging the fact that most of these publications are void of any real depth and insight. Some are poorly researched and lacking validity and reliability; presenting factual errors and erroneous information, yet quickly merging into the body of knowledge as respected references about the condition of Arab society and Arab media.

To explain the former observation; so much rampant is the culture of hired journalists, writers and historians and a culture of academic deceit and dishonesty in the Arab world, as elsewhere in the world, that authors, especially those who have written positively about Aljazeera or its competitors (such as El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2002; Miles, 2005 and Tatham, 2006), are compelled to declare that they have never received any payment from Aljazeera in connection with their books. 2 “So many journalists are suspected of being merely spokesmen, mouthpieces, or “hired pens” of one political group or another. Muhammad Hassanain Haykal, the most widely read journalist in the Arab world in modern times, gained his popularity not only by his facility with the Arabic language, which was conceded even by his critics, but also because his readers were convinced that he was such a close friend of Egypt’s President Nasser that he was in effect speaking for Nasser, the most important leader in the Arab world” (Rugh, 2004:11).
The number of books written on Iraq in the twelve months preceding the Invasion of Iraq in 2003, for example, is a potent reminder of the synchronicity of the “intellectuals”, the media and the political apparatus, and it would be rather naive to believe that the sudden interest in Iraq in the twelve months preceding the invasion was a sheer coincidence. In a similar vein, the interest in Aljazeera as a social and political phenomenon seems to be exaggerated at times, raising similar apprehension about the motives of some of these studies that suddenly produce experts on the Arab world, the Middle East and associated issues such as “terrorism” and “Islam”. Various research centres now boast of “experts” in these areas.\textsuperscript{3} The trend extends to Aljazeera itself, where the same experts appear regularly on news and current affairs programs to the extent that a certain anticipatory frame of reference is created in the minds of the viewers with respect to the differing views presented by these experts.

The latter form of inquiry—with the lack of validity of research—seems to have emerged from specific interpretive frameworks strongly wedded to particular ideologies or from personal prejudices and presuppositions. The notion of objectivity quickly dissolves when certain findings and descriptions are checked against historical, geographical and cultural records. An example of this is the following assertion: “More people in North Africa became Arabs when they converted to Islam and gave up their previous languages” (Jamal, 2004)\textsuperscript{4}, which simplistically regards conversion to Islam as an automatic racial transformation and reduces the Arab identity to the ability to speak the Arabic language. The same falsity is asserted by Rugh (2004) who claims that “the best definition of who is an Arab is not in terms of religion or geography but of language and consciousness, that is, one who speaks Arabic and considers himself an Arab” (19). It seems however that such definition applies to most modern nations and not just the Arabs. Another example is Rinnawi (2006) who writes: “Although there is no one dialect of Arabic, which can be understood among all levels of Arabic society (plagued as it is by low
levels of school attendance among women, and literacy), Modern Standard is perhaps the most widely understood, based on Qur’anic Arabic and taught through school systems all over the Arab world” (22) [emphasis added].

Apart from the tentative nature of such a statement (and the modalities with which it is punctuated) in keeping with the tradition of academic research of post-modernity, where nothing is absolutely certain and nothing is certainly absolute until someone else has said something about it (when it becomes a gospel truth), these ill-conceived and fabricated constructs of Arab identity seem to resonate with a large number of Arab intellectuals. So much so that any call for a broader Arab affiliation under a pan-Arab project is immediately stigmatized, condemned and dismissed as out of date or even racist, on Aljazeera and other Arabic television networks of its ilk. Words such as “arbaji” (Arabism-monger) and “qawmaji” (nationalism-monger) are often used by debaters to demean their opponents. The derogatory “ji” suffix in colloquial Arabic denotes an act or a thing contemptible.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) contend, Western culture has been dominated by the myth of objectivity. “The view that we have access to absolute and unconditional truths about the world is the cornerstone of Western philosophical tradition. The myth of objectivity has flourished in both the rationalist and empiricist traditions, which in this respect differ only in their accounts of how we arrive at such absolute truths” (195). But in democratic societies where freedom of expression is a sacred precept, even academic work is above criticism or the scrutiny of knowledgeable scholars and many a doctoral dissertation in this uncharted area of Arabic media has escaped the scrutiny of scholarly validation, so much so that long established historical and other facts have been distorted or presented in interpretive frameworks that largely reflect the views of the researchers rather than the object of inquiry. Consequently,
the reader, the ultimate observer and arbiter, with limited resources, is left to judge the validity of the information presented in the findings of research. That is why a literature review of Arabic media and Aljazeera in particular must proceed with this cautionary caveat in mind.

**Aljazeera: the taboo-breaker**

Undoubtedly, Aljazeera’s unapologetic policy of taboo-breaking has directly and indirectly opened the floodgates for a torrent of social, political and cultural issues and topics that had been hitherto unspeakable truths: suppression of freedom of speech, state terror, human rights, patriarchy and women’s oppression, sexuality and ultimately religious discontent and secularism and religious, racial and ethnic minority issues. Spurred by a puzzling vacillation of US foreign policy on democracy and freedom in the Middle East and egged on by successive annual United Nations reports on human development in the Arab world highlighting these issues, Aljazeera has provided the public forum for these issues to be heard and debated in public, unashamedly and speciously, showing meretricious disregard to established norms and traditions and in the process confusing almost everyone as to the true mission of Aljazeera.

The books and articles that have been published in the last decade about Aljazeera and Arabic media in general seem to map these issues. One is able to trace the history of development of both, by looking at some of the titles and chapter headings of the publications reviewed in this chapter. Consequently, it would make perfect sense to construct the chapter on the literature review along these lines. However, to situate the literature review of Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television in the context of this study, a brief review of the literature on media effects, news making and translation, relevant to the discussion is undertaken first.

It is important at this point to emphasize that the primary purpose of this literature review is to:
• Review landmark publications primarily about Aljazeera and secondarily about Arab television

• Review arguments regarding the effects of television on culture vis-à-vis Aljazeera’s role as a catalyst of change

• Review current translation theories and models relevant to the discussion of translation mediation being explored in this thesis

• Review news reporting models

The review aims to situate the main arguments within the context of the present research, identify gaps in the literature review with respect to the main thesis of the research and provide a framework for the discussions that follow in the rest of the chapters of this thesis. Subsequently, the aim of this chapter is to present a critical review of major publications in media studies, satellite television and translation that have direct relevance to the main propositions of the thesis.

**The Showcase**

There is no doubt that Aljazeera has set everyone talking about the impact of this new information media phenomenon in the Arab world and its momentous potential to bring about social and political reform in the region. But why would a television network such as Aljazeera attract such great attention in politics, academia, the media itself and the world at large? What makes the media in the Arab region more interesting and worthy of research and examination than any other media elsewhere in the world? Is Aljazeera really the media panacea that it is trumped up to be or is it just a storm in a teacup? And what is the fuss really all about?

Considering first the novelty factor associated with a widespread all-encompassing stereotypical view of the Arabs as being out-of-time underdeveloped nations suddenly acquiring modern means of communication—after all, “[A]n Arab Oriental is that impossible creature
whose libidinal energy drives him to paroxysms of overstimulation—and yet, he is as a puppet in the eyes of the world, staring vacantly out at a modern landscape he can neither understand nor cope with” (Said, 1978: 312). Apart from that, the influence of the media to affect sudden, cumulative and incremental change in individuals and societies has been widely acknowledged in mass communication studies. As Perse (2001) confirms, it is presumed that media and their content have significant and substantial cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on how information is acquired, beliefs are structured or restructured, information needs are satisfied; attitudes and emotional reactions to media content are formed; and media exposure motivates social behaviour. For a long time, the Arab world has been the centre of attention and source of concern for western observers and strategic planners. The strategic importance of the region to the west and more specifically the United States is paramount, and the sudden impact Aljazeera has had on Arab society may be seen as one of the successes of US strategy in the region. According to Oren (2007), after thirty years of ascendancy in the Middle East, the United States, with the invasion of Iraq, “fulfilled its centuries-long urge to instill American-style democracy in the Middle East” (Oren, 2007: 602). It is not far-fetched to deduce that Aljazeera’s creation was part of a strategic move to instil such democracy in the region through the media. As Scheuer (2008) observes, “the emergence of new media, concomitant with the new democratic potentials and new forms of violence and terrorism worldwide, is not accidental”.

**Translation, Culture and Television**

Central to the notions of this research are translation, culture and television. These interlocking concepts have been discussed separately in cross-cultural studies. In translation theory however, there are two different lines of enquiry into how translation operates vis-à-vis language use. One looks at language as “a mode of communication of objective
information, expressive of thought and meanings where meanings refer to an empirical reality or encompass a pragmatic situation” (Rubel and Rosman, 2003:6), and “a hermeneutic concept of language that emphasizes interpretation, consisting of thought and meanings, where the latter shape reality and the interpretation of creative values is privileged” (ibid).

**Figure 1—Interlocking Translation, Culture and Television**

Summing up what translation is in *The Poetics of Translation*, Barnstone (1993) asserts, “a translation is what we perceive when we do not read the script as primordial genesis—as the first created original” (12). However, in news translation, the reader or viewer in the case of television is not aware that what is being read out is anything but original despite the fact that every news item is essentially a multi-relayed, multimodal mediated discourse from another language and another culture. This notion of originality versus translation has been the central issue in the debate of translation. As Venuti (1998) observes, translation is often regarded with suspicion because it inevitably domesticates foreign texts and results in the formation of cultural identities and constructing representations of
foreign cultures. “The selection of foreign texts and the development of translation strategies can establish peculiarly domestic canons for foreign literature, canons that conform to domestic aesthetic values and therefore reveal exclusions and admissions, centers and peripheries that deviate from those current in the foreign language” (67). He argues that such domestication occurs through an inscription process of foreign texts with linguistic and cultural values that operates at every stage in the production, circulation and reception of the translation. Yet as this thesis demonstrates, it is those specific translation strategies employed in the translation of news, specifically at Aljazeera, that seem to contribute to the introduction of new canons in the target language—that is Arabic, rather than in the foreign language that represents the source of information. Here, in this multimodal medium of television, translation seems to work in reverse to what Venuti claims. Authenticity of the translation is not usually questioned except where direct speech reporting is involved since the total new package is seen as an original production rather than a mediated one.

**Mediating Cultural Change**

There is general agreement among researchers that changing behaviours will ultimately force a change in the culture of a certain community group and that a change in culture will in turn force a change in the behaviour of individuals belonging to that group (Matsumoto, 2000). The dynamic and cyclical nature of this reciprocal relationship between culture and behaviour creates a state of tension that is often resolved through reconciliation of the ensuing discrepancies between individual behaviours and cultural norms and values and between individuals and factions within the same community group. When tension of this nature occurs it creates conflict or confliction. The distinction between conflict and confliction is that the former may take the form of negative response while the latter may take the form of positive response. In behavioural

---

**Chapter 2**

**Mediating Cultural Change**
psychology, conflict is defined as the opposition of response (behavioural) tendencies, which according to Avrunin and Coombs (1988) may be within an individual or in different individuals.\textsuperscript{9}

In this respect, the news media plays a crucial role in mediating cultural change through news stories that introduce new values, metaphors, beliefs and norms, and in creating tension between tradition and individual behaviour, which is played out on-screen through various fora, such as talk shows and open debates and off-screen (in society at large) through various forms of civil actions and reactions, until the tension is resolved. When tension occurs, it creates either conflict or confliction. In modern democratic societies, when tension occurs it creates confliction that is resolved through the democratic process. However, in the absence of civil institutions, confliction soon transforms into conflict, which may escalate into various forms of response. As Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001:1) contend, different cultures have different expectations of how conflict should be handled as more often the underlying values and norms of a culture frame conflict expectations.

Throughout the world, the media, according to Peterson (2003:2), have become a part of the rhythms of human life. Such all-pervading presence is catalyzing change in social and cultural traditions and mediating new meanings to create social contexts that translate into behaviours and norms. In the Arab world, Arabic satellite television is gaining ever-increasing prominence through its mediation of social, cultural and political change. Social and cultural contexts are being created through primary mediation of translation of news and other programs from English and through secondary mediation of production in English and or French. Both primary and secondary mediations are “causing a cataclysmic change in Arabic language patterns and cultural representation” (Darwish, 2005:443).
According to Barker (1999), identities are constituted in and through cultural representations (including those produced by television) with which ‘we’ identify (33). In this connection, Rugh (2004) contends that the Arab mass media perform the same basic functions as media elsewhere, though in different ways. He identifies five basic functions the media perform. These are: (1) conveying news and information of general interest; (2) interpreting and commenting on events, providing opinions and views; (3) reinforcing social norms and cultural awareness by transmitting information about the society and its culture; (4) providing specialized information for commercial promotion (advertising) or available services; and (5) entertaining. Rugh argues that the Arab media convey socio-cultural values on two levels: a large pan-Arab audience and a nation-state: “A great deal that is of cultural value to an individual Arab is commonly shared with other Arabs throughout the area. Arab media convey such cultural messages” (19-20). Central to these functions is the role of the Arabic language, which according to Rugh (2004) and numerous other writers past and present, also serves the function of communicating cultural identity. As alluded to earlier, Rugh asserts that “indeed, the Arabic language is an especially crucial element linking the Arabs with each other and with their culture; it is inseparable from Arab culture, history, tradition, and Islam, the religion of the vast majority of Arabs. The best definition of who is an Arab is not in terms of religion or geography but of language and consciousness, that is, one who speaks Arabic and considers himself an Arab” (19).

**Cultural change or acculturation?**

Researchers have distinguished between two types of change that occur in a certain community: acculturation and cultural change. Berry (1995) defines acculturation as a process that leads “to changes at the population level when the source of change is contact with other cultures” as contrasted to cultural changes that occur “when the sources of change are
internal events such as invention, discoveries, and innovation within a culture” (Castro, 2003: 8). Certainly, western media and television in particular is a feature or agent of cultural change that comes about due to internal events. To begin with, the television is a western invention and western television networks usually carry domestic news programs for their domestic viewers, thus reinforcing the values of the domestic culture. The international versions of programs produced by networks such as CNN and BBC are not seen by their domestic viewers in the USA and Britain respectively. Consequently, very little interaction and exposure, if any, to international events takes place and the domestic viewers are largely buffered from such influences. When such exposure occurs, it is fragmented, framed and stereotypical, again reinforcing perceptions and misconceptions about other cultures being reported. News stories that promote a shared outlook in the minds of the viewers are presented positively and stories that deviate from the familiar set of values, norms and beliefs are presented within stereotypical patterns that are either dismissive or ignorant of other cultures. Furthermore, in the context of globalization, western media and American media in particular has been exporting American values, culture and lifestyle to other cultures of the world.

In contrast, Arabic satellite television, especially Aljazeera, is rather an agent of acculturation. It is mediating culture through the adoption of western styles, values, norms and even beliefs, uncut, unadapted, clumsily and boorishly presented in the name of the “truth” and without finesse. For example, in 2004, Aljazeera carried a promotional video clip focusing on the Palestinian Intifada. The clip showed a distraught old mother trying to hug the severed head of her suicide bomber son in a pool of blood in the middle of a street in occupied Palestine. Other examples of this kind of untamed and explicit footage of hostages being slain by their captors in Iraq, censored only by one frame, and foreign workers being shot dead as they lay facedown on the ground, were also shown on other television
channels, including LBC. The concept of journalistic freedom seems to be taken to the extreme by these channels, disregarding other social norms and values and overriding protocols that govern civilized societies. In the last couple of years however, this kind of explicit treatment has been toned down a little. However, as recent as December 2007, Aljazeera broadcast explicit footage of four French tourists killed in Mauritania showing the face of at least one victim.

In his magnificent book *The Silent Language*, Hall (1959) reminds us that culture is more than mere customs that can be shed or changed like a suit of clothes. It is a specific “way of organizing life, of thinking, and of conceiving the underlying assumptions about the family and the state, the economic system, and even of mankind” (23). Culture, Hall adds, “controls behavior in deep and persisting ways, many of which are outside of awareness and therefore beyond conscious control of the individual” (25). When two cultures are brought together in translation, their interactivity brings to the fore not only the organizational structures that bind either of the cultures together but also the subconscious and implicit properties of the cultures in juxtaposition to one another. Such juxtaposing has a contrastive effect that highlights differences and overlooks similarities as these do not bring attention to themselves within the cultural domain of the other. The immediacy of translation-mediated news television may cause a sudden impact on the receiving cultures in as much as such mediation highlights and plays out these differences on screen and creates dissonance between the values it carries and the values and norms of the receiving cultures. Again, mediated news does not necessarily mean foreign, in the sense that it carries values and norms that belong to another culture. It should also include values that have not been espoused by the receiving culture yet perceived by the news editor to be acceptable to the audience of that culture, and consequently cause value shift across viewers in defining and redefining their expectations. For example, showing uncensored footage of dead bodies or men kissing
the faces of relatives, or touching the bodies of martyrs killed in violence to receive blessing, is not something that the Arab viewers have been accustomed to, nor is the kissing of dead bodies a widespread practice in the Arab world. Yet this kind of uncensored and uncontrolled footage becomes the daily staple of Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite television networks to be seen by millions of viewers of varying age groups, with such necrophiliac or unusual practice gradually or eventually becoming an accepted practice or cultural norm. In this sense, Arabic satellite television, and particularly Aljazeera, has been playing a serious role in introducing news-mediated cultural values that are causing cultural change. The following section reviews major publications that have examined Aljazeera.

**Framing Aljazeera**

Since its inception, Aljazeera has attracted a great deal of attention in both the academic and professional worlds, but serious interest in Aljazeera began in earnest immediately after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Before this date, hardly any books or papers were published about Aljazeera. Although other Arabic satellite television stations such as MBC (1991), ART (1993) and Orbit TV (1994) had been in operation before Aljazeera, their presence did not attract worthwhile attention outside their immediate viewership base. The situation was set to change after 2001.

From the moment Aljazeera aired Bin Laden’s tapes in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, there has been a flurry of academic and professional activities seeking to understand this new curious phenomenon and to place it in the context of a region long regarded with suspicion and contempt in many quarters of the West. Several books, articles and research papers have been published about Arabic satellite television, and various inquisitive studies have been undertaken in western universities, by westerners and Arabs alike. Researchers in media and communication,
political science and cross-cultural anthropology, in the first instance, have looked at the social, political, economic and cultural aspects and impact of Arabic media, particularly Aljazeera. “Some of the books that have been published in recent years bear the hallmarks of politically motivated or propaganda-propelled campaigns by outsiders to the language and culture of the Arab region or by starry-eyed insiders, climbers and sycophants¹¹, barely scratching the surface of this important phenomenon that is set to change the region forever”¹².

A number of books have been written in the last ten years about the new Arab media phenomenon and more specifically about Aljazeera. Peculiarly, the titles of these books map the historical development of this phenomenon, and it would be a productive approach in this chapter to construct the discussion of these titles in a storyboard that reflects this timeline development. A chronology of publications from 1990 to 2007 reveals a correlation between major Middle East-related world events and books published about Aljazeera in the latter half of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The first book to appear was in March 2002, titled *Aljazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East*, followed by *Framing Terrorism* in 2003, which included a chapter on *CNN and Aljazeera’s Media Coverage of America’s War in Afghanistan*, and another book in 2004 titled *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-Expression*, reaching a climax in 2005 with five books. See Figure 2—Books published about Aljazeera 1990 - 2007.
Academic and professional interest in Aljazeera coincides with events that followed the September 11, 2001 attacks. Given that it takes a year to write a book and at least three years to complete a doctoral research, the initiation of some of these publications does not necessarily coincide with these events. Table 1 lists the major publications about Aljazeera and Arab media from 1993 to 2007.

### Table 1—Inventory of Major Publications about Aljazeera and Arab Media (1993–2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Relevant Event</th>
<th>Publication Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Type of Publication</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Mass Media, Modernity, and Development: Arab States of the Gulf</td>
<td>Fayad E. Kazan</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Transnational Media and Social Change in the Arab World</td>
<td>Jon Alterman</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal premier issue</td>
<td>editor, S.A. Schleifer</td>
<td>Online journal</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Mass Media, Modernity, and Development: Arab</td>
<td>Fayad E. Kazan</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Arabic version</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Relevant Event</td>
<td>Publication Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Type of Publication</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>September 11 attacks Attack on Afghanistan Aljazeera airs Bin Laden’s tapes</td>
<td>Satellite Realms</td>
<td>Naomi Sakr</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Aljazeera airs Bin Laden’s tapes</td>
<td>Aljazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East</td>
<td>Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Aljazeera airs Bin Laden’s tapes</td>
<td>Journalism after September 11</td>
<td>Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan (editors)</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Invasion of Iraq</td>
<td>Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government, and the Public</td>
<td>Pippa Norris, Montague Ken, Marion Just</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Invasion of Iraq</td>
<td>Media and Arab Culture: the position and mission</td>
<td>Tayseer Abu Arjah</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Invasion of Iraq</td>
<td>Control Room documentary</td>
<td>Jihane Noujaim</td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Tsunami disaster Aljazeera airs Bin Laden’s tapes</td>
<td>Will Aljazeera Bend?</td>
<td>John R Bradley</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Relevant Event</td>
<td>Publication Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Type of Publication</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Tsunami disaster</td>
<td>Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-Expression</td>
<td>Naomi Sakr (editor)</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Saddam Hussein’s trial</td>
<td>The Impact of Arab Satellite Television on the Prospects for Democracy in the Arab World</td>
<td>Abdullah Schleifer</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Saddam Hussein’s trial</td>
<td>The Aljazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media,</td>
<td>Mohamed Zayani, Editor</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Noha Mellor</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>Language, Translation and Identity in the Age of the Internet, Satellite Television and Directed Media</td>
<td>Ali Danwish</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Arabic with English abstracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aljazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World</td>
<td>Hugh Miles</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>Translational Television Worldwide: towards a new media order</td>
<td>Jean K. Chalaby</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Saddam Hussein’s trial</td>
<td>The Rise of Aljazeera</td>
<td>Nicolas Eliades</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Publication Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Type of Publication</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Hamas wins the majority of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections</td>
<td>Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Aljazeera and Middle East Politics Today</td>
<td>March Lynch</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Israel-Lebanon war</td>
<td>Media Under Pressure: Aljazeera Toeing the Red Lines</td>
<td>Olivia Qusaibaty</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Israel-Lebanon war</td>
<td>Losing Arab Hearts and Minds: the Coalition, Aljazeera and Muslim Public Opinion</td>
<td>Steve Tatham</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Israel-Lebanon war</td>
<td>The Media: Value Order and Power Dominance</td>
<td>Sabah Yassin</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Israel-Lebanon war</td>
<td>The BBC World Service Arabic TV: Revival of a Dream or Sudden Death by the Competition?</td>
<td>H. Amin</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alterman (2002) has analyzed the phenomenon of Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television at large. According to him, the rise of Arabic satellite-

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
broadcast television stations in the last decade has caused a revolution in the Arab world. These stations have challenged traditional state monopolies over television broadcasting, and “have played a significant role in breaking down censorship barriers in the region. They have encouraged open debates on previously taboo subjects like secularism and religion, provided fora for opposition political leaders from a number of countries, and given a voice to perspectives that were previously absent from the Arab media” (Alterman, 2002). To understand this phenomenon it must be seen within the larger context of the global, regional and local changes that have contributed to its emergence. The following review sheds some light on these factors within the framework of Aljazeera.

How Aljazeera scooped the world

In a book titled Aljazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East, the first to be published about Aljazeera, dedicated to the victims of September 11, 2001, Egyptian born American resident Mohammed El-Nawawy and Egyptian Canadian Adel Iskandar (2002) chronicle the rise of Aljazeera to global prominence. Curiously, the dedication smacks of the apologetic and of being more royal than the king. Why would a book about Aljazeera, written by two Arabs living in Canada, be dedicated to the victims of September 11? What is the connection between Aljazeera and this tragic event? In the preface to the book, the authors make this link in a rather reductionist tone.

We wholeheartedly believe in intercultural, inter religious, and interracial dialogue for better understanding of our common humanity. This book should be read as not only a historical account of how a satellite television network emerged in the Middle East; it is also the story of peoples’ quest for freedom of opinion and expression, a quest that if curtailed—as it has been for many years—can lead to catastrophes like those the world witnessed on September 11. The emergence of militant religious fundamentalism is a product of decades of oppressive regimes and the virtual non-existence of a public sphere where issues are discussed and resolved (ix-x).
However, reducing the reasons for the emergence of militant groups to the absence of freedom of expression and opinion is rather simplistic and dismissive of other historical, social, cultural and economic factors.

This book, which consists of a preface and eight chapters, opens with an account of how Arab migrants in Canada discovered Aljazeera. Relating the story of two neighbours: a Muslim Palestinian family and a Coptic Egyptian family, the authors epitomize the harmonious superficial relations between Arabs who belong to different religious affiliations when they live outside their native environments and employ the story to communicate the message that Aljazeera has provided first time exposure to opposing voices, “using the power and persuasion of television” (11). “Traditionally, most discussion programs on Arabic TV stations are non-controversial and do little else but serve as a public relations outlet for governments” (11).

Commenting on Aljazeera’s controversial role in the Middle East and appeal to the Arab viewers, the authors of this self-serving, proclamatory publication conclude that perhaps one of the reasons for Aljazeera’s success is the manner and language in which it presents Arab views. “It is intrinsic within many Arab cultures to consider Palestinians who are killed by Israeli soldiers in the Palestinian territories as shuhada’ (“martyrs”)…” (53), and Aljazeera has been accused by many Westerners of being biased toward the Palestinian cause because it “has the practice of describing Palestinian suicide-bombers who strike in Israel as “martyrs”, which many consider a violation of objective news reporting” (52).

This claim soon falters on examining the reporting of news from Iraq, where Aljazeera has continued to refer to the insurgents who are killed by US-led coalition forces as qatla (killed persons) until the British Daily Mirror published a leaked memo early this year alleging US President George W. Bush had planned to bomb Aljazeera’s headquarters in Doha,

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
Qatar. A cautious shift in this paradigm has been detected in the present research but not as far as using the term “martyrs” to describe those who are killed fighting the coalition forces. Yet terms such as “resistance fighters” and “resistance” to describe the insurgents have been detected, which indicates inconsistency of editorial policy. However, in the recent inner fighting between the main Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas, Aljazeera referred to civilian victims caught in the crossfire and Palestinian combatants as “killed persons”. Only those who are killed by Israeli fire are described as “martyrs”.

The authors emphasize that Aljazeera strives to have different sides listen to each other. “Its philosophy is built on demonstrating how objectivity can be attained only if all subjective views and opinions on any issue are presented and aired. The coverage must exhaust all possible ideas and perspectives’ (27). While it is not always possible to be exhaustive, Aljazeera endeavours to present both sides of the argument. The problem with this kind of approach in a polarized region where “traditional” connections play a central role in deciding who should go on air and who should not, and where very few intellectuals are prepared to talk about controversial issues in public, soon Aljazeera runs out of guests and the same faces and personalities are regularly seen on Aljazeera, so much so that they have become part of the extended family of Aljazeera.

Whether the “experts” Aljazeera hosts nightly are on its payroll is hard to tell, but in the last five years of Aljazeera a cyclic, discursive pattern has developed and the regular guests have achieved the same or more or less the same celebrity status as their hosts. This in a major way undermines the nature of objectivity which Aljazeera strives to achieve. But perhaps this is the subjective nature of objectivity. Acknowledging Aljazeera as a force for democracy in the Middle East, the authors conclude their book by asserting that “Aljazeera may not be perfect, but it is the only choice for Arab self-determination, political openness, and democracy. What the

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
Arab world needs now are more media services like Aljazeera, not fewer” (206). Such a leap of faith in Aljazeera’s ability to introduce democracy is being tested every day by sceptics. Sooner than later, Aljazeera will run out of ideas and will find itself repeating itself until the next natural disaster, military invasion or unplanned event. Even the once exciting and intriguing Osama bin Laden tapes have lost that excitement and intrigue and Aljazeera cannot expect to continue to garner viewers’ interest in rehashed materials. Whether “the only cure for the ails of democracy is more of it”, as the authors conclude, it is by transforming Aljazeera into CNN Arabica, or “Al-Foxeera” as Danny Schechter, (2007) puts it, that Aljazeera will cease to be.

In The Impact of Arab Satellite Television on the Prospects for Democracy in the Arab World, Schleifer (2005) contends that for many Arab viewers, Aljazeera’s "Cross-fire" types of political talk shows that would pit critics of Arab regimes against their defenders: Islamists against either liberal secularists or Arab nationalists”, have had the greatest appeal. “While debates that were unimaginable on the state national television channels flowed back and forth, the audience could join in by telephone, again expressing their own opinions, and doing so in a manner also unimaginable only a decade ago” (Schleifer, 2005).

The Aljazeera phenomenon

The first decade of the twenty-first century will probably go down in history as the decade of phenomena in the world. From the phenomenon of terrorism, to Harry Potter, the Internet, globalization and transnational broadcasting, the obsession with the word “phenomenon” seems to be contagious. A search on Amazon.com returns 239,870 publications with the word “phenomenon” in the title or subtitle. Everything seems to be regarded as a phenomenon. In The Aljazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media, Mohamed Zayani (2005), editor of this collection of papers, argues that few phenomena in the Arab world are
more intriguing that Aljazeera. But what is intriguing about a pan-Arab 24-hour news and current affairs satellite television station that is funded and sponsored by the head of state of Qatar? Zayani argues that since Aljazeera catapulted to international fame it has been surrounded by controversy and paradoxically loathed and loved. He observes that Aljazeera is a relatively free channel operating in a region that is regarded by many observers as not so inclined towards freedom of expression. This assertion is amazingly generalized; it obfuscates the distinction between society and the political systems that govern these societies and paints a picture of a Stalinist-like Arab world. Perhaps it is political freedom that is curbed and curtailed in various parts of the region, but to claim that the whole region is less inclined towards “freedom of expression” is a rash generalization. Zayani later explains that what is peculiar about Aljazeera is its ability to “expand what people in the Arab world can talk about” (6). But if people cannot talk freely how can Aljazeera expand on that which has not been talked about? This is rather paradoxically juxtaposed with the comment that the “kind of debate championed by Aljazeera is something new in the Arab world where public political debate is considered subversive” (6).

Foreign diplomacy by-product
Aljazeera may be seen as an indirect by-product of Qatar’s foreign diplomacy. Zayani (2005) argues that Qatar’s newly acquired status is not simply due to sponsoring and hosting Aljazeera. He stresses that it is rather the result of active diplomacy as a mediator in regional disputes such as in Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and in its role to build rapprochement between Iran and the Arab states, and between Iran and the United States. Zayani however is doubtful whether Qatar’s diplomacy has achieved a great deal or Aljazeera has done more than give Qatar a limited diplomatic presence and a heightened regional and international profile. It is worth noting here however, that Qatar has been reaching out to South East Asia and the Indian Subcontinent as mentioned elsewhere.
using Aljazeera’s successful profile as the vehicle for its efforts in this direction. The rest of the book explores Aljazeera and regional politics, and the public sphere; Aljazeera programming; and Aljazeera and regional crises. I will return to each one of these areas elsewhere in this chapter.

**Losing Arab hearts and minds**

“To win the hearts and minds of the Arabs” was the catchphrase of the last three years in western political discourse, gaining intensity and salience in 2006. So void of any substance and real meaning, this trite expression has been used ad nauseam by politicians and observers of the Arab world and more specifically as regards the role of the media in actually achieving that. This is where linguistic creativity stops, winning neither heart nor mind. In this regard, Zahrana (2003) observes:

> With such a concerted effort at the highest levels of the American government to get America’s message out, to ‘win the hearts and minds’ of the Arabs and Muslims, one would expect an increase in understanding and support of American policy. Instead, it appears the opposite has occurred. America’s intensified public diplomacy initiative has met with more misunderstandings, and support for American policies has declined globally—not just in the Arab and Muslim world (73).13

The catchphrase has also been picked up by the Arab media with such hilarity that both the catchphrase and its translation have become synonymous with empty talk and propaganda. The modern style of news presentation is reductionist and simplistically summative—all major events are reduced to a headline phrase or strapline: “Operation Iraq”, “New Iraq strategy”, “War on Terror”, etc. These convenient straplines frame the message in a way that invokes certain images and responses and plays on uncertainty and fear rather than to inform and educate, as the role of the media was once stated to be.

many, particularly in the United States, it appeared that Samuel Huntington’s prophecy of a ‘clash of civilisations’ might indeed be fulfilled. An indignant American media did little to counter the perception, moving into overdrive as it pored over the question ‘why us?’” (1). There is always a state of tension in the “normal conflictual/cooperative relationship” between the media and governments that are trying to govern with the least interference from the media. This tension intensifies during conflict, which according to Tatham, often presents the international media with difficult decisions that may force the media to offset ideological or political beliefs against national interests. The dilemma that faces journalist trying to objectively and accurately cover conflicts in which their countries are involved worsens—a criticism levelled at Aljazeera for its coverage of the recent Israeli war on Lebanon.

In this book, Tatham gives an insight into how the war in Iraq was waged. He presents an account of the British views on the conflict, how the Arab world reacted to the war and the state of pulling contrasts of the lesser of the two evils that existed, the United States “empires of evil” doctrine, and the Fox Factor. Tatham observes:

If there is one media organisation more than any other that has become associated with neo-conservatism and the US Republican Party it is Rupert Murdoch’s Fox Television. By any national measure the channel’s coverage was at times so uniformly subjective, ultra-patriotic and hugely biased in favour of the President’s actions that its strap line ‘We report, you decide’ appeared almost comically disingenuous. A selection of the thoughts on war from its correspondents and anchors more than adequately illustrate this point. (35).

Highlighting the connection between media bias and audience perceptions, Tatham explains that the influence of television and movies on real life is widely debated in society. “Yet there is strong empirical evidence that the way in which individuals and cultures are portrayed does influence audiences, particularly those who do not themselves travel much beyond the borders of their own country” (54). How the Arabs are portrayed in the media is a topic that is addressed in this book. Tatham

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
asks the question: Is there any correlation between the way the Arab world has been portrayed in films and the prevailing attitudes of the audiences that watch them? To answer this question, Thatham makes references to Edward Said’s work on Orientalism. However, one does not need to go farther than one’s own experiences in this area. In the early eighties, I sat in a conference room at an American Information Technology company I worked for in the United Kingdom listening with more than fifty delegates from various parts of Europe and from the United States, to our general manager presenting the company’s product strategy. On the white board, he presented the products by name, one by one, until he reached the Arabic products—Arabization of computer products was still in its early stages in those days. Instead of displaying the product names, he displayed the picture of a camel. This sums up the early inculcation of stereotypes by the media of the Arabs. When people are reduced to a camel status, it does not take a lot of imagination to figure out how those indoctrinated with such stereotypes would react.

Thatham observes that in many Arab states the media are closely monitored if not controlled by the state. He claims that the output of state media may sound comical and asserts that it lacks maturity and modernity when compared with organizations such as the BBC. But such an observation is a little skewed as he does not offer us a definition of “modernity” in the media. However, he alludes to this by saying that in the Arab press a large space on front pages is dedicated to photographs of members of the regime welcoming dignitaries or performing functions of state. Consequently, this is the antithesis of modernity. But what he is actually describing are Saudi Arabia and other gulf states. This is certainly not the practice in Lebanon for example. Like most other publications that tackled Arab media, Thatham falls into the same trap of generalizations treating Arab media as a monolith and overlooking the peculiarities of each Arab country vis-à-vis the media. Nonetheless, these differences, while not spelled out, can be educed from the detailed

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
account. Tatham concludes his observations by arguing that Aljazeera’s programs can be revolting, sensational and overstimulated and while Aljazeera experiences almost similar problems to other 24-hour news broadcasting networks throughout the world, such as the BBC and even “the heavily-slanted” Fox TV, it is subject to the watchful eyes of critics who spare no occasion to seize on its occasional slip-ups. “But even if you accept a small percentage of the nonsense that is written about it, there is one undeniable truth that cannot be distorted: it is the nearest the Arab world has to an independent media organisation. And given the importance placed by the United States on free speech and the enthusiasm for it that US supporters for emerging democracy in the Middle East once expressed, the criticisms are unsustainable” (203).

Aljazeera challenges the world

Why would a book about Aljazeera carry such a title? Is Aljazeera challenging the world and why? These are the first questions that come to mind on picking up this book *Aljazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World*, by Hugh Miles (2005). Pitting Aljazeera against the world in this manner is somewhat puzzling, especially when this satellite television network has been striving to emulate western forms of news and current affairs as faithfully and obediently as a young martial arts disciple. In the introduction to the book, Miles observes that everything on Aljazeera is in classical Arabic, the lingua franca of the Middle East. There are two problems with this assertion, as I have already argued in this thesis—one regarding the erroneous description of standard Arabic as ‘classical Arabic’ and one regarding Arabic being the lingua franca of the Middle East. Notwithstanding, in this book Miles takes us through several events that have occurred in the Arab world, where Aljazeera was on the ground covering the second Palestinian uprising, Intifadah, September 11, Afghanistan, and the invasion of Iraq.
His vivid account of these events and Aljazeera’s controversial coverage brings us to the conclusion that free speech is contagious and has a domino effect. In this regard, Miles contends that in the west “it has become an article of faith that a freer Arab media heralds social and political change in the Middle East”. He reminds us however, that in the entire hubbub about Aljazeera, we tend to forget that the most popular shows on Arab television are Egyptian and Lebanese soap operas and films, in addition to imported western game shows. Aljazeera is acting as a tranquilizer. “Arabs have been mulling over the pros and cons of democracy for almost two hundred years: what is meant is that today Arab public opinion matters for the first time” (389), thanks to Aljazeera and the rest of Arab media that are shaping Arab public opinion towards the west for the first time, as Miles contends.

**Media under pressure**

Aljazeera’s coverage of the invasion of Iraq brought upon it the wrath of western governments, particularly the United States and Britain. Showing images of charred and bloodied bodies of dead US soldiers along with five prisoners in Iraq in March 2003 was the ultimate sin any news network could commit, let alone Aljazeera. “Either you are with us or with the terrorists”, President George W. Bush warned the whole world in an address to the US Congress on 20 September 2001. Where fact and fiction are confused in the minds of decision makers and where the foot is made to wear the shoe and not the shoe to fit the foot, many childhood fantasies and folklore about “getting out of town by sundown” and “you can run but you can’t hide”, and other metaphors such as “carrot and stick”, become the drivers and framers of media events. Even before Aljazeera showed these images of the US soldiers and before the airing of the Bin Laden tapes after the September 11 attacks, the US administration had been exerting pressure on the Emir of Qatar to curb Aljazeera’s free broadcasting and to tone down its content. According to Konstantin
Kilibarda (2001), “it was important for Washington to neutralize its biggest potential source of contradictory images and alternative commentary before launching its Afghan campaign”. Kilibarda (2001) reports:

In early October US officials opened with a salvo of verbal attacks on the station and began applying a number of pressures on Qatar and Aljazeera in order to influence its coverage. Washington claimed to be upset by the fact that it continued to air a 1998 interview with bin Laden that allegedly incited Muslims to rise-up against the United States. The US also objected to the airtime given to analysts who either expressed overtly anti-American perspectives or attacked US policies in the region, and it began pressuring the Emir of Qatar as well as the station’s managers to set aside more time for US press conferences, key US officials, and paid political advertisements explaining America’s position towards the Islamic world.

In *Media under Pressure: Aljazeera Toeing the Red Lines*, Qusaibaty (2006) uses qualitative data analysis to examine the patterns of change in the Arab world and pressures for reform, and evaluate Aljazeera’s ability to provide a perspective other than that of its western and Arab competitors. Olivia Qusaibaty starts from the premise that she does not consider the Arab world a unified entity due to the important political, social, economic, cultural and religious differences that characterize the region. Qusaibaty observes that much of the literature on Aljazeera has adopted a generalized approach and has painted this news network with a strong positive or negative bias towards it. However, as the literature has revealed so far, there is more praise than dispraise. Qusaibaty argues that Aljazeera has helped in creating a public space for dialogue in the Arab world and has provided an alternative to other media outlets, such as the BBC and CNN. She contends that Aljazeera’s controversial coverage has increased its credibility and popularity among audiences and that the Al Arabiyah network was founded to provide a more moderate alternative. Qusaibaty utilizes a framing/discourse analysis approach to select program episodes. She reports that a framing analysis of the various programs has revealed specific patterns in the framing of various issues.
Her analysis of the way interlocutors conduct themselves in debating issues of three programs, *For Women Only, The Opposite Direction* and *Open Dialogue*, shows the following characteristics:

1. **Dichotomy of “them and us” (the west and the Arab world).** This dichotomy, Qusaibaty claims, presents itself in several ways, but mainly as paranoia of western socio-political and economic invasion.

2. **Focus on the west and particularly the United States.** In this regard, Qusaibaty observes that while the debaters relentlessly criticize the west, they ironically replicate English terminology, frame events and situate their arguments using Anglo-Saxon frameworks.

3. **Subjective framing.** Programs, such as *The Opposite Direction*, use *Yes* or *No* closed questions to introduce the topic of debate and poll viewers.

4. **Host’s interference.** The host interrupts the speaker and influences the debate.

While these are valid observations they raise a question about whether they are specific to Aljazeera programs or are universal features of contemporary television debate in general. For example, observation of Tim Sebastian, former BBC Hard Talk presenter reveals similar patterns. Sebastian is known for his combative style of interviewing. This is what he says about his own style of interviewing:

> I have no particular bias towards any of them [guests]. I'm looking for holes in their arguments, whoever they are and whatever political stripe they happen to represent. They all have holes in their arguments, some more glaring than others. My job is to show them up, expose them—as I say, expose the gap between rhetoric and reality. That's true of everybody, so everybody gets the same hard time when they sit down, because of the nature of the program. There are softer programs on option on the BBC; this happens to be a hard version. We can't drag people into the studio, they come into the studio knowing what kind of treatment they're going to get, and acquiescing to that. And a lot of people like to take you on. A lot of people think it's a badge of honour to come through the program and having done well, or put me in my place,
or whatever—and many people do put me in my place. That's absolutely fine.\textsuperscript{15}

Qusaibaty concludes by reiterating what other writers and researchers have said ad nauseam: “By breaching taboos and uncovering sensitive issues, Aljazeera has allowed previously forbidden discourse to emerge from behind closed doors into the public field, especially as concerns the Arab world” (48). She contends:

“the contrasting responses the channel has generated indicate that it provides merely a reflection of the reality it seeks to portray. Aljazeera may then resemble a messenger with less stringent filters than government-controlled media. Nevertheless, such editorial policy implies that Aljazeera toes a very fine line subject as concerns pressure from governments and other interested parties. In doing so, the channel’s framing of events is not linear, but rather depends on the divergent opinions voiced in responses to particular issues” (48).

This assertion however discounts other factors that contribute to the framing of issues apart from viewer responses. While Aljazeera is motivated by the momentum of its earlier successes, it is certainly not a running train. Its awareness of the significant role it is playing in Arab politics cannot be reduced to a mere reflection of “reality”. Aljazeera must be seen in the larger context of what Qatar is trying to do on the world stage. For about three years now, Qatar has been focusing on supporting development projects in South East Asia as well as playing a role in Arab politics. Its critical role during the Israel-Lebanon war in July 2006 when the rest of the Arab countries did little to stop the hostilities has won it admiration and support in the Arab world, and if it is any indication, in his speech at the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2007, the Emir of Qatar indirectly criticized the US policy in Iraq, saying that Iraq could no longer remain the responsibility of just one country and calling for a strengthening of the United Nations’ role.

\textbf{Voices from the void: the new Arab public}

Public sphere has invariably been a recurring theme in publications on Aljazeera and Arab media. It seems to be an in-vogue concept in this area
of inquiry with sketchy details of what this concept signifies. Public sphere according Habermas is “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body” (49). A public sphere is a precondition for deliberative arguments, which according to Goodnight (1998) necessarily pertains to the domain of probable knowledge: “that kind of knowledge, which although uncertain, is more reliable than untested opinion or guesswork. Public deliberation is probable because the future is more and less than expected. The full worth of a policy is yet to be seen” (251).

In his book *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Aljazeera, and Middle East Politics Today*, Lynch (2006) argues that Aljazeera and other satellite television channels have transformed Arab politics over the last decade. How? By breaking state control over information and giving a platform to voices that have been stifled for quite a long time, and by encouraging open debate about a host of issues such as Iraq, Palestine, Arab identity, these television networks have redefined what it means to be an Arab. Using Iraq as the vehicle for his arguments and exploration of the state of Arab media, Lynch warns that it is not sufficient to say an Arab public sphere exists. The question is what kind of public sphere is it and what kind of impact is it likely to have? What kinds of arguments dominate within it and who are the participants? Citing Gamson (2001), Lynch reiterates that mass media has been long criticized for tending to demobilize societies and to discourage political action. In contrast, the new Arab media assumes an active role in trying to “mobilize mass publics to become politically involved” (52).

In this regard, Zayani (2005) asks the questions: can Aljazeera be a vehicle for political change? Does a network like Aljazeera enhance or eviscerate democracy? Zayani argues that so far the Arab public seems to
be content with satellite democracy. “Add to this yet another danger, and that is the increasing marginalization of the role of the media in development and modernization. The media discourse is increasingly embroiled in an oppositional ideological underpinning” (33). Moreover, El-Oifi (in Zayani, 2005) suggests that Aljazeera is influence without power. “Aljazeera has become a weapon to contend with and a source of influence at the disposal of a tiny country [Qatar] which does not possess any of the classical elements of power...This extraordinary shift of power—in fact, the revenge of the micro state over Arab countries that have a weight in the region—points to momentous changes or imbalances which are shrewdly exploited by the American administration.” (76).

Nonetheless, Lynch (2006) again observes that there is a noticeable amount of reflexive, self-conscious discussion within the Arab public sphere about itself and contends that ironically this self obsession may be one of the things that most identifies it as a public sphere. “Aljazeera regularly airs programs devoted to questioning its own importance, its own behavior, its own mistakes” (55).

Fourth Estate or Fifth Column

Since its launch a decade ago, Aljazeera has been received with ambivalence in the Arab world and by the Arab diaspora. Perhaps this mixed reaction to a liberal news and current affairs television reflects the great social and political divide across the Arab society at large. There are those who have regarded Aljazeera as the harbinger of democracy and social liberation and those who have seen it as a western saboteur. For societies that have been used to police-state oppression and an authoritarian form of puppet media, the sudden introduction to uncontrolled public free speech and public debate must have been a real cultural shock. For those who have always been suspicious of imported western liberalizations in the absence of liberal and democratic systems, Aljazeera must have been received with a degree of apprehension and
cynicism, and along other entertainment television channels, as a fifth column. The culture of fifth column had been widespread in Arab politics for most of the second half of the twentieth century and any departure from the official political party line had been seen as dissention.

In the pre-Aljazeera and more specifically pre September 11, 2001 period, the Arab world was divided into three major social-political systems: conservative, semi-liberal and authoritarian-populist. This delineation, which was taking shape during the Cold War, became more pronounced in the decade that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the successive political and military events that took hold of the region. Interestingly, these social-political systems have been translated into four dynamic forms of media, which Rugh (2004) calls: mobilization press, loyalist press, diverse print media and transitional print media. The mobilization press includes Syria, Libya, Sudan and pre-2003 Iraq. The loyalist press includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Palestine. The diverse print media include Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco and Yemen. Transitional print media include Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria. Rugh (2004:23) argues that the Arab media systems do not fit neatly and completely into any of the categories of the standard classification of authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility or totalitarian. However, he confirms that in most Arab countries, the media operate under variations of the authoritarian theory and concludes that the media system in the Arab world “cannot be understood without specific reference to the political and other conditions prevailing at the time in the country” (23).

The common definition of the media being the fourth estate rests on the notion that the media functions as a guardian of the public interest and as a watchdog on the activities of government. While this concept of the role of the media has recently come under fire in the west, it seems to have been embraced wholeheartedly yet somewhat abnormally in the Arab
media. For example, Stockwell (2004) argues that the fourth estate gives journalists the dual benefit of placing them inside the political process but outside the institutions of governance. He contends that the traditional explanation of journalism based on the notion of fourth estate has been undermined because audiences no longer find traditional journalism as important and sustaining as they once did. News and current affairs in both Australia and United States are losing ratings “indicating a rising level of dissatisfaction with mainstream news”(4)\(^1\). In contrast, news and current affairs in the Arab world seem to be gaining prominence with the liberalization of the media in the last decade thanks to the dramatic influence of Al Jazeera and the interest it has aroused in the Arab world. Moreover, Baker (2006:142) argues that the fourth estate notion has no relation to the general quantity, quality and diversity of speech.

On the role of Al Jazeera as a fourth estate, Khalid Rhoub (2006) argues in the Lebanese English language *Daily Star* that despite Al Jazeera’s importance in the creation of an “Arab” public sphere, its contribution to political change is at best limited and contends that this seeming paradox remains an enigma to many analysts. Hroub confirms the general current view of Al Jazeera as follows:

> The creation of a “regional media public sphere” has been central to Al Jazeera's policy over the past 10 years. Motivated by the success of the Qatar-based station - envious too, no doubt - a number of trans-terrestrial Arabic-speaking television stations, chiefly Saudi, Egyptian and Lebanese, were established in competition. Most of these modeled themselves on Al Jazeera, in style if not in substance: challenging existing political, social and religious systems became the name of the new media game. The newly created virtual sphere of free debate and news access effectively rendered old-style state-controlled Arab media obsolete.\(^2\)

But whether Al Jazeera is creating consensus around undermining state-controlled media is doubtful.
Out of control: the taming of the shrew

For many viewers in the west, Aljazeera, at least in the early years of its operation and during the period from 2003 to 2006, may have come across as a wild, untamed and bombastic news and current affairs channel. In many ways it is. The little boy with the handgun metaphor may aptly describe how Aljazeera, unbridled and unguided by any clear policy, has been dealing with the events in the region, and capture the state of fluctuation and irrationality of news coverage. The transformation that has taken place over the last two years, however, has transported Aljazeera into another phase of television news broadcasting, and while rationality may have been needed to streamline Aljazeera’s editorial policies, Aljazeera today is another foreign language replica of CNN. Whether this is a natural outcome of maturation and adaptation or the result of a conscious policy on the part of decision makers is hard to ascertain. Most likely, it is a combination of these two factors.

In an interview with MSNBC on May 13, 2004, Jihane Noujaime, the director of “Control Room”, spoke to Alison Stewart about the reasons for making this documentary about Aljazeera. For the full transcript, see the Appendix. Noujaime challenges the basic notion of objective reporting and calls objectivity a “mirage”. Explaining why she made the move, she states:

I was really just curious in terms of figuring out who these people were that were going to Qatar to cover the news. Umm...With Aljazeera I thought they really had to have a belief in some kind of independent press because many of those come from state-run news institutions. So many of them I knew were going to be frustrated from the world they had come from and excited to be part of what they saw as the freest press in the Middle East.

The American media, I thought was, you know, we live in a time where 24 hour news coverage, you need to get on the story right way. The individual journalists, David Shuster from MSNBC, Tom Mantier from CNN, were fantastic people and had a lot of integrity, as journalists and as people. I think it’s difficult... Tom described it to me really well, when the Jessica Lynch story came out for example. He was really frustrated with what was going on, because he said, look they are burying the lead. There is

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
something going on. They are not telling us what’s going on. But at the same time, everybody else is reporting about Jessica Lynch, so he had to stand up there and report on Jessica Lynch. I think there has also been a lot of pressure. A lot of journalists, I can say the names, obviously, said look, since September 11, there has been a really enormous pressure not to criticize the President, to criticize what we are doing. We need to be patriotic. But the difficult part about that if we are not seeing what the other side is thinking and I think that puts us in a very dangerous situation as Americans.

In a network that spends lavishly, one impression that American journalists walk away with is what David Shuster of MSNBC experienced: “Aljazeera, they’ve got the best food, the best food, Aljazeera, they are also the nicest guys” [emphasis added] (Control Room, 2004). However, cutting through the delicacies of cuisine, Shuster confirms:

“First of all, we respected Aljazeera in the sense that they were doing something that hadn’t been done in the Arab world, and they were reaching a lot of viewers, and they were ruffling a lot of feathers, which is a great part of journalism. The worst part Aljazeera is struggling with is how when there isn’t over a long tradition of being independent and being able to say anything you want in any one of these sorts of kingdoms, how do you establish that now? We’ve got some 200 years of being to build on that in our country and I think this helps journalism”.

But Aljazeera’s role or rather frivolity cuts deeper into the consciousness of its media workers than the trimmings of its recent journalistic tradition might show. In a special program making the fortieth anniversary of the 1967 war and the defeat of the Arabs to Israel, aired in June 2007, a random sample of young and old Arabs was surveyed in several Arab countries about what they knew about the war. Strikingly, while Aljazeera lamented the fact that most of the surveyed participants could not remember the war, the promotional video clip and program trailer showed collaged still pictures of three deceased Arab leaders, Egyptian President Gamal Abel Nasser, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, with bare footprints and shoeprints treading all over them. This symbolism of the passage of time, which probably escaped the attention of most Arab viewers, was most likely symbolic of how

*Chapter 2*

*Mediating Cultural Change*
Aljazeera sees past Arab leaders. It was certainly an insult to those who noticed the pictures, which were flashed on screen.

**Mission Aljazeera**

Aljazeera, *Mission Aljazeera* by Josh Rushing (2007) offers the reader a blend of a personal story and observations of a media professional who has so far viewed both sides of the equation. More telling however is the career transition from a US Marine to a reporter at Aljazeera, as this gives us insight into how Aljazeera operates to recruit personnel. Rushing (2007) tells the readers that he is as American and patriotic as any ex U.S. Marine can be. He recounts how he joined the Marines at the tender age of seventeen, as he puts it, how he joined the Defense Information School to study journalism, how he ended up at U.S. Central Command (CentCom) in Doha, Qatar as a talking point for Aljazeera, and how his encounters with Aljazeera journalists opened his eyes to the Arab culture.

Rushing paints a bleak picture of how the American military command viewed not only Aljazeera as a hostile media network, but also how democracy-exporters despise and look down on the very people they have come to liberate and educate in the ways of democracy and freedom of speech in the Arab world. While this view has been communicated to the Arabs through persistent stereotypical Hollywood portrayals, Rushing offers a first-hand account and insights into these perceptions and attitudes and the workings of the war propaganda machine. Rushing writes:

> To Fox News viewers, which described the majority of my CentCom colleagues, Aljazeera was a hostile network, and its portrayal of the United States’s actions frustrated my superiors, who would be outraged at the station’s reporting and vow to cut off all access to its reporters. (50).

I would argue that time on Aljazeera’s airways—for better or worse—gave CentCom our only opportunity to reach the audience we most needed to reach: the Arab people […] I argued my case
so strongly that at one point an Air Force lieutenant colonel came to me and said, “Check your uniform and see what name is on it. You need to remember which side you’re on.” It wouldn’t be the last time I would be accused of being a traitor.

Towards the end of the book, Rushing assumes the role of spokesperson for Aljazeera. Now that he is in the employ of the mega network empire, he speaks in the same manner as he did when he was a talking point at CentCom:

A lot of people want to know why Aljazeera decided to launch an English language network. The answer is simple: We launched Aljazeera English because the Emir of Qatar said to do it. He has never publicly said why he thought an English-language iteration was needed, leaving us as well as the rest of the world to speculate on his thinking, but his instincts have proven right so far. His growing media empire (which includes Arabic channels for news, sports, children’s programming, C-SPAN-like public affairs coverage, and documentaries) has been a product of his hunches and vision, one that he keeps fairly private. And while conspiracy theories inside and outside the Arab world have claimed it’s a stalking horse for a political movement, or a target meant to draw fire from the more controversial Aljazeera Arabic, all I’ve heard as far as our mission goes is to be as credible as possible.

Credibility is a watch word at Aljazeera and I think it’s fair to surmise that one thing the Emir wants to do is to extend the credibility he has established with the Arab network to a broader, international audience. (193-194)

This is where the credibility of the book begins to falter a little and for cynics and sceptics, it sounds rather odd to have someone working for Aljazeera not to say something good about Aljazeera. But in all fairness, throughout the book, Rushing has tried to be as transparent and honest as possible and this comes across in his narrative and detailed account of the events that make up this book. In many ways too, the book manages to add a human touch to the phenomenon of Aljazeera that other books, too engrossed in political analyses, theoretical fancy footwork and academic methodologies and procedures that give the illusion of objectivity and scientific enquiry, have failed to do. When I heard about the book I had almost completed my literature review, but a review of the literature about Aljazeera could not be complete without reading *Mission Aljazeera,*

*Chapter 2*  
*Mediating Cultural Change*
which in many ways can be described as the icing on the cake. I approached the book with scepticism, but half way through, I was touched by the ingenuity of observation and description, Rushing came across as a genuine and credible narrator who finally declares “I was a former Marine, but I also understood the Arab media. I am that bridge I had always imagined I could be, without worrying about the lanes” (228).

**News, Language, Translation and Culture**

The vital role of language is probably nowhere as salient and influential as in news media. Allen Bell (1991) highlights the importance and widespread influence of language in the media. He contends that “…media language is heard not just by one or two people but by mass audiences. It is the few talking to the many. Media are dominating presenters of language in our society at large” (1), with news being “the primary language genre” within the media. In the Arab world today, Aljazeera is carrying this all-pervading influence of news language to millions of viewers and accelerating the standardization process of the Arabic language at a rate unprecedented in the modern history of the region.22

Before the introduction of satellite television to the Arab world, there have been claims of conscious moves within journalism to simplify the Arabic language. Translating Mroue (1961), “the refined easy style we have achieved in Arabic writing today is not attributable to language teachers in schools and colleges, nor is it attributable to writers and ancient men of letters. It is in the first place owing to the journalism of today” (111). However, much as these early pioneers would like to think that the shift in style of Arabic writing is due to the conscious efforts of the press, it can be argued that the shift was due to the direct influence of translation. As is the case today, foreign press was the primary source of information for Arabic newspapers and journalists in the second half of the twentieth century. With the widespread coverage of satellite television
in the Arab world and real-time accessibility to foreign language satellite television, such as CNN, BBC, NBC and so on, the influence of translation on Arabic linguistic and thought patterns has become more readily pronounced that will be demonstrated in this research, and the correlation and causality between translation and the Arabic media language become stronger and arguably more established.

Highlighting the role of journalists as language custodians, Denmark-based Egyptian writer Noha Mellor (2005) echoes Mroue’s view asserting that the “news media have thus played a role in the modernization of the language. Television plays an important role as a medium even for illiterates, but television sets are not yet available in certain rural areas, where radio is still the medium of necessity” (126). Mellor further confirms the views made here and elsewhere (Darwish, 2004, 2005) regarding the role of translation in journalism and the impact of translation on the language.

“The short deadlines that rule journalistic practice have forced editors and journalists to depend on quick translation of incoming news from international news agencies and sources, paving the way for the introduction of new terms and expressions in the MSA [Modern Standard Arabic] used in the news (Abdelfattah, 1990:42f)”.

While Mellor’s reference goes back to 1990, the situation is even more pronounced today at Aljazeera and other Arabic news media networks. There is more emphasis on literalizations and absolute literalization of English expressions. However, although high-powered newsroom production places ever-increasing pressures on journalists-cum-translators (or vice-versa), the introductions of neologisms into news media language has more to do with the lack of a systematic approach to translation, as will be illustrated in this research, and that such neologies are not just confined to terms and expressions of limited or confined impact. They extend to thought and logical patterns as well as argumentation patterns and paradigms, which largely contribute to the reframing of the original message. This influence derives from translation being a process of
deconstruction and reconstruction of the original text. In literalization, an extreme form of literal translation where expressions are reduced to lexical meanings, the rhetorical devices of the target languages are usually suspended, giving way to source language patterns to dominate the rendition.

As far as Aljazeera is concerned, the claim that it has “set a new standard of excellence [emphasis added] in translation and is used as a benchmark by professional translators all over the world” (Miles, 2005: 335) is empirically unsupported. A close examination of the translation standards used at Aljazeera reveals serious flaws with these standards, which are far from being excellent. In fact, the literalization style that has been adopted by Aljazeera is gravely contributing to mistranslations, misinterpretations and misrepresentations. A prelude study to the present research has examined the standards of telecast simultaneous interpreting at Aljazeera, and has revealed serious problems with the mode of delivery and standards of rendition employed at Aljazeera (Darwish, 2006: 75).

**Translation mediation and downstream reporting**

The role of translation in news media is no less important than language itself. As the following figure illustrates, in a monolingual news media environment, the news flows from the primary sources through the reporter/news editor and is read out (animated) by the news presenter to an audience.
In contrast, in the translation-mediated model of news reporting, the news flows from the primary sources in its native form through primary reporting in mediated form to the news editor and text animator to an audience.

In the monolingual model, translation plays a secondary role (however essential in the news gathering process), whereas translation plays a
central role in the downstream reporting model. Downstream reporting is defined here as news reports originating in English mainly by news providers and translated into other languages locally by news monitors, translators and editors, or translated by translators working at or for these news providers.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the role of the translators and/or fixers within this monolingual model was examined (while the present research was still in progress) by Palmer and Fontan (2007). Examining the problems faced by western journalists working in Iraq, Palmer and Fontan focused on the first stage of information relays depicted in the model that intervene between the events and the journalists who report them and the role of the translators/fixers in facilitating information gathering from local sources. They confirm the argument maintained throughout this thesis that the overwhelming majority of the journalists working on location spoke no or very little Arabic and that all of the non-Arabic journalists had used interpreters. They report that mistranslations and/or omissions of significant material, inability to understand the local culture and the fixer forming the journalist’s view of the situation.

In the downstream model, the information relays become more complex as translation-mediation occurs more frequently in the information flow between the event and audience.
The making of Arab news

With the exception of two books, no publications examining Arab news exist. Most publications at hand have addressed various aspects of Arab media but they have not tackled the role of language or translation in the making of Arab(ic) news. In *The Making of Arab News*, by Noha Mellor. Written by an Arab living in the West, this scholarly book brings a fresh insight into the intricate nature of the Arab media. In the preface, Mellor sets out to explain her motivation for writing the book: “AS A NATIVE ARAB LIVING [emphasis in original] in Europe and working in the field of media—both as a scholar and a journalist—I have had the privilege of being able to access information and publications in both English and Arabic.23 I have deliberately chosen to share this privilege with my
readers by consistently presenting the views of Arab scholars and professionals side by side with the views of their western, and particularly American, counterparts” (xi). Certainly, the book goes beyond sheer juxtaposition of these views to a deeper and more incisive analysis of Arab(ic) news and how it is viewed in the west, dispelling some of the long-held misconceptions in western media and political circles about Arab journalism, and unfortunately (as discussed later) perpetuating a few fallacies about the language and culture. Mellor states again, “[s]crutinizing media coverage in both spheres, although a worthy exercise per se, shows only reactions on the surface but does not go deeper than that” (2). Since this book is the only book that actually address Arab news making, it is worth examining very closely in this section.

The book opens with an introduction about the emergence of Aljazeera as an alternative source of news stories in the Arab world, “…challenging American media hegemony” (1), and about global convergence not only in the importation of western music and entertainment genres, “but also in the development of news genre in the Arab media and the development of television journalism, which is said to have been non-existent in the Arab world television” (2). The book, which consists of an introduction and two parts, explores in Chapter 1, *The Arab Region: Similarities and Differences*, the similarities and differences that exist in the Arab world, shedding light on some important aspects of language, identity and political and civil rights, literacy and policy. Falling back on statistics and information primarily from UNESCO, Mellor paints a grim, realistic picture of the state of affairs not only of journalism but also of the general social and political climate in the Arab region. Mellor concludes this chapter by saying that “despite similarities among Arab states, their efforts to launch mutual cooperation projects, particularly in the media field, have not been successful” (23).
Chapter 2, *History of Arab News*, gives a thorough and informative account of the beginning, development, function and current status of Arab news. This chapter looks at the news as a unifying tool and form of control. It then examines the role of Arab news agencies and their main function “to assist the government in disseminating its information and controlling the incoming news from foreign sources” (38), concluding that “Arab news agencies fail to provide a rich source of Arab news to Arab media and thereby reduce their dependence on foreign (western) news sources” (45), which perhaps to some degree explains why Arab news relies primarily, and in most situations solely, on foreign news sources. “The amount of foreign news in the Arab media is in fact higher than that in the American media” (43).

Chapter 3, *Categorization of the Arab Press: Rugh’s Typology Revisited*, reexamines William Rugh’s (2004) typology of Arab news and presents a critique by scholars of this typology, “which stems from western theories of the press”. Mellor then explores agenda-setting issues in the Arab press, confirming that “the indulgence in foreign policy issues is not only deep rooted in the history of news reporting in the Arab region but also in officials’ attitudes towards news media” (60). This chapter also looks at Arab newspapers published outside the Arab region in the past three decades, and examines the reasons for this drive, arriving at the conclusion that the “reasons that drove these newspapers abroad—lack of technology, access to information, and censorship—seem to have diminished, as several pan-Arab newspapers are now returning to the Arab world” (63).

In *Chapter 4, News Values*, Mellor examines the values by which the news in the Arab press is selected vis-à-vis western news values. Mellor confirms the dominant view that “the criteria journalists use for selecting the news vary from one culture to another, reflecting various ideological, political, and cultural realities” (75). Regarding news in terms of politics,
social responsibility, objectivity, prominence, and newness, Mellor examines news values in the Arab region and the west, particularly in the United States, through these variables, concluding that American journalists tend to see their mission as exposing the truth, whereas this role is rare in Arab news media.

In part two, Chapter 5, *The News Genre* examines the news genre in the Arab media compared to western media. Mellor contends that the development of the news genre in the Arab press was a long, hard process. This short chapter (103-107) very briefly touches on the different types of news genre and sub-genres. In this chapter, the comparison stops there and Arabic news is treated as an isolated phenomenon. Citing Ayalon (1995) and Haeri (2003), Mellor claims that the “new medium demanded new genres of writing: clear and understood by a wider audience. However, the journalistic genres sprang from classical Arabic, which had been used primarily in literary genres addressing the small community of intellectuals…” (105). This flawed argument, which indirectly assumes that the so-called “classical Arabic” lacked clarity and precision, begs the following questions. What was the role of schools in teaching the so-called “classical Arabic” (as a separate thing; a totally different language that has no connection or bears no resemblance to the “spoken” form) and could all pupils and students who were taught this “variety” of the language understand it in the same way as present-day students learn and understand a totally alien language such as English, for example, so much so that it had no direct impact on their lives or means of communication? A crucial distinction that most people, scholars and laypersons alike, fail to make in their analysis of this phenomenon is that between “al-fus_ha” (الفصحي) and “al-faseeha” (الفسيحة) varieties of standard Arabic; the former being “the most eloquent”, pure and perfect (pristine) version of Arabic, which no longer exists, and the latter “an eloquent” version of Arabic, recognizing the elements of “lahn” (لحن) (solecism) or “foreignness” that have crept into the Arabic language since
the Arabs’ first contact with other nations, which has been erroneously labelled “classical Arabic” by Orientalists—a label faithfully adopted by Arabs (see Darwish, 2005).

Chapter 6, MSA: The Language of News, continues to explore language issues related to the news. Setting the scene for the discussion that follows here and in chapter 7, the chapter opens with a recount of a snippet from the autobiography of Egyptian feminist Leila Ahmed recalling the time she was working in Abu Dhabi, her first (and probably last) encounter with other Arabs from other nationalities and how it suddenly dawned on her that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was not her mother tongue and that her mother tongue was Egyptian Arabic. “She finally realized why English and Egyptian Arabic felt closer to her than MSA: they were living languages”. This non sequitur (were the other Arabs speaking MSA?) represents the psychological trap that most so-called educated Arabs find themselves in when it comes to standard Arabic. Their sense of alienation, westernism and the so-called gentleman’s complex (cultural cringe) takes them as far as considering English closer to them than Arabic. Again, this misconception stems from the erroneous definition of “living language”. A living language is a language that is in active function or use, and it would be naive to claim that MSA is not a living language by this definition. For these people, a living language is largely a spoken language, a dialect.

Ironically, the late Saudi King Faysal Ibn Abd al-Aziz is reported to have said to the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nassir at an Arab summit sometime in the early seventies that “Egyptian Arabic” was the closest to standard Arabic in terms of terminology, phraseology and structure. Yet whenever and wherever educated Arabs meet, they complain endlessly and peevishly about their different dialects all in their own local dialects, without the slightest glitch in communication.

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change
The chapter presents a brief account of the development of MSA as a deliberate move on the part of the rulers to standardize the language during the peak of the Islamic Empire. This account relies on Versteegh’s (1997) analysis of such alleged “standardization”. This chapter would have benefited from studies by prominent Arabic language scholars such as Subhi as-Salih, instead of relying on Orientalists and outsiders to account for the various phenomena of the Arabic language that very few people are able to appreciate and for which others do not hesitate to suggest remedies based on their understanding of their own languages.

Jaroslav Stetkevych, for example, cited in the present volume and in Darwish (2005), has suggested that “the future of the Arabic language will thus lie not in artificial compromises between the two native linguistic sources of classicism and colloquialism, which work against each other [emphasis added], but rather in a straight line of development out of a classical morphology towards a new, largely non-Semitic syntax which will be dictated by the habits of thought rather than the habit of live speech. Only then in possession of a language by which to think [emphasis added], will the Arabs be able to overcome the problem of conflicting colloquialism and classicism” (109). Such audacious linguistic imperialism and condescension is probably not seen anywhere else except in the studies of Arabic by foreigners who can only understand the language through their own. Sadly, such ideas will always find their misguided and starry-eyed enchanted followers in the Arab world.

Colloquialism has existed alongside “classical” Arabic since the early days of the Arabs, and has never prevented them from “thinking” and from achieving intellectual and scientific greatness to which modern civilization owes a great deal of debt. Certainly, successive imperialist and colonialist powers in the last centuries played a serious role in stunting the natural literacy process of societies of the colonized countries. By imposing their own languages on the local population (for
example, the French in Algeria) and/or encouraging the use of the vernacular as a means of upward mobility in society (for example, the British in Egypt), these colonial powers contributed significantly to relegating standard Arabic to a lower status in education and professional life. Today however, thanks to Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite television networks—despite the numerous criticisms one might level at them—the perceived gulf between standard Arabic and the local dialects is diminishing at an unprecedented accelerated rate. It is expected that within the next twenty-five to thirty years, major dialectical differences will have merged into standard Arabic or an “educated” streamlined version already in use in many quarters of inter-Arab interaction.

Chapter 7, Values in Language, provides specific examples of Arabic news with back translations. Back translation follows an arbitrary approach that weakens the point these examples try to illustrate. Arabic expressions that have crept from English through translation in the first place are lost in back translation. For example, the trite Arabic expression (إلى ذلك) (ila tHalika) (literally, “to that”), which is used and overused ad nauseam in Arabic news today, is translated into “About this” (page 131), when in fact it is a direct poor translation of the linking device “to this end”.

More to the point, this chapter completely ignores translation as a critical and defining factor in the development of these styles (see Darwish, 2005) and the fact that most Arabic news is translated from various foreign news agencies. In chapter 2, the author discusses the role of foreign news agencies from a sociopolitical viewpoint and admits that Arab news media depend on foreign news sources. Yet she fails to make the connection between the increased reliance on these foreign sources and their impact on the style of news language through poor translations. A discussion of active vs. passive voice, attribution, hierarchy of textual
representation, tense and deictic, cannot be complete without exploring the influence of translation on these aspects of Arabic news.

Most of those who translate the news from foreign sources are journalists who are by all accounts untrained, ill-equipped and unqualified as translators. Low translation standards, and literalization—a misguided notion of literal translation as a means of innovation, modernization and creation of new writing styles in journalism—are adversely contributing to copycat representations. It contradicts the claim that “the discovery that there was a mysterious link missing for a successful thought transfusion from the Western into the Arabic culture became a source of frustration [emphasis added], particularly for the literary generation active in the first quarter of the present century, as it was fully committed to innovation. At the same time, it was this generation which put modern Arabic on its present course, which unknowingly defined modern Arabic, and which produced the first firmly rooted and consequential cultural communication with modernity. What enabled all this to happen was the gradual appearance of affinities between Arabic and the modern European family of languages” (Stetkevych, 1970),24 certainly through literalization and mimicry. The final chapter sums up the present volume, arriving at the conclusion that the Arab news media have pushed the limits of freedom and enforced a healthy spirit among media outlets, fostering new journalistic practices. One striking oddity about this book is that while the author lives in Europe, her analysis of western media focuses solely on American media. British and other European media of equal importance are completely ignored, and the book, it seems, is catering for the academic taste of American scholarship.

The Role of Translation in the Media

This section of the literature review addresses itself to translation and the role of translation in the media in general and Arabic media in particular. Strikingly, there is hardly any significant literature on the role of
translating in the news despite the central role translation plays in the process of news reporting.

Translating memes and mismemes

It makes sense at this point in our discussion of the role of translation in news reporting at television in general to examine the influential concepts, theories and models of translation at large. This will help elucidate some of the problems encountered in translation of news reports. The realization among translation writers in the past 30 years that translation is a complex system has been gaining momentum with the globalizing effect of mass communication technologies and the convergence of cultures in one global media culture. Characteristically, translation theories have tagged along the various intellectual changes elsewhere and translation theories have reflected the dominant trends of thought of the day. Depending on the prevalent trend of thought at every juncture of development of human thinking, be it hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism, and so on, a translation model or theory is developed within the limits of these frames of thought.

These theories and corollary models have spanned the translation phenomenon on two axes: a vertical axis that examines the paradigmatic relationship of translation to text at different levels of structure and a horizontal axis that examines syntagmatic relationship of translation to the various applications of text. This relationship has governed translation strategies and approaches.25

According to Schulte and Biguenet (1992), all acts of communication are indeed acts of translation, now that “it has become clear that translational thinking is fundamental to all acts of human communication...” (6). In their view, thinking is basically a process of translating. As Octavio Paz (1971) observes, “when we learn to speak, we are learning to translate; the child who asks his mother the meaning of a word is really asking her
to translate the unfamiliar term into the simple words he already knows. In this sense, translation within the same language is not essentially different from translation between two tongues” (152). Paz argues that the very medium that makes translation possible—that is language, is essentially a translation.

Here, a clear distinction must be made between thinking and the verbal expression of thought because thinking is not translating — verbalizing thinking is. However, this notion becomes a metaphor that is applied to other areas of interpretation. Iser (2000) for example, observes that we usually associate translation with converting one language into another, be it foreign, technical, vocational, or otherwise.

“Nowadays however, not only languages have to be translated. In a rapidly shrinking world, many different cultures have come in close contact with one another, calling for mutual understanding in terms not only of one’s own culture but also of those encountered. The more alien the latter, the more inevitable is some form of translation, as the specific nature of culture one is exposed to can be grasped only when projected onto what is familiar. In tackling such issues, interpretation can only become an operative tool if conceived as an act of translation. In Harold bloom’s words: ‘interpretation’ once meant ‘translation’ and essentially still does” (5).

However, Umberto Eco (2003) warns against using translation to mean interpreting in this sense. He argues that something can act as the interpretant (following Pierce’s model) of a given expression without being a translation of it—“at least in the proper sense of the word” (127). Agreeing with Gadamer (1960), he argues that it cannot be refuted that every translation is always an interpretation. However, Eco refutes the proposition that every interpretation is a translation. For Eco, paraphrasing and rewording within the same language is not translation.

With this in mind, let us proceed to the concept of translation-mediated interpretation, that is interpretation of something in one language through the translation of discourse describing or defining that something into another language. Assuming that access to the full significance of that
something can be achieved through a target-language bounded mind or through translation proper of the discourse describing the thing, some kind of interpretation takes place. In importing foreign styles and practices of broadcasting to package news and programs, interpretation of these artefacts occurs. At the same time, translating discourse and narrative accompanying these artefacts and constituting the content of packaged programs entails a degree of interpretation. The dilemma of nativization of such borrowed artefacts (including metaphors) in Arabic is a real one since in the absence of intersubjectivity between the source and the target cultures is bound to produce mistranslations that in turn produce pseudo cultural memes (or mismemes). While these pseudo memes are circulated through the media they remain alien to the linguistic and cultural perspective of the Arabic language and reframe the original message in a particular way that was not intended in the source. Without reconstructing source intersubjectivity within the linguistic and cultural interpretive framework of the target language, cultural memes become cultural mismemes. Consequently, the present research examines both aspects of packaged news, which both involve social semiotics.

The concept of memes was first introduced by Dawkins (1976). A meme, according to The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is an idea, behaviour, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture. As such, memes are cultural replicators, or units of imitation, that are supposed to transmit such ideas within a culture. They can also work as cross-cultural transmitters to other cultures through cross-cultural communication, knowledge transfer or translation mediation. When such replicators fail to transmit these ideas correctly because of mistranslation or a specific translation strategy, they produce mismemes that replicate a defective meme. Take for example the English expression the moment of truth. This expression was first introduced by American novelist Ernest Hemingway in his story Death in the Afternoon (1932), as a translation of the Spanish expression el momento de la verdad, signifying the point in a
bullfight when the matador makes the kill, and later developing into the idiomatic meaning “a critical or decisive time on which much depends; a crucial moment”. The moment of truth is more critical to the matador than it is lethal and final for the bull itself. This is derived from the way the matador raises both arms and the sword above his head a moment before he thrusts the sword into the bull’s neck to finish off the bull.

![Figure 6-The Moment of Truth (source: Darwish, 2005)](image)

A translation of this expression has found its way into the Arabic media and has been widely used by news editors and reporters. Literally translated into (لحظة الحقيقة), this expression, which means very little in Arabic, has been used incorrectly. Consider the following example (source: Darwish, 2005: 334).
But (the moment of the truth) has never been for one day between George Bush and Saddam Hussein only. Such a moment has also occurred thousands of times during the time of relationship between the Iraqi people and their Arab brethrens from the Maghreb to the Levant.

Clearly, using this expression in this loose manner in Arabic is unusual. While a back translation may not quite highlight problem, the Arabic version does not convey the meaning of the English original of decisiveness, criticality or cruciality, and it is evident that the translation is a cultural mismeme.

Conclusion

In a recent telephone conversation with my younger sister, a journalist who lives in the United Arab Emirates, regarding my recent book *The Book of Wonders of Arabic Blunder in Journalism, Politics and Media*, and its scathing critique of media practices in the Arab world, she made the poignant comment that it was rather pitiful that most constructive and daring criticisms of media practices regarding translation and language standards were made from outside the Arab world and that people living in the region were unable to express these views more freely from within the Arab countries. To a very large extent, this observation is true. Despite the noise, clamour and remonstrance that have accompanied Aljazeera, Aljazeera was not discovered initially by researchers, analysts and commentators living in the Arab world. Rather it was discovered by Arabs living overseas, as the preceding literature review has revealed. Soon after, everyone seems to have jumped on the bandwagon and now hardly any centre or university anywhere, including the Arab world has
not engaged a student or two in research about Al Jazeera and Arab media looking at Al Jazeera from various angles and different perspectives. In *The Social Construction of Al Jazeera*, Walker (2006) has argued that Al Jazeera has been “described as a challenger of the Arab status quo, a dangerous cultural phenomenon, a beacon of democracy, anti-Semitic, a harm to Arab unity, a challenge to hegemony in the Middle East, a diplomatic boon for Qatar (its host country and chief financial sponsor), a purveyor of Al Qaida propaganda, and an international broadcaster competing successfully against the BBC and CNN”. These descriptors, Walker contends, comprise the *Idea of Al Jazeera*.

**Gaps in the literature**

This chapter has reviewed landmark publications that have tackled the idea of Al Jazeera from the vantage point of external observers. These observers have traced Al Jazeera’s development and have recorded the circumstances that have made it possible for Al Jazeera to take centre stage in media and politics and turn into a household name worldwide. One recurrent theme that seems to resonate through the literature on Al Jazeera and Arab media in general is social and political change within the framework of democracy and liberalization. Public sphere, increased latitude of freedom of speech and expression, objectivity and bias, mobilization effect, organizational culture, women’s representation, and gender and identity are issues that have been addressed in the current literature on Al Jazeera and Arab media in general. These studies have relied on qualitative and quantitative research methods to make sense of the sudden impact of the Al Jazeera phenomenon.

Interviews, formal and informal, surveys, field studies and content analyses have been utilized in the analysis and development of the research findings. These studies have not adopted a clear theoretical framework, and what can be discerned from the literature review are interpretive or historical models informed by political postulates grounded
in the eventuality of democracy, thus allowing a linear mode of interpretation of political, social and cultural manifestations of media phenomena. Characteristically, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have yielded similar results and more or less arrived at similar conclusions. What transpires however is while there is a bipolarity of opinions about Aljazeera, there is also a common thread across views and arguments for and against Aljazeera. Aljazeera has changed the media landscape in the Arab world. Rinnawi (2006) for example, attributes the emergence of Aljazeera in the Anglo-European world to larger changes in the media environment in the Arab world, which have translated into transnational satellite broadcasting.

Despite the misgivings of Arab and western politicians and governments about the role Aljazeera is playing, as Aljazeera develops and reaches maturity as a media organization, a more positive view seems to reinforce itself, not only in the literature reviewed in this chapter but also outside the confines of academic and institutional walls. Nonetheless, the social and cultural impact Aljazeera has been causing through translation-driven language changes and semiotic packaging of programs, more specifically the news, cannot be underestimated. Yet so far it has been almost totally ignored in the literature at hand. Those who have addressed this problem in this review, such as Mellor (2005), have regarded the changes in the journalistic style as a favourable outcome of the contact between Arabic and other languages, especially English. As this research has established, translation plays a critical role in the process of change that is taking place in the Arab media and Arab communities that are being affected by Aljazeera. An interesting observation to made here is that minority or ethic media services, such as the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), have also been influenced by the translation-defined stylistics employed by Aljazeera and Arab satellite television. What is baffling about the whole process of translation-mediated news at Aljazeera and other Arabic television channels is that expressions, concepts and
metaphors that defy the logic of language are being used by Arab journalists throughout the full spectrum of Arab media and are being accepted by viewers and other language and news consumers. To conclude this section with an example of such anomalies, the English word “reactions”, in the plural, is translated into something like “responses to the actions” (ردود الأفعال) instead of “responses to the action” (ردود الفعل), when the intended meaning is several actions in response to one event. This anomaly clearly demonstrates how translation mediation is introducing new expressions that are incorrect translations that reframe the original message. In this example, it gives the idea that there are several events and several responses to these events. This is short of accurate reporting to say the least.

The literature at hand on translation, news and media, and Aljazeera in particular, does not address the role of translation in reframing the original message. This chapter has revealed that there is clearly a serious gap in the literature and body of knowledge with respect to the impact of translation on news making.

Notes


2 In the Acknowledgements section of his book Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World, Hugh Miles (2005) writes: “I have never received any payment from Al-Jazeera in connection with this book.” Steve Tatham (2006) also declared in the Acknowledgments section of his book Losing Arab Hearts and minds, The Coalition, Aljazeera and Muslim Public Opinion: “The author received no financial remuneration from any of the media organisations discussed in the book.” In the preface to their book, El-Nawawy and Iskandar (2002) state: “More important, in a world where agendas are determined by channels of interest, readers should understand that the authors of this book remain independent, autonomous of any governmental or personal influence; they are not connected with any vested media interest”.

3 A simple quick internet search of “experts + middle east” reveals this trend.

Chapter 2
Mediating Cultural Change

5 This is simply not true. The Egyptian dialect, for example, has been widely understood by the Arabs and has been incorporated into many facets of other Arabic dialects.


8 By using these terms in this sense, I make a distinction between the negative and positive forms of “conflict”.


10 Aljazeera claims that 70 million viewers watch it.

11 See note 1.


22 Literal translation is introducing change that violates the basic language rules and norms. For example, to say in English "sit on the table" instead of "sit at the table" is a violation of the English language norm. Similar violations are taking place in Arabic through the media and through translation mediation that is based on the literal tradition. This phenomenon is not restricted to immediate translations of foreign language reports. The wholesale literal borrowings are breaking up the constraints of collocations, and word-level borrowings are being applied out of place to other linguistic situations where these borrowings do not collocate. For example, when an Arabic news reporter tells us that the island inhabitants enjoy thyroid cancer, one has to stop and think about the sources of influence of such expression (do the inhabitants really enjoy cancer?). The influence of English on Arabic should not be underestimated. The arguments about the influence of such literal translation on the language
should not be understood as a call for the maintenance of some sort of linguistic purity. They rather
alert to the impact of absolute literal translation of idiomatic expressions that lose their intended
meanings and at the same time violate basic linguistic rules of Arabic.

23 People living in many parts of the Arab world have the same if not better access to similar sources,
thanks to the Internet and global satellite television.


Derrida.


28 The word “truth” in Arabic requires the definitive article “the”.

December 2007.
Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework and Research Model

*Every discourse, even a poetic or oracular sentence, carries with it a system of rules for producing analogous things and thus an outline of methodology.*


In this chapter:

- Aims
- Overview
- A Multimodal Conceptual Framework
- Methods
- Design of the Study
- Data Collection
- Sampling Procedure
- Data Analysis
- Sources and Logistics
- Research Model
- How the Model Works
- Model Categories
- Conclusion
Aims

The aim of this chapter is to outline the conceptual framework and methodology employed in addressing the research questions and to describe the theoretical framework in which the research is grounded.

This chapter also describes the methods used for data collection, sampling and analysis, including the research model employed in the analysis of the data.
Overview

The preceding literature review has revealed a serious lack of attention to the role and impact of translation in news making, in terms of news content and news production, not only in Arabic television but also in the media at large. There is hardly any landmark publication or known research in this area in both translation and mass communication studies. Only a handful of publications dealing with news translation directly or indirectly exists. These include Clausen (2003), Kuo and Nakamura (2005), Millor (2005), Darwish (2005, 2006, 2007), Baker (2006), and Palmer and Fontan (2007). Only recently has interest been taken in this area, culminating in a conference held in England in June 2006.¹

Recent examples of erroneous or contentious translations of news reports and political statements have highlighted a shortage of serious studies on the causal relationship between translation and news reporting and a lack of appreciation of the different approaches to translation. Most research on translation has examined the broader problem of translation, while the literature on translation heuristics has largely concerned itself with problems of style, genre and text typology across language and knowledge domains. A translation-focused study of the news remains lacking.

Furthermore, the media’s emphasis on the precepts of objectivity, neutrality, fairness, truthfulness and accuracy, enshrined in the codes of ethics of journalists, suggesting rationality and stability of the discourse, is sharply contrasted by the absence of any attention to translation in these codes of ethics as a major critical factor in ensuring these precepts are upheld. This contrast is further compounded by the paradox that exists between the traditional notion of meaning as a fixed production that has dominated the approach to translation for decades and the multimodal notion of meaning-making “in any and every sign, at every level, and in any mode”² that has been increasingly dominating current theories of
meaning. Post-modernist theories of meaning that have influenced translation theories and models have created a dichotomy of referential versus contextual production and reproduction of meaning:

“In traditional theories of meaning, signifiers come to rest in the signified of a conscious mind. For poststructuralists, by contrast, the signified is only a moment in a never-ending process of signification where meaning is produced not in a stable, referential relation between subject and object, but only within the infinite, intertextual play of signifiers”3.

When the signifier and signified are associated they become a sign that has signification, but as poststructuralists have argued, the relationship between the signifier and signified is not permanently fixed. As Holmes (2005) explains, the arbitrariness of this relationship means that language is a system without positive terms. “To repeat a signifier it is not necessarily true that a signified associated with it in a former signification will also be repeated” (Holmes, 2005:125). In his breakthrough work on semiotics, Saussure proposed that it is the relationship between systems of signifiers rather than between signifier and signified within any one system that “determines the kinds of thought concepts that are associated with any one signifier” (Holmes, 2005:125). However, Saussure’s notion of stable systems of signifiers was strongly criticized by Derrida who argued that there was no such thing as a stable sign system. “What is problematic in Saussure is that he regarded the relation between a signifier and a signified to be a cozy one-to-one correspondence, as in a parallelism, as if all signs were constituted by symmetrical values (that could be measurable) of the signifier and signified” (Holmes, 125). However, this notion of fixed signification has been a central problem in translation studies.

The literature review has also established grounds for selecting framing theory within an interpretive, multimodal, social-semiotics theoretical framework for this study. Social semiotics provides the mechanisms for the analysis and interpretation of the news content and the visual communication that accompanies the discourse of television.
The present chapter describes the conceptual framework adopted in the analysis of some of the salient features of Arabic satellite television, Aljazeera in particular, in addressing the question of translation in news making. The primary aim of this study has been to examine the role of translation in the making of Arabic news and in representations of social and cultural values through translation mediation.

**A Multimodal Conceptual Framework**

How to reconcile the paradox created by the two contrasting views on meaning described in the preceding paragraphs is a challenging task. An attempt to extend multimodality to a social semiotic analysis of translation in television might help to reduce the paradox to an operational model that can be used for both production and evaluation of translation mediation in television with universal applicability.

The conceptual framework for this research is thus based first on the assumptions that translation is a constraint-driven process. It is a process that is constrained by several variables such as space, time, quality of information, problem-solving aptitude or ideologies. These constraints always circumvent the realization of an optimal approximation.

The second assumption is that translation is only an approximation of the original and not an exact replica of the original. Central to the debate on translation is the notion of equivalence and whether complete translation is achievable across the different levels of expression. Baker (1992) argues that although equivalence is achievable to some extent, it is usually influenced by various linguistic and cultural factors; therefore it is always relative. One can argue that the relativity of equivalence is governed by the conditions of multimodality of the communication process within which translation operates. In translating live broadcasts, such relativity is clearly illustrated in the problem of translating dialogues, especially when two linguistically and culturally divergent languages, such as English and
Arabic, are involved. The dilemma here is real. If equivalence is achievable on the linguistic level, it might not be so, on the cultural level. Even if linguistic and cultural equivalences are found, the communicative function of such equivalence is doubtful — the cognitive, linguistic and pragmatic distance between the dyads within the cross-lingual communication situation might not be achievable at all.

Ultimately, translation is a multimodal communication process that takes place in a temporal-spatial environment. It operates at several levels simultaneously: linguistic, cognitive, socio-cultural, psychological, geo-historical (time and space), and aesthetic. These levels are bound to be in conflict with one another across languages. A certain expression in one language might find its equivalence only on one or two levels, but not at all levels at once. For example, when Robert Burns’ “My love is like a red, red rose.” is translated into another language, all six levels are activated in terms of the intrapersonal and interpersonal perspectives of communication and linguistic, social and cultural reality— the translator’s ability to understand and communicate the socio-cultural reality embedded in the text is always governed by his or her distance from the text.

According to Watson (1993), every text has a certain perspective on reality. Reality is external to the text, but the reader seeks it as presented in the text through its semantic context. Communicating such perspectives on reality through the medium of translation involves a process of reconstructing and imaging reality in the target language. The imaged reality, no matter how close it is to the original, is bound to be an approximation only. How exact the image depends only on the degree of matchability between source and target textual realities and the distance between them, and on the translator’s ability to understand, interpret and match. This problem, which is inherent in the relative nature of the relationship between the text and the mental picture it creates in the mind.
of its reader (for example, the word *table* may evoke different images of table in different readers or in the same reader in different contexts), becomes more complex in translation, as the text is reconstructed outside its native environment.

The study of television as an audiovisual phenomenon rests on observation, which requires not only seeing but looking. As Sturken and Cartwright (2001) remind us, “to see is a process of observing and recognizing the world around us. To look is to actively make meaning of the world. Seeing is something that we do arbitrarily as we go about our daily lives. Looking is an activity that involves a greater sense of purpose and direction” (10). In order “to make an observation one must have an idea of what could be seen, and a framework of beliefs, both confirming and disconfirming, may be interwoven”.\(^4\) Consequently, observing the social semiotics of television must be done within a structured framework that enables the observer to ask adequate questions about the observed phenomenon. As Ahl and Allen (1996) contend, observation is a structured experience that is always interpreted by cognitive models, which operate at the boundary between the internal and external worlds. At no point does the observer access the external world directly.

The multimodal theoretical framework of this multi-level research draws primarily on four theoretical sources, which provide the basic concepts for describing the social semiotics of translation mediation in Arabic satellite television at different levels of analysis. These are: (1) remediation, (2) contrastive translation analysis, (3) visual communication analysis, and (4) critical discourse analysis, which all operate within framing theory.

**Multimodality and multimodal analysis**

Television as an audiovisual, static-kinetic communication medium is multimodal. It combines three major modes that subsume submodes. These modes are visual, audio and kinetic. All of these modes mostly simultaneously combine to produce a meaning in totality. As Kress and
Van Leeuwen (2001:2) explain, in this kind of multimodality common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes. Subsequently, these different modes cannot be treated as separate, strictly bounded and framed specialist tasks. Every television production creates its own semiosis through a visual, auditory and kinetic synthesis. Figure 7 illustrates how these modes combine to produce meaning.

The conceptual framework is supported by a transactional analysis model. The model is used to establish the transactional nature of television and the transactional roles television presenters assume in the delivery of programs. Briefly, Transactional Analysis (TA), which was advanced by Berne (1964) posits that at any given moment in social intercourse individuals “will exhibit a Paternal, Adult or Child ego state and that individuals can shift with varying degrees of readiness from one ego state to another” (Berne, 1964: 24). A transaction, which is the unit of social intercourse, may take any of the following combinations in a social interaction:

Figure 7— The Multimodal nature of television
aggregation: Parent-Parent (critical gossip), Adult-Adult (problem solving), Child-Child or Parent-Child (playing together). Transactional analysis is concerned with diagnosing or identifying the ego states of the individuals engaged in the transaction. When the response is appropriate and expected and follows the natural order of healthy human relationships, the transaction is said to be complementary. When it is not, a crossed transaction occurs, resulting communication breakdown and social difficulties. In as far as the present research is concerned, an analysis of the social semiotics of Arabic television is facilitated by gaining insights into which ego states Al Jazeera, its media workers and viewers assume in the transactions that take place either within Al Jazeera programs as displayed on screen, or between the media workers and the viewers in terms of positioning and interactivity. More specifically, as I discuss in Chapter 4, Translating the News, transactional analysis is useful in the analysis of situationality and affinities of the news makers, including the translators; how they see themselves and where they belong vis-à-vis the original text and the translation. This in part may account for the strategies they employ to reframe the original message and may explain why they adhere to literal rather than functional translation. Broadly speaking, a Parent-Child relationship between the source text originator (assumed and not present) and the translator may result in such a translation strategy as the translators may hold sacred the original message and may in a way determine their definition of fidelity of meaning.

**Methods**

Stressing the point that research methods should flow logically from the questions one asks and calling for making use of more multidimensional methods, Deacon (2000) contends that “our research traditions, by and large, privilege either numbers or words and focus on the use of numerical measurement instruments or interviews for data collection. More active
and tangible methods for data collection (e.g., videos, photography, artwork) are rare in both quantitative and qualitative research literatures.” (96-97). Since the purpose of this research is to examine the causative relationship between translation mediation and news content and production in reframing the original message, and in as far as such framing is taking place in a multimodal environment, to examine the social semiotics of news presentation in Arabic satellite television, through an examination of data from Aljazeera, the central question that remains unanswered is restated as:

Translation-mediated news causes the news to be reframed.

To establish this assertion at the linguistic, social, cultural and ideopolitical levels within the context of the study, the logical research method needs to address three areas of this assertion: translation, mediation and framing. To understand what these interrelated phenomena are, the ontology informing this research is an interpretive research utilizing (1) framing theory, (2) critical discourse analysis that emphasizes the role of vocabulary choices in process categorization (Fairclough, 1995), and (3) social semiotics as defined by Thibault (1991) with particular attention to the notion of contextualization. As Dirkx and Barnes (2004) confirm, virtually all forms of inquiry and research aim at some form of interpreting an aspect of the world.

“We seek to explain, understand, or some way, make sense of an aspect of that world that has, in one way or another, become problematic. Our motivations for engaging in this process of interpretation vary widely, and the process itself is shaped by a host of presuppositions and assumptions that we bring to the inquiry, including our worldviews, paradigms, perspectives, theories, and beliefs” (1).

In seeking to understand the phenomenon of translation-mediated news production, where at least two language and cultural systems are usually interactively engaged in production and reproduction of meaning, and construction and reconstruction of realities, a contrastive critical discourse and content analysis approach was employed. That was placed within a

Chapter 3
Conceptual Framework and Research Model
structured three-tier model of translation that seeks to account for variances and discrepancies and error detection and analysis across translations. This model, which informs the epistemology of the research, sought to explain the phenomenon of translated-mediating reframing in relation to news making and the social signification of reframed news discourse.

**Philosophical assumptions**

Different theoretical models have different philosophical assumptions. Øvretveit (1998:58-59) argues that if we can recognize the different philosophical assumptions underlying a research study, we can relate the theoretical models to the context of the study through causality or other types of influences, since these philosophical assumptions define how the objects of study are conceptualized. Identifying these philosophical assumptions enables us to set clear boundaries around the area of research and define the objects of enquiry within these boundaries.

Consequently, as alluded to earlier in this chapter, the multimodal framework utilized in this research was grounded in four interrelated theoretical models: critical discourse analysis, functional pragmatic translation model, visual communication analysis within framing theory and visual social semiotics. Framing theory enabled the critical discourse analysis of news production in its native form and the constraint-driven, three-tier translation model should enable a structured and rational analysis of translated news, informed by a rhetorical contrastive approach.
Framing theory offers a sound framework for the analysis of translation-mediated news. As Schudson (2003) and numerous other scholars confirm, framing is a central concept in the study of news. “It moves the analysis of news away from the idea of intentional bias. That is, to acknowledge that news stories frame reality is also to acknowledge that it would be humanly impossible to avoid framing” (35). This is an important aspect of the concept of framing in the study of translation-mediated news production since the reframing occurs as a product of the translation process, which is beset by a myriad of constraints that generally inhibit the realization of the original message in the target language. Consequently, the analysis of frames in this manner will enable the research to explore the factors contributing to or influencing certain translation outcomes, or rather translation frames.

Following on from the preceding discussion, it becomes clear that framing is a multimodal process. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001:3) argue, “there can be framing, not only between the elements of a visual composition, but also between the bits of writing in a newspaper or magazine layout...”. One could go one step further and argue that in television, framing also occurs between modes; the visual, auditory and
 kinetic. Critical linguistic analysis emphasizes the role of vocabulary choices in the process of categorization (Fairclough, 1995) utilizing contrastive analysis. Social semiotics is concerned with the study of meaning-making in social contexts.

“The basic premise is that meanings are made, and the task of social semiotics is to develop the analytical constructs and theoretical framework for showing how this occurs. Meanings are jointly made by the participants to some social activity-structure. They are made by construing semiotic relations among patterned meaning relations, social practices, and the physical-material processes which social practices organize and entrain in social semiosis. In social semiotics, the basic logic is that of contextualization” (Thibault, 1991).

The functional pragmatic translation analysis approach is based on optimality theory that posits that forms of the language arise from the resolution of conflicts between lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical constraints (after Kager, 1999 and Prince, 1993). Finally, as Deacon (2006:106) concludes, “qualitative research can be systematic and rigorous and still be innovative, creative, and actively dynamic”. The semiotic nature of television and dynamic nature of the translation process lend themselves to an interpretive qualitative research method.

**Design of the Study**

The design of the study was closely aligned to the multimodal nature of the object of inquiry. Consequently, the study was designed to judge two distinct yet interwoven modes of contemporary Arabic television that reinforce cultural norms and values and have a causal effect on these socio-cultural values: translation and visual presentation. The study was also designed to examine the effects of translation mediation on both the textual content (discourse) of news and the modality of presentation.
The case study

The research adopted an interpretive qualitative approach to the study of the phenomenon of Arabic satellite television taking Aljazeera as its case study.

As I have already highlighted in the previous chapter, it is claimed that Aljazeera is objective in its reporting of the news. It is also claimed that Aljazeera has set the standards for translation. Both assertions are challenged in this thesis, which makes the case for a contrastive view on both objectivity and translation. In this medium of communication, these two aspects of news reporting are intertwined, as translation mediation not only plays a major role in the provision of information for the content of news stories, but also frames these news stories in a manner that reduces their objectivity. Consequently, this case study has sought to examine the relationship between “objective” reporting and translation as practised at Aljazeera.

An interpretive approach is premised on the notion that there exist multiple realities of a phenomenon and not a single reality and that these realities can differ across time and place. Tamanaha (1999)\(^6\) observes that issues in social science have been framed in either interpretivism or positivism term and that a shift has occurred towards recognition that both approaches can complement each other. “A pragmatic reaction to this state of affairs should be obvious: apply whichever approach or a combination of approaches proves to be useful and informative” (58).

A case study method was used in this research. According to Stake (2000), case studies are widely believed to be useful in the study of human affairs because they are down-to-earth and attention-holding, but they are not a suitable basis for generalisation. However, Stake also contends that “case studies are the preferred method of research because they are epistemologically in harmony with the reader’s experience and
thus to that person a natural basis for generalization” (Stake, in Gomm, Hammersley and Fosters, 2000:19). Moreover, case study research belongs to a quasi-experimentation approach, as Campbell (2003) confirms. According to Yin (2003:1), case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” and “why” questions are asked and when the researcher has little control over the events and when the focus of study is on a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context. In scholarly circles, case studies are frequently discussed within the context of qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry. This method of enquiry is appropriate for the analysis of translation-mediated news, where the researcher/analyst has no control over how the news discourse is constructed and reconstructed, be it through straightforward translation, editorial intervention, or a combination of the two—and where access to the cognitive and operational processes of such discourse production is not possible. As a method of uncovering knowledge, a case study is used to examine one specific example. Huber and Snider (2005:95) confirm that a great deal of information can be gleaned from the case study method. However, they contend that the weakness of the case study method lies in that the conclusions are derived from one case only, which is hardly sufficient to make a generalized conclusion. Nonetheless, according to Gerring (2007:1), in all instances, the case study rests on the existence of a macro-micro link in social behaviour, and a strong link exists between the overall editorial processes and the sub-processes of translation at the discourse production level.

Data Collection

The research was conducted outside the Arab world by monitoring Aljazeera broadcasts made possible through a pay-TV subscription. Since the research was concerned with the product rather than with the processes and procedures of production or with the reactions of viewers to Arabic television, no interviews or surveys were conducted.
Consequently, no human participants were involved and no ethical clearance was required. Data collection focused on the content of programs broadcast by Aljazeera.

Due to the dynamic nature of Arabic satellite television and the accelerated rate of development and change taking place at Aljazeera in response to various factors, the data was derived from recordings of news broadcast sources, primarily Aljazeera, and secondarily Al-Arabiya, and LBC, preliminarily in 2004, and then in 2005 and the first half of 2006 and ongoing. This enabled the research to compare and detect persistent and changing patterns, variations and paradigm shifts over a tenable period of time. The primary and secondary sources of news and current affairs programs were governed by three considerations:

1) Aljazeera being the main focus of study as a 24-hour news and current affairs broadcaster;

2) The limited access to Al-Arabiya (Al-Arabiya is carried by ART twice a day for a one-hour news and or current affairs segments) although it is also a 24-hour news and current affairs broadcaster;

3) LBC (Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation) being an assortment broadcaster of news and entertainment programs. It is not a 24-hour news and current affairs broadcaster. While LBC broadcasts news and current affairs are of a serious nature, these are mostly localized.

Both Al-Arabiya and LBC were used for comparison purposes in order to detect observable similarities, patterns or difference in relation to Aljazeera. These recordings were coded for easy identification and classification, categorised and analysed systematically and inductively within a three-tier model, in terms of the degree of transfer to determine the extent of reframing. Pattern analysis was utilized.
Coding of programs

A structured method of classification was adopted for the coding of programs. The following table shows the coding system developed for categorising the programs recorded. For certain programs, such as For Women Only, sub codes were also used. These codes were used for identification and classification purposes; consequently no numeric values were assigned to them.

Table 2—Program codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALJNEWS01</td>
<td>Aljazeera newscast main bulletin</td>
<td>Newscast</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJNEWS02</td>
<td>Aljazeera news cast news in brief</td>
<td>News brief</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJOPDIR</td>
<td>Aljazeera Opposite Direction</td>
<td>Talk Show</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJMTO</td>
<td>Aljazeera More than one opinion</td>
<td>Talk show</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJDHAR</td>
<td>Aljazeera Day’s Harvest</td>
<td>Newscast &amp; current affairs</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJWO</td>
<td>Aljazeera For Women Only</td>
<td>Current Affairs</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJBENEWS</td>
<td>Aljazeera Behind the News</td>
<td>Current Affairs</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJSHARIA</td>
<td>Aljazeera Islamic Law and Life</td>
<td>Religious Program</td>
<td>Aljazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARBNEWS</td>
<td>Al Arabiyah newscast</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Al Arabiyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALMNEWS</td>
<td>Al Manar newscast</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Al Manar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBCNEWS</td>
<td>LBC newscast</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>LBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBCCAFF</td>
<td>LBC current affairs</td>
<td>Current Affairs</td>
<td>LBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBCMUSIC</td>
<td>LBC music video clips</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>LBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBCENT</td>
<td>LBC entertainment</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>LBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBCREAL</td>
<td>LBC Reality TV</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>LBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table presents the coding system developed and employed in the content analysis using the research model discussed in the second part of this chapter.
Table 3— Coding of research model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Direct matching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM IDEN</td>
<td>Direct matching Identitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM EQT</td>
<td>Direct matching Equative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>Interventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT CMP</td>
<td>Interventional Compensatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT MOD</td>
<td>Interventional Modulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT EXP</td>
<td>Interventional Explicatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sampling Procedure

According to Fowler (1993:11)\textsuperscript{13}, a sample is not evaluated by the results or the characteristics of the sample but rather by examining the way by which it is selected. With this in mind, a representative sample of materials was selected from a huge collection of programs recorded during the research period in three program categories: news bulletins, talk shows, current affairs and documentaries, with the following criteria:

- Translation mediation: discourse or narratives that are clearly translated from foreign news providers
- Interpreting mediation: programs had interviews or debates with foreign guests through the mediation of a simultaneous interpreter
- Semiotic dissonance: instances where the visual representation did not match the social and cultural values of the viewers.

Due to the protracted period of the research and the ad hoc nature of anomalies across programs, the sampling and selection of text followed a naturalistic critical-viewer approach. This approach enabled the research to assume the role of the viewer critically responding to mediated anomalies.
Data Analysis

Data analysis utilised a mixed approach that employed a variety of techniques. This approach was adopted because it allows multimodal analysis.

Analysis methods

An integrative qualitative content analysis method was used to analyse the collected data. Critical analysis was utilised to explore correlation and causality among translated data.

Semiotic and discourse analysis was used to analyse translation-mediated language, images, metaphors, and other elements that contribute to the reconstruction of frames. Semiotics is a formal mode of analysis used to identify the rules that govern how signs convey meanings in a particular social system (Eco, 1979, in Fiol, 1989 and Fiol, Harris and House, 1999). Within semiotics, several analysis techniques have been developed by various researchers (Fiol, 1989). For the proposed study, narrative and visual semiotic techniques were used to uncover the patterns that determine translation-induced socio-cultural framing.

Visual semiotic analysis examined the cultural perspectives of visual representations in terms of the positioning of elements within each image or frame. Visual semiotic analysis examines “the composition of spatial syntagms with regard to the ‘informational value’ of the positioning of elements within an image” (O’Neill, 2005). Left to right orientation and visual representations as indicators of cultural shift were explored.

The present research relies on Arabic examples from Aljazeera broadcasts. While these examples have been selected randomly, a consistent pattern emerges from the analysis of data that points to serious translation anomalies.
Mediated discourse analysis

Each news item was analyzed against the following criteria (Darwish, 2003)\textsuperscript{14}.

- Information integrity
- Linguistic integrity
- Translation integrity
- Fitness for purpose

As previously defined\textsuperscript{15}, information integrity refers to the ability to retain the same information in terms of accuracy, correctness, completeness and intention —both the informative and communicative. Linguistic integrity on the other hand, refers to the ability to render the text in a sound language in terms of grammar, structure (both micro and macro levels), coherence and cohesion, while translation integrity refers to the translation strategies adopted by the translator and to his or her ability of comprehension, production, matchability, and approximation. Fitness for purpose refers to the ability to render the text suitable for its purpose. This latter criterion rests on the notion that text can be repurposed for various media, audiences and application.

In the translation-related discourse analysis, the rules in the model described later in this chapter were applied to the level the translation was operating at, and the following template was developed and used to capture the analysis in a manner relevant to the model.
Table 4—Example of Translation Discourse Analysis template (developed for the research)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semiotic Source</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Text</td>
<td>I feel desperately sorry for Ken Bigley, for his family, who have behaved with extraordinary dignity and courage. I feel utter revulsion at the people who did this, not at the barbaric nature of the killing, but the way frankly they played with the situation in the past few weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Translation</td>
<td>I feel deep sorrow for the tragedy of Bigley’s family who showed nobility and courage. I feel utter disgust towards those people who did this, not because of the barbaric nature of what they committed, but the way they did it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraint</td>
<td>Lexical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Tier</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Translation Operation</td>
<td>Direct Matching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources and Logistics

As stated in the foregoing section Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation, data was collect from television broadcasts from Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya and LBC. Monitoring, recording and analysis of collected data was conducted ex situ—that is at the location where the researcher is based. Access to Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite television networks was made possible through a standard monthly subscription to a cable television service provider to gain access to the Arabic television channels relevant to the research. Since this research was concerned with the product rather than with the processes that the producers (the professionals working at these television networks) of the broadcasts follow, no field study was conducted. Instead, the content of
recorded programs was analyzed within the theoretical framework outlined and the research model detailed in this chapter.

**Research Model**

In order to analyze the impact of translation-mediation that accompanies the visual images of news reports, a translation analysis model was developed. This model is characteristically a functional, production model that seeks to map a set of operations that take place within the translation process.

Hercz et al (2003) distinguish between two types of model: research model and production model. They contend that there is a difference between these two types of models and argue that a production model is better suited to well-defined, repetitive tasks. They also argue that all models, irrespective of type, require assumptions that greatly simplify reality.

**Translation analysis model**

To evaluate the validity and reliability of translation-mediated discourse of news reports within a multimodal remediation framework, a dynamically adaptive constraint-driven translation model has been developed for this research. The model is a further development of a basic three-tier model previously developed as a generic operational translation model consisting of primary, operative and interpretive levels of operation (Darwish, 2003). Each of these levels has a set of translation techniques that can be used to achieve an optimal rendition within the constraints each text and language pair present.

This multimodal model rests on the notion that translation is not a haphazard cognitive activity that involves arbitrary choices, but a constraint-driven, dynamically adaptive decision-making system, where choices are governed by the degree of transparency and opacity and
convergence and divergence that exists at any given level between any two languages in process—in other words the degree of translatability.

Different languages employ different syntactic, pragmatic and rhetorical devices to express the same ideas or concepts. In translation, awareness of these differences is critical in deciding the most appropriate device in the target language that does not compromise the integrity of the source text, in terms of information content, informative communicative intentions or perspective.

**Rationale and assumptions**

The problem of discrepancy between the original message and its translation and variance across different translation versions of the same text may be analyzed and accounted for within an enhanced multimodal three-tier model of translation. This model consists of three levels of operation that vary in intensity and salience within the same text and across translations. The primary level relies heavily on literal and lexical meanings derived from dictionary-based data at three structural levels: word, sentence and paragraph. The dilemma that faces translators is the state of tension that exists between two divergent languages and the quest to convey both intentions of the original text: the communicative and informative. Working around constraints while trying to represent the internal structures of the text, becomes a daunting task in the absence of a structured translation framework. The problem is further complicated by the lexical field and range of possible alternatives and synonyms at word level. The operative level is concerned with functional meanings derived from the communicative intention of the text and functional-pragmatic application of the language. The interpretive level is concerned with the informative intention of the source text and the function of the translation in the target language. At this level, without safeguards, the risk of distorting the message is a real one.
The model is anchored in optimality theory and regards translation as a temporary system of conflicting forces that are embodied by constraints. Following Kager (1999) each translation constraint makes a requirement about some aspect of equivalent output. “Constraints are typically conflicting, in the sense that to satisfy one constraint implies the violation of another” (4). Empirical and anecdotal evidence has shown that no translation form can satisfy all constraints simultaneously. Therefore, there must be a mechanism of selecting [translation] forms that incur ‘lesser’ constraint violations from others that incur ‘more serious’ ones (after Kager, 1999:4). To manage these conflicting constraints, the model provides explicit rules for translation production and analysis. These rules include the following.

1) The point of departure is the closest point between source and target languages. This means the most direct translation is the primary option.

2) IF this fails to preserve the informative and communicative intentions of the source, THEN a shift to the operative level is warranted.

3) IF the operative level fails to preserve the informative intention of the source, THEN a shift to the interpretive level is required.

4) To make explicit in the translation what is implicit in the source so long as what is implicit in the source is readily accessible to the intended reader of the source.

The fourth rule is critical in determining whether the translator/interpreter should intervene to recover in the translation the shared knowledge (or intersubjectivity, as Hewes and Planalp, 1987 call it) between the writer and the reader of the source text.

The model is also driven by the following assumptions:
1) A high level of uncertainty about the source text will increase the degree of indeterminacy about the intended meaning of the source text.

2) A high level of uncertainty about the source text will cause greater translatorial interference.

3) A high level of uncertainty will produce a literal translation.

In the contrastive analysis of text and translations, the model also integrates functional pragmatics, which is based on the notion of action-centred understanding of text, where “pragmatic aspects are not simply added to non-pragmatically understood linguistic forms” (Titscher et al, 2000:171). This integrates thought and logical pattern analysis to identify the structural and reasoning schemas in the message. For example, the concept of verticality in English and how it translates into Arabic is a focus area in the analysis of the thought and logical aspects of transfer.
This model is also guided by the following principles of equivalence.

- Equivalence is relative. What is expressed in one language can be expressed in another. An idea, notion or thought that is expressed in one language can be expressed in another in a similar or different fashion.

- Equivalence is dynamic. Two linguistic items or verbal expressions may match in “contextlessness”, but they may not correspond in
context. A Source Language word or verbal expression changes counterparts in different Target Language contexts.

- Equivalence is interactive
- Equivalence is contextual
- Equivalence is approximate

**Elements of the model**

The model outlined in *Figure 9 — A multimodal three-tier translation model* is important for our understanding of the relationship of the factors that are brought to bear on the original message when it is re-mediated through translation. The model consists of six fundamental components: source text, source text semiotic environment, translator, editor and animator, target text semiotic environment.

**Implications**

The implications of this model for the production and evaluation of translations are explored through the analysis of the constraints and the causal relationship between the translation choices and constraints and the development of translation categories for each level within the model.

The model implies the establishment of explicit rules that bring a measure of control to the translation process and the evaluative process of translation products.

**Using the research model**

The research model was used in the analysis of the translation of news monitored on Aljazeera.

A basic version of the research model was developed by the author (Darwish, 2003) and has been successfully used by several researchers in relation to aspects of the translation problem. For example, Merkle (2005)\(^{17}\) used the model to examine the external pressures on the translator and their relationship to censorship. Kulwindr Kaur Sidhu
(2005a, 2005b, 2006) used the model extensively to study the translation of scientific text from English into Malay.  

The model has proved to have universal applicability in terms of understanding the phenomenon of translation and the choices and decisions involved. Closely related to the present research, Abusalem (2008) employed the basic version of this model as the main framework for analysis in examining the role of translation in reporting translated scripts by Aljazeera. He confirms that the three-tier model “allows for the explanation of script manipulation through translation. […] The model provides an effective framework to determine the degree of such interpretation” (126).

How the Model Works

These three modes are not watertight divisions and may overlap or coexist within the same translation. The primary mode involves direct matching techniques, while the operative and interpretive modes will always require translatorial intervention that takes the form of supplemental, reductional or substitutional data. Such intervention is necessary and sometimes obligatory to place the translation in the context of the translation situation for the target language readers who do not have access to the same extralinguistic information that enables them to make assumptions about the informative and communicative intentions of the text and make inferences to understand the text.

The following translation techniques may be used in translation within the three-tier model of operation. These techniques vary in response to different translation situations within the same text and may involve the entire sentence or parts of it.

Any departure from direct translation however must be driven by the constraints imposed by the degree of convergence and divergence that
exists between the source and the target languages, and not by arbitrary choices or personal preference alone.

**Model Categories**

Within the three-tier model, translation techniques fall into two main categories:

- Direct matching techniques
- Interventional techniques

Direct matching techniques include identitive and equative techniques while interventional techniques include: compensatory, modulatory and explicatory techniques.
Figure 10—Translation Model Categories

The following section explains these categories and their application in more detail.
Direct matching translation

In a one to one relation, direct translation through matching linguistic components is the most common translation technique. It consists of two main techniques:

- Identitive translation
- Equative translation

The shortest distance

Direct translation must not be confused with literal or verbatim translation. Direct translation is choosing the shortest distance between the source language and the target language and starting from the closest point possible between them. There is no real justification, moral, professional or otherwise, for moving away from direct translation, unless such a departure is dictated by the nature of transfer, the degree of
translatability of the original text and the extent of cooperativeness of the target language to express the information content of the source.

Consequently, the first recourse is to match the target to the source through direct matching, (identitive or equative translation), where a one-to-one relation does exist between the source and the target, or by substitutive translation, where there is a lexical or conceptual gap in the target language. However, in certain translation situations, identitive or substitutive translation is not always possible and other compensatory techniques such as supplemental translation may be used.

**Identitive and equative translation**

Identitive translation is used when all characteristics of a match in the target language are identical to the source language item lexically, semantically and pragmatically. Equative translation is used when an identical counterpart does not exist in the target language.

**Identitive translation**

Identitive translation is a direct translation technique where two concepts have identical characteristics and are usually expressed by established, crosslingual one-to-one synonyms on the same level of abstraction and within a similar communicative situation. For example, “mother” and “mutter”, “unknown soldier” and “jundi majhul”.

**Equative translation**

Equative translation on the other hand, is a direct translation technique where two concepts with identical characteristics are expressed with words that are also identical on the morphemic level as well as on the lexical, semantic and pragmatic levels. Let us consider the word “unknown” in a different context.

The teacher was unknown to the students. But they realized soon enough that he was an authority on the subject he taught.

Here the word “unknown” takes on a different meaning in English and requires a different translation technique. In Arabic for instance, the
notion of “unknown” in this context may be expressed directly with equative translation: un + known = ghayr ma’ruf as follows:

Equative translation should be differentiated from the substitutive calque translation condition where only the literal sense of the source language expression is calqued or equated. See Calque Translation under Compensatory Techniques later in this chapter. Consider the following examples.

**Original**  
The following publications are available. Please take note of the copyright message of each publication if you plan to download or reproduce them in any way.

**Translation**  
Las publicaciones siguientes están disponibles. Por favor tome nota del mensaje de derechos de propiedad literaria de cada publicación si usted planea descargarlas o reproducirlas de cualquier manera.

Here a one-to-one relation exists between the following sentences:

- The following publications are available.
- Las publicaciones siguientes están disponibles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Type of Modification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the</td>
<td>las</td>
<td>Grammatical, plural form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following</td>
<td>siguientes</td>
<td>Grammatical, plural form, adjective –noun transposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publications</td>
<td>publicaciones</td>
<td>Grammatical, plural form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are</td>
<td>están</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>available</td>
<td>disponibles</td>
<td>Grammatical, plural form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identitive/equative translation is matching by identical one-to-one “synonymy”. Cross-lingual synonymy is conventional in nature and is dependent on similarities of the communication situation in both languages and on two factors: community and individual. A speech community may collectively choose a certain counterpart for a foreign word or phrase. Also a person may choose his or her own counterparts of source language expressions based on their own understanding and matching abilities. In both situations, one must guard against introducing “common” mistakes into the target language. For example, in Arabic the collective identitive translation of “negotiating table”, as expressed by leading Arabic media outlets, is “ma’idat al-mufawadat” (ماندة المفاوضات) instead of “tawilat al-mufawadat” (طاولة المفاوضات). Strictly speaking, the word “ma’idat” means “banquet-laden table” and the banquet (food) itself.

**Interventional techniques**

When a gap exists in the target language, or where constraints in the target language prevent the realization of direct matching (identitive and equative), interventional techniques are used to fill the gap or remove the constraint. These interventional techniques are:

- Compensatory
- Modulatory
- Explicatory

Chapter 3

*Conceptual Framework and Research Model*
The following section examines these techniques. When these techniques are used unjustifiably in the translation, interference occurs. Within the three-tier model of translation, there are three categories of interventional techniques in terms of distance from the source: primary, operative and interpretive interventional. These categories correspond to the three modes of operation in that model.

**Compensatory techniques**

When direct identitive or equative translation is not possible at any given level of textuality, compensatory techniques may be used. These techniques include the following subcategories:

- Substitutive
- Supplemental techniques
Substitutive techniques

Where a one-to-one match does not exist between the source and target languages, the translator may substitute the closest counterpart available in the target language for the missing match using any of the following substitutive techniques. Such counterpart might consist of one or more than one word. Within the three-tier model of translation, there are three categories of substitutive techniques in terms of distance from the source: primary substitutive (that is in the primary mode), operative substitutive (in the operative mode) and interpretive substitutive (in the interpretive mode).

Substitutive techniques include:

- Loan translation
- Claque translation
- Modulatory substitution
- Implicative translation
- Intersectional translation
- Disjunctive translation
- Privative (negational) translation
- Supplantive translation
- Transplantive translation
- Metonymic translation

Loan translation

Loan translation is a substitutive technique that borrows the words or expressions of the source language, where there is a lexical or conceptual gap in the target language and represents them in the target language through transliteration, transcription or native-form notational transplantation. The borrowed linguistic items may retain their native pronunciation or be adapted to the phonetic system of the host language. For example, weekend = Le weekend.

Native-form notational transplantation (is also used as a supplemental technique, where a source language word is embedded as is in the
translation (or more generally in target texts) to supplement translated information.

An important distinction is made here between loan translation and calque translation (see the following section Calque Translation). Loan translation is borrowing the source target words themselves, while calque translation is borrowing the meaning parts of the source language words.

**Calque translation**

Calque translation is a type of borrowing which traces the contours of the original source language expression (which may be a word, a phrase or a short sentence) and translates it as a verbatim mirror-image of the original. For example, “space shuttle” is calqued into Arabic as makūk fada’ī (مكوك فضاءي).

Calque translation should not be confused with loan translation. Calque translation is essentially copying or tracing the meanings of individual parts of the source language word while loan translation is basically borrowing the words or expressions of the source language.

**Modulatory substitution**

Modulatory substitution is a paradigmatic substitutive translation where a source language condition placed on the action in the sentence is modulated in terms of permission, obligation, or ability by different types of substitutive structures. This translation technique derives from
grammatical modulation that exists in language. Consider the following example.

\[
\text{We } \begin{cases} \text{cannot} \\ \text{are unable to} \\ \text{do not have the ability to} \end{cases} \text{ settle disputes between property owners.}
\]

All of these sentences are expressing the same modal condition. Modulatory substitution may be used as a substitutive technique when one type of structure cannot be realized in the target language for syntactic, semantic, pragmatic or rhetorical reasons.

**Implicative translation**

Implicative translation (or translation by implication) is a substitutive technique that translates a concept in terms of another concept that either subsumes it (hyponymy) or is subsumed by it (hypernymy). For example, “vehicle” and “car”. Car is subordinate to vehicle. This technique is sometimes used where there is a conceptual gap in the classification system of the target language, or the parallel classification systems are out of sync with one another in the way they classify concepts. Certain languages conflate concepts and others break or rather slice them down into sub-concepts.

**Intersectional translation**

Intersectional translation is a substitutive technique used where a source language concept intersects or overlaps with a target language concept and where no direct identitive translation or counterpart exists. For example, “sword” and “knife”, and to a certain extent, “crusaders” and “mujahideen”, “suicide”, “kamikaze” and “istish-had”. Intersectional translation is usually target language focused and is concerned with core meanings shorn of cultural register.

**Disjunctive translation**

Disjunction translation is a substitutive translation technique used where the concepts exclude one another on the same level of abstraction. For
example, adolescent: boy ≠ girl, adult: man ≠ woman. The technique is sometimes used where one language is gender-sensitive and one gender-neutral. As a rule of approximation, disjunctive translation should be avoided when gender differentiation is not an essential part of the message and where gender differentiation introduces markedness in the translation.

**Privative translation**

Privative (or negational) translation is a substitutive technique used where one concept contains the characteristics whose negation occurs as characteristics of another concept. For example, Humanize = dehumanize, flammable = inflammable, compression = decompression. In translation, negation is employed where no direct positive match is found in the target language. Translation by negation is used when a direct translation is not possible because of syntactic and semantic restrictions.

Consequently, privative (negational) translation must be used very carefully because the negation of one state does not always necessarily mean the opposite state. For example, non-violent and peaceable are not interchangeable.

**Supplantive translation**

Supplantive translation is a translation technique that involves supplantation of one concept, convention, standard or system in the source language with an adjacent one that has an identical function in the target language. Examples of translation situations where supplantation may be applied are with measurement systems (Imperial versus metric), currency, calendars (Gregorian, Islamic (Hegira), lunar, Iranian, etc).

When used in conjunction with the source text counterparts, as it is often the case, supplantive translation becomes appositive translation (see *Appositive Translation* under the following section *Supplemental Techniques*). However, in certain situations, supplantive translation replaces the source language components altogether.
Like appositive translation, supplantive translation is target language reader focused. Supplantive translation is a useful technique to inform the target language reader specifically when referential integrity is not compromised by the technique.

**Transplantive translation**

Transplantive translation is a type of loan translation that involves the transplantation of a source language item (word, phrase, acronym or abbreviation) into the target language text without translating the borrowed item. In language pairs that share the same foundational script system (Latin-based, Arabic-based, Cyrillic, Kanji etc), transplantation is hardly noticeable. However, in language pairs that do not, such as English and Arabic, French and Japanese, transplantation is readily noticeable and requires special attention on the part of the translator.

Transplantive techniques work with language pairs that share a common script such as English and French, Arabic and Farsi, or Japanese and Chinese. On its own, transplantive translation is not an effective technique with languages that do not share a common script. If such is the case, it is imperative that the translator should employ appositive translation as a supplemental technique. Using transplantive translation on its own is insufficient.

**Metonymic substitution**

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, as in the use of *Washington* for the *United States government* or of the *sword* for *military power* [American Heritage Dictionary].

Etymologically, the term “metonymy” is derived from the late Latin word *metonymia*, from Greek *met所有人*: *meta-*, *meta- + onuma, name*; see. It literally means beyond seeing. In Arabic the term is known as “kinaya” (كتابة), which means to conceal or cover. So when we say Lion-heart for
instance, we conceal the real name of King Richard by substituting the quality of being very brave for the proper noun.

Within the same language, there are at least four types of metonymy:

- Substitution of cause for effect
- Substitution of effect for cause
- Substitution of proper noun for one of its qualities and
- Substitution of one of the qualities of a proper noun for the proper noun

Metonymy follows the principle of economy in language. It is culture and situation informed.

Metonymy is not always readily translatable into another language, and the relationship between the two parts of metonymy is not always the same. Certain metonyms acquire the same metonymic relation in translation. Others do not. In this case, intervention is needed and metonymical translation techniques may be used. Metonyms, especially conventional metonyms, are also closely related to collocation — another reason for their resistance to translation.

When a metonymy is not translatable, the substituted entity is translated. For example, “the kettle has boiled” may legitimately be translated into “the water has boiled” where, strictly speaking, no other translation works to reproduce the metonymical expression.

**Supplemental techniques**

Supplemental techniques add data to make up for the deficiency in direct translation where substitutive techniques are inadequate or ineffective.

Within the three-tier model of translation, there are three categories of supplemental techniques in terms of distance from the source: primary substitutive (that is in the primary mode), operative supplemental (on the operative mode) and interpretive supplemental (in the interpretive mode). Supplemental techniques include:
Appositive translation and additive translation

Appositive translation

Appositive translation is the use of an apposition construction in which a noun or noun phrase is placed with another as an explanatory equivalent or alternative and where such information is not explicitly stated in the source. Appositives identify or explain the nouns, pronouns or phrases which they modify.

Apposition is when two words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence have the same relationship or reference to other elements in the sentence as in the following example.

The US president, Mr Bill Clinton, will be visiting Australia later this year.

In this sentence, Mr Bill Clinton is an appositive or in apposition to The US President as it refers to the same person. It identifies or specifies The US President.

There are two types of appositives in language: restrictive and non-restrictive.

A restrictive appositive delimits or restricts the meaning of the word it modifies. It is usually a single word that follows a noun, pronoun or phrase. It provides essential information necessary to maintain the meaning of the sentence. In English, restrictive appositives are not set within commas.

The teacher John Smith will give a lecture tonight.

A non-restrictive appositive provides additional, non-essential information that can be omitted without changing the basic meaning of the sentence. In other words, it does not restrict or delimit the preceding noun or pronoun. Non-restrictive appositives are usually set within commas to indicate their non-restrictive function.
Steve Bracks, the Premier of Victoria, urges Victorians to become water savers this summer.

In translation, appositive may be used when the word, phrase or clause expresses a concept alien to the target language and does not have a direct closest natural equivalent, or when the closest natural equivalent belongs to a different register or is not common.

Appositive translation is used to ensure the referential integrity of the translation, which would not otherwise be ensured. Such referential integrity ties down the information in the translation to the source text or to the knowledgebase of the source. Within the three-tier model of translation, there are three categories of appositive in terms of distance from the source: primary appositive (that is in the primary mode), operative appositive (on the operative mode), or interpretive appositive (in the interpretive mode).

Most if not all appositive in translation are non-restrictive even when they may function as restrictive appositive in the target language translation.

**Types of appositive translation**

The following are the main types of appositive translation:

- Juxtapositional alternative appositive
- Parenthetical appositive
- Parenthetical native-form appositive
- Parenthetical interpretive appositive
- Explanatory appositive

Juxtapositional appositive are appositive that are positioned side by side. The purpose of juxtapositional appositive is to provide an alternative translation that is more familiar or clearer to the target language reader. This type of appositive usually involves transplantive translation.
Parenthetic appositives are qualifying or explanatory alternatives that are set off within parentheses. In translation, parenthetic appositives function in the same way, where a word, expression or concept is new to the target language and needs explanatory intervention on the part of the translator.

Parenthetic native-form appositives are appositives that retain their native form. It is standard and best practice in non-Latin based scripts such as Arabic to use **parenthetical native-form appositives** juxtaposed to translated or transliterated terms where no lay terms exist in the target language. This is usually cited on first instance to help the reader understand the newly introduced and less common terms, which may not be readily understood by the lay person. This technique of information presentation is applied to ensure referential integrity.

Removing the **parenthetical native-form appositives** from the translation compromises the integrity of information especially where the intended users of the information will have to consult with source language speakers through interpreters who are most likely unfamiliar with the target language terms.

Parenthetical interpretive appositives are appositives that take the form of phrasal interpretations of the word or phrase in question.

**Additive translation**

Additive translation is the use of a word or phrase to qualify a source language item without which identitive translation fails to communicate the intentions of the source text.

Additive translation techniques include:

- Genitive additive and
- descriptive backing

**Genitive additive translation**

Genitive additive translation is explicitization of a word by adding a descriptor that explains the nature or kind of that word. For example, the
sentence “At the time of her construction, the Titanic was the largest ship ever built” may be rendered in Arabic as follows:

عندما بنيت سفينة تايتانك كانت أكبر باخرة تم بناؤها على الإطلاق.

This literally means: “When the ship Titanic was built, it was absolutely the largest steamship the construction of which completed.”

In this example, the translator employed additive translation to qualify the source word “Titanic” as a ship because on its own, “Titanic” means nothing to those who do not know what Titanic is.

To avoid repeating the word “ship” in the same sentence, the translator used the word safina (سفينة) in the first instance and the synonym bakhira (باخرة), in the second. Bakhira literally means steamer or steamship. However, in modern Arabic both bakhira and safina are used interchangeably.

Additive translation may also involve partial apposition.

**Descriptive backing**

Descriptive backing is changing a proper noun into a generic noun to denote a predominant characteristic as in “She is a Thatcher”, in reference to a strong personality. As a supplemental compensatory technique, descriptive backing is extended to any lexical category as a discriminative qualifier.

**Modulatory Techniques**

Modulatory techniques are concerned with adjusting or adapting the source text, which may be a word, a phrase or a sentence in order to communicate the intentions of the source and remove the constraints.

Modulatory techniques include:

- **Reductive** and **expansive** techniques as a compensatory technique to convey the meaning of the source text in a natural target language form.
Extricative translation techniques, which include translation by form extrication when a semantic component is derived from linguistic or grammatical form and translation by condensation and obversive translation.

Within the three-tier model of translation, there are three categories of modulatory techniques in terms of distance from the source:

- Primary modulatory (that is in the primary mode)
- Operative modulatory (on the operative mode)
- Interpretive modulatory (in the interpretive mode)

Modulatory techniques are target-language focused.

**Reductive and expansive techniques**

Translation by reduction or expansion is a modulatory technique to convey the meaning of the source text in a natural target language form. It is therefore target-language focused. This subcategory includes three classes:

- Compactive translation
- Expansive translation
- Subtractive translation
- Extricative translation

**Reductive translation**

Translation by reduction is the reduction of lexical items to a smaller construction to avoid awkward renditions caused by divergent rhetorical techniques. Translation by expansion is the reverse of contraction.

**Compactive translation**

Certain languages employ a rhetorical technique known as hendiadys, which is the expression of an idea by two nouns that have overlapping meaning connected by "and" instead of a noun and its qualifier. Arabic is a good example of this tendency. In translation from such languages into
English or other languages that do not place emphasis on hendiadys, the translator may condense the two nouns into one or change them into noun and qualifier.

**Transpositional translation**

Transpositional translation is a translation technique where a part of a sentence is transposed on to another position within the sentence (intrasentential transposition) or a sentence is transposed into a new position within a string of sentences or paragraph (intersentential transposition). Such transposition is dictated by the syntactic, semantic or rhetorical rules of the target language where a direct translation is not possible.

**Explicatory techniques**

Explicatory techniques seek to explain a source language text (a word, phrase, or sentence) where no direct match is found and where none of the compensatory techniques is adequate to convey the informative and communicative intentions of the source text. Explicatory techniques are interventional techniques if prescribed by the discrepancy between the source and the target and are target reader oriented. They can be an integral part of the text without textual markers or annotations pointing to them as distinct from the original text or parenthetic explanations alerting the reader to their interpolative annotative nature.

Within the three-tier model of translation, there are two categories of explicatory techniques in terms of distance from the source: **operative explicatory** (in the operative mode) and **interpretive explicatory** (in the interpretive mode).

Explicatory techniques include:

- **Definitional translation** is the use of a phrase or sentence to define a term or a phrase in the source by stating its precise dictionary-based meaning instead of translating it directly.
• **Descriptive translation** is the use of a description to translate a term or a phrase in the source by characterizing it instead of translating it directly.

• **Explicative translation** is the use of a term, phrase or sentence to explain a term or a phrase or even a mechanical device in the source instead of translating it.

• **Exemplificatory translation** is dynamic translation technique where an example is used as a parenthetic partitive appositive to provide an example that is more familiar to the reader of the target language than the actual concept itself.

These categories often overlap and coexist with other translation techniques such as appositive translation, loan translation and claque translation.

**Definitional translation**

Definitional translation is the use of a phrase or sentence to define a term or a phrase in the source by stating its precise dictionary-based meaning or its non-conventional implicative meaning instead of translating it directly. A definition is stating a precise meaning or significance; formulation of a meaning in the interpretive mode of translation.

**Descriptive translation**

Descriptive translation is the use of a description to translate a term or a phrase in the source by characterizing it instead of translating it directly. Descriptive translation is the process picturing an object or a concept in the source language.

Descriptive translation may be used where no one-to-one relationship exists between source and target language material, and where none of the other interventional techniques is adequate to convey the intended meaning of the source. Since description is bound to be partial or exclusive, that is it focuses on certain aspects from a specific viewpoint, it
may produce a shift in focus thus distorting the communicative intention of the source.

**Explicative translation**

Explicative translation is the use of a term, phrase, sentence, or even a mechanical device to explain a term or a phrase in the source instead of translating it. Sometimes, explicative translation is used in conjunction with other compensatory translation techniques such as loan translation or claque translation.

**Exemplificatory translation**

Exemplificatory translation is a dynamic translation technique where an example is used as a parenthetic partitive appositive to provide an example that is more familiar to the reader of the target language than the actual concept itself. It is a way of explaining a general or unfamiliar concept by citing a specific, familiar example.

This technique is usually target-reader oriented. It should be strictly used where no other technique works and should be clearly indicated as translatorial annotation, preferably within square brackets. Otherwise, it might be seen as interference.

Exemplificatory translation is used to recover intersubjective data by citing an example closer to or derived from the culture of the target language.

**How These Translation Techniques Interact**

Starting from the closest point possible between the source language and the target language, and employing direct translation,

1) Apply an identitive translation technique, where a one-to-one direct match is found.

2) If no direct match is found, apply an equative translation technique.
3) If equative translation fails to convey the intended meaning, or where a lexical gap exists in the target language, interventional translation is required.

4) Apply a suitable compensatory technique, substitutive or supplementary.

5) Failing that, apply a suitable modulatory technique, or barring that, use an explicatory technique to remove the constraint.

Conclusion

The study was conducted within an interpretative multimodal social semiotics framework utilizing an adaptive three-tier model and was largely informed by an integrative theoretical approach derived from literature in the fields of social semiotics (Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2005), visual communication analysis (Bell, 2001), multimodal discourse analysis (O’Halloran, 2004) and transactional analysis (Berne, 1964). The three-tier model was informed by optimality theory and theory of constraints and has benefited from work previously developed by the researcher.

This chapter also introduced a comprehensive model of translation within three tiers of operation: primary, operative and interpretive. By using this research model, problems of translation mediation were detected in the analysis of data collected from Aljazeera’s news broadcasts. The following chapters present the findings of the study.

Notes

1 Translation in Global News is a conference that was held in June 2006 at University of Warwick in England. It focused “on news translation, a largely unexplored area which falls in between academic disciplines. Translation studies has traditionally ignored a field in which the process of interlingual transfer is performed by journalists and not translators. Media studies has remained largely monolingual in its approach and blind to the crucial intervention of translation in news production. Yet, since the establishment of the modern journalistic field, translation has been pivotal in the circulation of news which describes a highly interconnected world”.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework and Research Model

3 http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/pomo/ch1.html


8 In the foreword to Yin (2003).


Chapter 4
Translating the News

News is not a mirror of reality. It is a representation of the world, and all representations are selective.


In recent years, there have been studies of the semantics of non-Western languages done in very great detail—sufficient detail to demonstrate that the conceptual systems underlying some of them are fundamentally different from, and incommensurable with, our conceptual system.


In this chapter:

- Aims
- Overview
- Translation in the News
- Information Sources
- News Translation as Reframing
- Ethics of Mediating News
- Language of the News and the Illusion of Modernity
Aims

With cable and satellite television networks spreading rapidly and competitively across the globe, news and current affairs television is increasingly becoming a primary source of information for viewers worldwide for both domestic and international stories. While critically relying on translations of news from international providers, these networks are contributing to the reframing of news events and creating information and cultural misfits, often unintended by the original sources and sometimes unwelcome by the intended viewers. This chapter examines the impact of translation on news making and argues that by submitting news to translation it undergoes a reframing process that entails a reconstruction of a constructed reality already subjected to professional, institutional and contextual influences.

This chapter should pave the way in the subsequent chapters for a discussion of the specific aspects of news translation at Aljazeera.
Overview

I began writing this chapter to a backdrop of two major events taking place in the Middle East: (1) Saddam’s death sentence passed down by the Iraqi Supreme Court against controversies about the legitimacy of the court, the trial and the sentence, and (2) Israeli occupation forces launching their military offensive against Palestinian militants in Gaza and the West Bank. Both events have received extensive media coverage on Aljazeera and other media networks in varying degrees, with both live and recorded broadcasts evidently relying primarily on translated reports from various news sources. The news stories covering these two events have been widely inconsistent, not so much in terms of the actualities of the events, but rather in terms of the inconsistent approach to the translation of news artifacts originally transmitted via the English language. While some of the terms and expressions used to describe aspects of these events have been dictated by the original source text—for example, if the English source used “topple” to describe the ousting of Saddam, the Arabic translation remained faithful to the source without editorial intervention—other linguistic artifacts have been translated haphazardly and inconsistently, even within the same network and across news bulletins. It should be stated from the outset that remaining faithful to the literal sense of the words of the source does not necessarily mean faithfulness to the intent of the original message, nor does it prove the intentional adoption of the expression of the original message. In most situations, the adoption of absolute literal translation is believed to be the cause of dissonance between the source and target versions of news stories broadcast on Arabic satellite television. The case study of Aljazeera is no exception. This kind of approach to translation of news sources is also believed to be a critical factor in reframing the news in a certain way as to elicit specific responses form the viewers, perhaps subliminally.
Furthermore, despite glaring infelicities, and as alluded to in the early chapters of this thesis, no serious research has so far been undertaken to examine this critical aspect of news reporting and mediation, and it is only now that attention has been given to news translation. *Translation in Global News* is a conference that was held in June 2006 at the University of Warwick in England. It focused “on news translation, a largely unexplored area which falls in between academic disciplines. Translation Studies has traditionally ignored a field in which the process of interlingual transfer is performed by journalists and not translators. Media Studies has remained largely monolingual in its approach and blind to the crucial intervention of translation in news production. Yet, since the establishment of the modern journalistic field, translation has been pivotal in the circulation of news which describes a highly interconnected world”.¹

While this claim has some validity to a large extent, it is not quite true that interlingual transfer is performed solely by journalists. As we examine in this chapter, news agencies have always recruited translators to do the translation of foreign language sources, while journalists may have relied on these translations to frame their news stories. As Knight (2000) confirms, western correspondents rely heavily on the English language while gathering information for their stories. “Foreign language skills would appear to be critical for correspondents who sought to explore the subtleties of the stories from the countries to which they were posted” (79). However, whichever is the language used to gather information for the news stories, which in itself is problematic, the translation of these stories adds another dimension of complexity to the process of reproducing the news.

This chapter is an expanded and revised version of a paper published prior to the Warwick conference, in March 2006 as part of the current research. It applies the three-tier model outlined in the previous chapter.
The role of translation in mediated realities

The role of translation in mediated realities cannot be overlooked or underestimated in a study of contemporary Arabic television, and more so of Aljazeera as a serious news and current affairs television network. By its very nature, translation is a deconstruction-reconstruction process of a text constructed in another language. The view taken in this chapter is that translation is a constraint-driven process. Translation is a process that is driven by many constraints at different levels of text—that is, lexical, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, functional and semiotic—and at various stages of development and production. “These constraints affect the perceived and desired quality of the translation and dictate the choices and decisions the translator makes” (Darwish, 2003:91).

To reiterate, it has been claimed that Aljazeera has set the international standards for translation in the media (Miles, 2005). If this surmise were true, it would be a frightening proposition and a sad reflection of the state of affairs of both the media and translation worldwide, since a close analysis of translations at Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite networks reveals horrifying quality standards. The argument maintained throughout this research is that Aljazeera and all other Arabic news providers are operating at an absolute literal translation level (down to the preposition level) that is causing the original message to be distorted and the target language to be undermined at the lexical, idiomatic and metaphorical levels of composition. As it is illustrated here and in the subsequent chapters this claim is supported by evidence derived from a corpus of news broadcasts from Aljazeera.

Translation in the News

Translation has recently received some attention in the news with controversies over the translation of the Bin Laden tapes by CNN, Aljazeera and other news outfits, highlighting an inconspicuous problem of translation-mediated communication and the critical importance of
accuracy and precision of translated messages, especially in times of crisis and global instability. The German genius Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) once asserted that the translator must act “as mediator in this commerce of the mind, making it his business to further this intellectual exchange. For whatever one might say about the inadequacy of translation, nevertheless it is and will remain one of the most important and worthy occupations in the general intertraffic between peoples.”

More so in today’s globalization and global television news media, translation-mediated knowledge transfer is becoming increasingly important in “the complex chains of global interdependencies”; “being able to transmit vast amounts of information rapidly from continent to continent, we have transformed a widely spread and diverse world into a single global megapolis” (Devlin, 1999:12). Different times however assign different value to the importance of translation. The situationality of the translator within the larger context of the social transaction plays a major role in the translation strategies chosen at a particular instance in the process of knowledge transfer, especially in an area of human activity as viscous and ephemeral as news media, where often “voracities and verities are sometimes interacting”. In one respect, motivated by the doctrine of fidelity, the translator seeks to be faithful to the original. Yet a host of situational factors are willy-nilly brought to bear on this quest for the truth in translation. The state of tension and conflict is often resolved through reframing that conforms to specific editorial policy, norms and formulas.

Translations are not made in a vacuum, as Andre Lefevere (1992) confirms. “Translators function in a given culture at a given time. The way they understand themselves and their culture is one of the factors that may influence the way in which they translate” (Lefevere, 1992: 14). This view has been articulated by several writers and scholars in translation studies. As Gentzler and Tymoczko (2002) observe, “most contemporary
translating the News

Chapter 4

Translation studies scholars view the process of translation as heterogeneous with different issues addressed by different translations and different translators at different times and different places, depending on the specific historical and material moment” (xx).

Toury (1995) for example, contends that “[I]n its socio-cultural dimension, translation can be described as subject to constraints of several types and varying degrees. These extend far beyond the source text, the systemic differences between the languages and textual traditions involved in the act, or even the possibilities and limitations of the cognitive apparatus of the translator as a necessary mediator” (54). He asserts that socio-cultural factors influence and likely alter the translator’s cognition, and different translators performing under different conditions will choose different translation strategies and produce different products. Regarding translation as a norm-governed activity, Toury (1995) argues that translation has to contend with two languages and two cultural traditions. The translator’s basic choice is to work towards the norms of the source text or the target culture as an initial norm. This will define whether the translation subscribes to the norms of the source text or to the norms of the target culture, thus entailing different strategies that ultimately produce different translation products.

It follows that translations take place in various situations and environments where the translator may change locations, and linguistic, cultural, ideological, temporal and/or spatial affinities and perspectives. These interactive and interdependent influential variables consciously and subconsciously influence the actor’s cognitive behaviour, responses, and attitudes to both source language and target language realities (Darwish, 2004). They also influence the actor’s cognitive and affective responses to the source text and product, and ultimately affect the nature, focus, quality and pace of knowledge transfer and they may act as a reinforcing positive or negative factor in defining the overall translation strategy. These
relationships in the translation process can be understood in terms of the following model.

![Figure 13—Contexts of the translation event (source: Darwish, 2003)](image)

The relationship and interaction between these entities within the translation event dictate the strategy and decisions that the translator follows. “Each entity within the hierarchy imposes its own constraints and norms on the translation process. On the micro level, the translator has to deal with constraints imposed among other things by the text, his or her aptitude and system of meaning and the idiosyncrasies of matching two distinct linguistic entities. On the meso level, the translator has to deal with external group standards, specifications and values. On the macro level, the translator has to deal with constraints imposed by organizational or institutional values and system of beliefs, which are in turn informed or dictated by the mega level. On the mega level, the translator has to deal with constraints imposed by society at large. All of these levels impose immediate constraints on the translation process”.

In previous work, I identify two types of translation variables: external and internal. External variables can be further broken down into extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic variables are those physical variables that are extraneous to the act of translating, yet form an integral part of the...
translation event. Extrinsic variables include: the environment, time and space, standards, norms, protocols, tools, technology, systems, machines. Intrinsic variables are those variables that belong to the act of translating and are a manifestation of the translation act. Intrinsic variables include: information medium, readability, legibility and audibility of discourse. Internal variables are those nonphysical variables that constitute the core cognitive activities of the act of translating. These include the cognitive, textual, interlingual and attitudinal variables that have an impact on the act of translating.

Figure 14—External variables
In many translation-mediated news reporting situations and environments, particularly in television news media, the manner in which these variables are played out on and off screen in relation to each other, vis-à-vis a particular news story will substantially affect the perspective of the story causing accuracy and precision to vary in salience and producing a reconstruction of an already constructed reality.
As Tuchman (1978) confirms, news is the product of news workers who draw upon institutional processes and practices to make information available to consumers. “News is located, gathered, and disseminated by professionals working in organizations […]. It is the product of professionalism and it claims to interpret everyday occurrences to citizens and other professionals alike” (Tuchman, 1978: 4-5). Such interpretation is a construction of reality as these news workers see it, influenced by the institutional processes and practices of the organizations in which they work. Consequently, not only do they bring their own perspectives, but they also frame their interpretation within the institutional context and situationality of these organizations. Furthermore, translators and or translation-journalists work under the same conditions, influences and constraints. In news translation in particular, the interplay of all of these factors and variables is more pronounced, intense and immediate, where the various situationality-driven affinities may act as a reinforcing positive or negative factor in defining the overall translation strategy.

**Situationality and affinities**

In any translation situation, at least seven interrelated influential variables are brought to bear on the translation process. These are: (1) location, (2) time, (3) language, (4) language proximity, (5) cultural dependency, (6) ideology and (7) purpose.

**Location**

In terms of location, the translator may physically exist in the location of the source language (SL) text. An example of this is translations of English documents produced in Australia and translated for the ethnic communities within Australia. However, the translator may physically exist in the location of the target language (TL). This has generally been the case with most translation work, where in receptor languages and cultures, documents written in one language are translated by local translators. Another possibility is where the translators may exist in
neither SL nor TL location. For example, a text written in The United States is translated into Arabic for the United Arab Emirates by Arabic speaking translators living in Australia. In the 1990s, major Japanese computer companies commissioned translators in Singapore to translate Japanese manuals into English for the Australian market and other English speaking countries.

Location plays a critical part in the psychological, cultural and ideological affinities of the translator to the text being translated. Not only does it impose logistic constraints, but it also defines the ownership of text in terms of how the translator regards the text he or she is translating and whether such sense of ownership gives the translator licence to modify the text to suit certain target language requirements or objectives. In translation-mediated news reporting, *in situ* reporting, that is the reporter being physically in the location of the news event or story being reported, imposes a mode of operation that is different from *ex situ* reporting, where the reporter is physically elsewhere.

**Time**

In terms of time, the translator may exist in the same time interval of the Source Language and the Target Language, or the translator may exist in the same time interval of TL but not SL. The translator may exist in neither SL nor TL time.

**Language**

In terms of language, we have the following situations:

- The translator’s “native” language is the same as SL.
- The translator’s “native” language is the same as TL. The translator’s “native” language is neither SL nor TL.
- The translator’s “native” language is a variation or a derivative of SL or TL.
Language proximity

Languages are said to be convergent or divergent depending on the degree of similarity between them in terms of syntax, lexis and idiom. In translation, SL and TL are convergent or divergent languages. This may be measured in terms of the operations required to render one sentence in one language in another language.

Any translation activity involves a number of operations aimed at reproducing the source language text in the target text through the path of least resistance. The path of least resistance is often the shortest point possible between the source and the target and the most direct translation. However, routes routinized through pattern recognition and pre-alignment of these patterns may be used as off-the-shelf solutions, which are not necessarily the most direct translation.

Furthermore, the distance between any two languages varies on a continuum from close convergence to wide divergence. Any given text that is submitted to the process of translation is bound to vary in terms of transparency and subsequently congruency to target language, depending on the degree of difference between these languages. Such variability determines the degree of translatability between languages in translation, the number of operations required to complete the translation, and the techniques and strategies employed. Convergence and divergence variability may be intrinsically linguistic, that is the linguistic properties of language such as lexis and syntax may vary across languages, or linguistically manifested socio-technological developmental characteristics.

On the linguistic level, as a general rule, languages that belong to the same family of languages are usually convergent and families that belong to different families of languages are usually divergent.

The distance between source and target languages is measured by the degree of similarity phonologically, morphologically, lexically,
syntactically, semantically, pragmatically, rhetorically and schematically. Phonology in translation helps in determining word matches more easily, especially in the case of related languages. However, phonological similarity does not necessarily entail semantic or pragmatic matchability. This phenomenon is known in French as Les Faux Amis or false friends in English. Words may sound or look similar, but their meanings may be somewhat different. Moreover, rhetorical differences also play a critical role in determining the translatability.

**Cultural dependency**

Cultural dependency relates to the properties of text that are culture-bound. These properties reflect the social attitudes and mores and intellectual perspective of those who speak the language of a certain culture. Many expressions in language are specific to the cultures to which they belong. They evoke images closely related to social behaviour and temperament. Some of these expressions are universal and can be transferred with some ease across cultures and languages. Many other expressions are inherent to one specific culture and cannot be easily transferred, at least directly, without losing some of their associative meanings. Take for example the expression “smoking gun”, which has recently been parroted with sickening frequency by almost all English media outlets in reference to almost everything on earth from weapons of mass destruction in Iraq to Alzheimer’s disease. A smoking gun is a culturally laden figurative expression that means “something that serves as indisputable evidence or proof, especially of a crime”. Most likely, the imagery originally comes from American Western movies, where a gunslinger is caught with his gun still smoking. The expression is attributed to US Republican congressman Barber Conable during the Watergate investigation although Arthur Conan Doyle, in The Gloria Scott, a Sherlock Holmes story published in April 1893, is said to have been the first to use the phrase smoking pistol albeit in a non-figurative
sense: "the chaplain stood with a smoking pistol in his hand." Regardless of when and who said it first, the figurative sense of “smoking gun” is untranslatable in the same figurative manner.

Translatable texts are texts that are transparent. Transparency of text is the quality of text to be transparent to other languages. A transparent text is a text that presents universal information in a neutral style of writing, free from jargon, catch phrases and cultural idiosyncrasies.

**Translating the News**

Despite its crucial role in news making, translation in the news has thus far occupied a very small area of research into translation and communication studies in general. Translation-mediated news production is generally acutely under-researched and particularly not researched at all in Arabic television. There is little research to date into the effects of translation on English-language news and on news translated primarily from English into other languages, and more to the point, the Arabic language.

A review of the literature at hand indicates serious research deficiencies in this area. The major publications (including 115 books) in both media and translation studies have neglected this area, with the exception of Darwish (2005, 2007) and Clausen (2003), who slightly touches upon language import through news.

The role of translation in framing the news seems to be severely neglected in both journalism and translation studies. Despite the centrality of translation in shaping the news, none of the major publications in either discipline pay serious attention to how translation affects news making and reporting, and while translation-mediated news reporting has had a long history in international relations, and while television news, in particular, has been at the center of “academic hyperactivity” for the past
twenty-five years (MacGregor, 1997: 44), news translation has so far occupied a miniscule area of the research.

Translation has recently received some attention in the news with controversies over the translation of the Bin Laden tapes by CNN, Aljazeera and other news outfits. For over sixty years, the US Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), a federal agency that monitors and translates foreign media into English; the BBC Monitoring Service; the Associated Press; and Reuters, to name the main ones, have provided daily feeds of extensive coverage of open source intelligence information (obtained from full text and summaries of newspaper articles, conference proceedings, television and radio broadcasts, periodicals, and non-classified technical reports), monitored worldwide, serving thousands of daily newspaper, radio, television and online customers with coverage in all media and news.

Not only is translation a vital component of the work of these organizations, it is also an essential part of the operations of non-English news providers worldwide, which for the main part rely on these organizations for their news and other information sources. Yet surprisingly despite its centrality in the production of news in both directions, translation in this area has so far received little attention in both communication and translation studies.

With the advent of satellite television and Internet technologies in several languages, viewers are able to compare the same news reported by different channels and are able to intuitively discern the subtle differences in the reporting, whether in the same language (for example, English-language CNN, BBC and Fox TV, Arabic-language Aljazeera, Al-Arabiyah and LBC) or across languages (for example, CNN and Aljazeera). Anecdotally, some of these differences are translation-induced and as the original news reports are submitted to the translation process...
they also undergo a reframing process, which for the main part attempts to reconstruct a constructed reality.

It has been argued that although the news media present reality "the way it is" news writers and editors construct a subjective picture of reality by selecting and organizing information in a way that makes sense to them and their audiences through framing (Ryan, 1991). Confirming this view, Dobkin (1992) explains that “News stories are organized according to standard production formulas; television audiences need not only to be informed but also seduced, entertained, and in the proper state of mind for advertisers. News stories are also based on the intuitive, professional assumptions of news journalists and producers. These characteristics of news help determine the telling of the news stories and the way in which audiences are likely to interpret them” (27).

According to former foreign editor of The Guardian, Martin Woollacott (2005), journalists are instinctive moralists. “The first thing journalists want to know in a crisis is what are the rights and wrongs of it. They want a briefing on the physical facts, too—names, places and numbers, some history and geography—but the moral grid is primary. If they simply stuck with this as a given, they would indeed be poor creatures, and sometimes that does happen on stories of brief prominence. But on the bigger stories the moral view is debated; it evolves and is distinctly autonomous, insulated to some extent from the pressures of government”. This moral grid, as Woolacott calls it, is responsible for framing news reports and stories. Consider the following excerpt form CNN’s foreign correspondent Christiane Amanpour in Baghdad:

AMANPOUR: Obviously, for so many people here and probably around the world, as well, a deep sense of satisfaction that Saddam Hussein and, in this case, seven of his henchmen, co-defendants, are sitting trial, finally facing justice for some of the crimes they’re alleged to have perpetrated through that long, long brutal reign of his. [source: CNN, emphasis added]
The moral stance is framed in the phrases “deep sense of satisfaction”, “seven of his henchmen”, and “finally facing justice for some of the crimes”. This is far from objective reporting. The correspondent has already made up her mind about Saddam’s guilt, rightly or wrongly, and has framed news facts in a biased manner. More interesting is the surreptitious logical contradiction caused by the use of “alleged”. How can they be facing justice for crimes they are alleged to have perpetrated? Using the expression “face justice” in its loosest sense to mean “stand trial” frames the news report because the expression “face justice” connotes guilt on the part of the accused. The following excerpts illustrate the presumption of guilt connotated in this expression.

US President George W. Bush vowed today that Saddam Hussein would face ”justice he denied to millions”, but warned that the ousted dictator's stunning capture would not end deadly attacks on US forces in Iraq. [The Age]

Being aware of your planned visit to Indonesia, another outcome of the meeting was the resolution to bring to your attention our strong views and lasting commitment to ensure that those known Indonesia figures who have documented involvement the attempted genocide of the East Timorese will face justice.

In translation-mediated news, this framing process involves two things: (1) first-hand account of such events as witnessed or heard in their native form and submitted to the translation process by often bilingual correspondents and field reporters, who transmit their own translations to their news networks (and the Big Four), and (2) formal and ad hoc translation of text processed in its original form in situ and ex situ. It can be argued that in doing so, the original frames are subjected to a reframing process that changes the perspective and meaning of the original frames.

In the western media, foreign information sources, especially translations (with the exception of direct quotes and statements) are usually used as raw material that submits to a synthesis process to produce the news report. In contrast, in the Arabic media specifically, foreign information
sources are translated verbatim down to the sentence and phrase levels. The synthesis process in this case is largely limited to basic text rearrangement that is subject to distortion, obfuscation, and translation mediated reframing. Although access to the operations of news production at media outlets such as Aljazeera, is not always possible, the operational aspects of news production can be gleaned from the product itself. Having worked in newsrooms and information media outfits in the past, I have firsthand experience and knowledge of how newsrooms operate. For these newsrooms, translation constitutes the primary source of information.

**Information Sources**

Most international news is provided as daily feeds by major news agencies from open-source information, where translation plays a central role in the making and production of news. As Knight (2000) reminds us, news agencies have a powerful and invisible influence on the news that appears in the newspapers, radio and television. The “pervasive nature of agency material can help set agendas for those organisations which have placed their correspondents in the field” (115). And as political scientist Leon V. Sigal (1986) contends, “News is not what happens, but what someone says has happened or will happen”. Most international news is ready-made; either conveyed by foreign correspondents or raw-translated by *in situ* or *ex situ* monitors from open sources of news already framed.

For over sixty years, the US Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)\(^{11}\), a federal agency that monitors and translates foreign media into English; the BBC Monitoring Service, and the so-called Big Four: Reuters, Associated Press, United Press International and Agence France Presse, have provided daily feeds of extensive coverage of open source intelligence information (obtained from full text and summaries of newspaper articles, conference proceedings, television and radio broadcasts, periodicals, and non-classified technical reports), monitored
worldwide — serving thousands of daily newspaper, radio, television and
online customers with coverage in all media and news.

According to Boyd (1999), “an estimated million words a day stream
directly into newsroom computers and spill out from agency printers,
Reuters, PA, AP, UPI, which instantly identifies the source. BBC
Monitoring in Caversham listens in to radio, TV and news agencies of
140 countries in seventy different languages and passes on the world’s
most important stories. Domestic copy is supplied by the BBC’s General
News Service” (190). This “enormous productive news processing”, Boyd
confirms, requires taking “the mass of raw material coming in and refine,
reshape and rewrite it into the 100 hours of regular radio news programs
broadcast…” (190). The raw material is in fact raw translations of these
open source news broadcasts. On a regular day, a monitor-translator
listens to the broadcast live on radio or television, and while recording it,
he or she types up a summary of the news into the computer. The items
are prioritized and translated according to editorial policy or instructions,
and the raw translation is edited by the duty editor and then dispatched to
the news room, where it is submitted to “productive news processing” and
reframing. With technological advances, this operation has become
increasingly more efficient. The transition from the typewriter and reel-to-
reel recording devices to computerized and digitized processing has meant
shorter turnarounds and more pressure to produce ever increasing
information loads and a higher potential for error and misinterpretation.
With globalization, outsourcing open-source information to translation
agencies and freelance translators has become a more cost-effective
option for some of these operators. It is not unusual these days for news
feed providers to outsource news media material captured primarily from
the Internet, the preferred medium for most news material of low priority,
to translation agencies and for these agencies, to mete it out to their pool
of freelance translators for exploitative payment and dubious quality
standards.

Chapter 4
Translating the News
Clausen (2003) contends that these international news agencies play a strong role in globalization in their function as international wholesalers. “The international news agencies have great influence in international newsrooms. Their strong agenda-setting function, however, does not necessarily lead to ‘homogenisation’ of international information flows” (17). This may in part be attributable to the fact that most news feeds provided by these agencies are routinely translated into other languages, which results in further fragmentation, reframing and interpretation.

As Bell (1991) also confirms, “most news outlets carry far more news originated by other organizations than by their own journalists. Almost all international news derives from the “Big Four” news agencies: Reuters, Associated Press, United Press International and Agence France Presse” (16). In most situations, minor editorial changes are made to the news feeds received from these sources, and any major discrepancies between the English language news feed and the source language text or discourse can be traced back to the originator of the news feed. The following example illustrates the situation where the same news item is repeated in its native form (English) by various news media providers unchanged and retaining the original frames.

Ali said earlier that his house had been destroyed. His young son was buried in rubble but pulled out unharmed, he said. (Reuters)

Ali said earlier that his house had been destroyed. His young son was buried in rubble but pulled out unharmed, he said. (The Telegraph, Calcutta, India)

Zulfiqar said earlier that his house had been destroyed. His young son was buried in rubble but pulled out unharmed, he said. (The News International, Pakistan)

How the news item was put together in English in the first place and what happens to it when it is translated into other languages are two questions worthy of study, for not only is translation a vital component of the work of these organizations (The Big Four), but it is also an essential part of the operations of non-English news providers worldwide, which for the main part rely on these organizations for their news and other information.

Chapter 4
Translating the News
sources. Consequently, translation into these languages adds another dimension to the problem of open source information. Yet surprisingly despite its centrality in the production of news in both directions, translation in this area has so far received little attention in both communication and translation studies.

**News Translation as Reframing**

Despite the crucial role translation plays in framing domestic and international news, a survey of more than 370 codes of ethics and codes of practice adopted by different media outlets around the world shows a serious lack of attention to translation. With the exception of the code of ethics adopted by the Press Foundation of Asia, enshrined in the Principles on Reporting Ethnic Tensions, which evolved from a nine-nation journalism conference held in Davao City (in the Philippines) in April 1970, none of the surveyed codes mention translation as a principal factor in ensuring accuracy and objectivity, and none of the United Nations fifty-one founding member states cite translation in the codes of ethics of their media and journalism associations, accessed during this survey.

Furthermore, neither “translation” nor “language” (except occasionally) is entertained in the codes of ethics of journalism and media associations and institutions in advanced first world countries, such as Australia, Britain, France, Germany, USA, and Canada, which boast ethnically, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities. In Australia for example, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) provides foreign language services in several community languages. These services use translations of primary English information sources in their news broadcasts and other current affairs programs. Yet while the SBS code of practice recognizes “English as the common language of Australia and therefore as a major vehicle through which SBS can promote cross-cultural awareness”, hardly any attention is given to translation as a
defining factor in news production, except casually in the treatment of subtitling and voiceovers for television.

Almost all of the surveyed codes of ethics focus on ensuring: accuracy, fairness, truthfulness, objectivity and neutrality, and rehash the same principles in almost the same carbon-copy format. How can these be upheld when foreign language sources are translated? Recent world events have clearly demonstrated that such is a consistently risky undertaking fraught with problems relating to language, culture, politics, editorial policy, and ideology, among other things.

Generally, foreign information sources, especially translations (probably with the exception of direct quotes and statements) are usually used as raw materials that are submitted to a synthesis process to produce news reports that supposedly conform to editorial policy. In most situations however, information gathered and packaged as news feeds by newswire agencies, such as Reuters, Associated Press, and AFP (Agence France-Presse), are used and reused wholesale by various news and media outfits worldwide. It is not highly unusual to come across the same news item repeated “as is” by different news and information media providers.


defined factor in news production, except casually in the treatment of subtitling and voiceovers for television.

Almost all of the surveyed codes of ethics focus on ensuring: accuracy, fairness, truthfulness, objectivity and neutrality, and rehash the same principles in almost the same carbon-copy format. How can these be upheld when foreign language sources are translated? Recent world events have clearly demonstrated that such is a consistently risky undertaking fraught with problems relating to language, culture, politics, editorial policy, and ideology, among other things.

Generally, foreign information sources, especially translations (probably with the exception of direct quotes and statements) are usually used as raw materials that are submitted to a synthesis process to produce news reports that supposedly conform to editorial policy. In most situations however, information gathered and packaged as news feeds by newswire agencies, such as Reuters, Associated Press, and AFP (Agence France-Presse), are used and reused wholesale by various news and media outfits worldwide. It is not highly unusual to come across the same news item repeated “as is” by different news and information media providers.
For most non-English news media providers, news feeds constitute the primary source of information on international and surprisingly domestic and regional events. In the Arabic media for example, foreign information sources are translated verbatim down to the sentence and phrase levels. The synthesis process in this case is largely limited to basic text rearrangement that is subject to distortion, obfuscation, and translation mediated reframing of source information. Given the poor translation skills of most journalists and translators and the lack of structured methodologies in news translation that ensure accuracy, fairness, truthfulness, objectivity and neutrality of reported news and transferred information through translated documentaries, major violations of these principles are inevitable, as evidenced in this chapter.

This chapter examines translation-driven framing of news in Arabic satellite television vis-à-vis international and domestic codes of ethics and codes of practice. It highlights the central role translation plays in framing and reframing news and documentaries and argues that factors such as

---

*Figure 17—The seven standards of translation (source: author, 2004)*

---

Chapter 4
Translating the News
metaphor, metonymy, euphemism, allusion and quotatives, are real and potential culprits in translation-driven framing of news.

**Ethics of Mediating News**

In an unprecedented initiative, Aljazeera published its code of ethics in an ostentatious launch on the back of a media conference in Doha, Qatar on 12 July 2004, perhaps bowing to US pressure to toe the line after a spate of controversies that saw Aljazeera and the US Administration drift apart and relations sour in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq. Since then, excerpts from this code of ethics have been promoted by Aljazeera in regular program ending and inter-program breaks highlighting ten major points\(^{13}\).

1) Being a globally oriented media service, Aljazeera has adopted the following code of ethics in pursuance of the vision and mission it has set for itself:

2) Adhere to the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity, giving no priority to commercial or political considerations over professional ones.

3) Endeavour to get to the truth and declare it in our dispatches, programmes and news bulletins unequivocally in a manner which leaves no doubt about its validity and accuracy.

4) Treat our audiences with due respect and address every issue or story with due attention to present a clear, factual and accurate picture while giving full consideration to the feelings of victims of crime, war, persecution and disaster, their relatives and our viewers, and to individual privacy and public decorum.

5) Welcome fair and honest media competition without allowing it to affect adversely our standards of performance so that getting a "scoop" will not become an end in itself.

6) Present diverse points of view and opinions without bias or partiality.

7) Recognise diversity in human societies with all their races, cultures and beliefs and their values and intrinsic individualities in order to present unbiased and faithful reflection of them.
8) Acknowledge a mistake when it occurs, promptly correct it and ensure it does not recur.

9) Observe transparency in dealing with news and news sources while adhering to internationally established practices concerning the rights of these sources.

10) Distinguish between news material, opinion and analysis to avoid the pitfalls of speculation and propaganda.

11) Stand by colleagues in the profession and offer them support when required, particularly in light of the acts of aggression and harassment to which journalists are subjected at times. Cooperate with Arab and international journalistic unions and associations to defend freedom of the press.

Hailed as a progressive approach to journalism and the media in the Arab world, the new code of ethics adopted standard Arabic as the language of broadcasting at Aljazeera. In the section titled “Composition and Treatment”, left un-translated into English, the Code of Practice (or conduct), which is obviously at least in part a translation from an English textbook on journalistic writing, states:

1) Poise and not sensationalism is what wins your audience’s respect. Consequently, you should avoid exaggeration when describing events, presenting the news, or talking to people with expertise or opinion. This requires non-emotionalism [emotional detachment] towards the events in a manner that such emotionalism does not suggest to the viewer that there is sympathy or bias towards one party or another—even through what is called body language (gestures, facial expressions, etc).

2) Adjectives and attributes of a general nature most often cast doubt on the credibility and neutrality of the story (heinous conduct, barbarism, savagery).

3) Simplified standard Arabic is the language of the channel—that is [the language which is] free from complexity and affectation, in other words, what is known as the language of journalism. However, simplification should not mean resorting to slang words unless the context requires that (such as citing a slang phase).

4) Language is a communication tool, and a journalist must master it in order to be able to use its vocabulary and phrases in a manner that will serve the news/report/topic because not using the correct word or phrase undermines the accuracy of the journalistic material. Equally, language errors and weak constructions negatively affect the channel’s reputation.
5) Avoiding trite rhetorical devices [literally, tricks] and memorized pre-cast phrases (such as [Arabic expressions]), and using correct and easy expressions that have direct significations to communicate the required meaning. Words and sentences that have more than one meaning or which may be construed to underestimate or abuse any belief, race, culture or individual.

While the focus of these principles is news reporting, content analysis of both news broadcasts and current affairs programs soon reveals that these principles have not been uniformly and consistently observed in either news broadcasts or regular programs. A good example of principle three is the weekly program presented by veteran Egyptian journalist Muhammad Hasanain Haykal, *Ma’a Haykal: tajribatu hayat* (With Haykal: A Life’s Experience). This program is presented from start to finish in colloquial Egyptian, with occasional standard Arabic. This violates the rule that Standard Arabic will be used. Hayakal is regarded by Aljazeera’s journalists as *Le grand maître de journalisme arabe*, and is approached with awesome reverence. Consequently, it seems he has been given licence to conduct his program in his own Egyptian dialect. What this tells us though, socially, is that Aljazeera is willing to break its own rules when it is unable to enforce them.

Nowhere is translation mentioned in these codes of ethics and conduct, and it is rather indicative of the lack of awareness or underestimation of the role and impact of translation in the realization of all of the above instructions. There may be some guidelines for translation that exist somewhere in a separate document, but information gathered through informal personal communication with translators working at Aljazeera prior to the launch of its Code of Ethics confirm that no such guidelines document existed. What is interesting however is if such a document now exists, how does it link whatever guidelines there are to both the Code of Ethics and more specifically the Code of Conduct? This remains speculative and what is known to date supports the view taken here that
translation ranks low on the list of priorities of developers of these codes despite the centrality of translation in the daily productions at Aljazeera.

Aljazeera’s code of ethics has been seen as a reaction to the mounting pressure from the US administration over its coverage of the war on Iraq. During the war, US officials accused Aljazeera of shoddy and biased journalism and providing a media platform for terrorists. The then Aljazeera spokesperson Jihad Ballout is reported to have said that the code of ethics is designed to have the network “adhere to professional core values, distinguish between what is news and what is opinion and analysis, and monitor its output, acknowledging unintended mistakes if and when they occur and ensuring they do not recur.”\textsuperscript{14} However, the distinction is not that simple and a set of rules, which are subject to interpretation, cannot guarantee that separation, especially when reports are mediated through translation and there are no clear standards or policies to guide the translation process. Evidence we have to date suggests a predominant absolute literal translation approach permeating not only Aljazeera’s news reports but also every single news agency and network across the full spectrum of Arabic media.

Moreover, Aljazeera’s adoption of a code of ethics should not be puzzling. As a media network modelled after the western school of media, it was only a matter of time before a code of ethics was seen as a cutting edge solution for the apprehensions surrounding Aljazeera’s professional standards. As Coady and Bloch (1996) observe, the 1990s were characterised by what could almost be an obsession with ethics in the west and across professions. Trailing behind its western masters, it is not surprising that Aljazeera adopted a code of ethics. However, what is really surprising is the absence of translation as a defining and constitutive factor in upholding these ethics.
Translation-mediated framing

Translation mediated framing is framing that is informed or driven primarily by translation—its techniques, processes, strategies and constraints.

Why is translation a process of approximation? In the presence of constraints that prevent an exact replication of a source text, an absolute equivalent is not possible at all levels of text (lexical, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, rhetorical). The ultimate objective of true translation is to convey the message of the original text in its totality, but this is not always possible and tradeoffs have to be made. These tradeoffs affect the degree of approximation between the source and the translation. However, a translator’s choices are not always driven by constraints. A translator may choose a specific strategy to realize a specific objective in the absence of constraints.

Language of the News and the Illusion of Modernity

Looking at the impact of literal translation on language, thought and expression in Arabic journalism today, one could contend that translation is a process of simplification; it (ideally temporarily) suspends the rhetorical properties of the target language in favour of those in the source language. Consequently, alien rhetorical features that only work in the source language are introduced to the target language—features which largely do not have the same rhetorical effects as in the source.

In this sense, I argue that modern writing styles of Arabic journalism today are not the product of original invention or ingenious planning, but rather a translation-induced “Mickey-Mouse” recreation of western styles through adherence to form stripped of its rhetorical features. I argue that what are regarded as underdeveloped old Arabic styles of writing by English language standards are highly developed and sophisticated styles that have become out of step with modern Arabic due to the decline of...
Arab civilization during the Ottoman rule and European colonization and post-colonial imperialist domination. Compared to Arabic writing styles in the Golden Age, modern styles represent a primordial stage of development. These old styles served well when linguistic development was on a par with intellectual progress in literature, science and technology and were more or less emulated in a reversed simplification process when the bulk of knowledge store was translated into European languages.

It is wrong to assume that the so-called “simplification” of modern Arabic has been due to a deliberate act on the part of Arab journalists in the last half of the twentieth century. Some Arab journalists and researchers have given in to the illusion that the professional body of Arab journalism decided one day to change the Arabic language writing styles deliberately and consciously and that they collectively decided to lay down a clear and decisive strategy to achieve this goal—so much so that the Lebanese journalist Adeeb Mroueh (1961) confidently declares:

“[t]he refined easy style we have achieved in Arabic writing today is not attributable to language teachers in schools and colleges, nor is it attributable to writers and ancient men of letters. It is in the first place owing to the journalism of today” (111).

There is no doubt that the twentieth century saw various individual and collective moves and campaigns to simplify and modernize the Arabic language. Some of these misguided or misled “reformers” went as far as calling for giving up the standard Arabic language in favour of the vernacular. There is nothing surprising about this, as Afifi (1980) asserts. “For the calls of today are the same as those of yesterday—a combination of ignorant voices driven by incompetence and lack of culture and education and voices motivated by racist claims or historical hatred waiting for the opportunity to spread their venom. Sometimes, they choose the call for reform or renewal to turn away suspicion and doubt about their real motives”. However, there is no need today to resort to this kind of camouflage, diversionary tactics and political correctness, as
blatant foreign interference has become a clear policy. On the pretext of fighting global terrorism, Western powers led by the USA, have attempted to force a language and cultural change in the Arab region to the extent that a new American “sanitized” version of the Quran has been published by the US government.

There is no doubt also that Arabic writing styles became stale and archaic during the Ottoman influence and European colonialism that followed after these writing styles reached a superlative degree of refinement, complexity and artistry during the Golden Age of the Arab and Islamic Empire. During that time, geniuses such as al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Ibn Khaldun, whose writing styles were highly refined and sophisticated, were shining examples of clear, effective and powerful communication styles.

During the most influential Ottoman rule, a hybrid variation of the Turkish language, mixing Turkish with Arabic and Farsi, became the language of administration and Arabic was confined to religious studies.

**Reframing the Already Framed**

Despite the cloning effect globalization of news media has had on regional and national terrestrial and satellite television, the visual clutter and graphic razzmatazz that accompany news presentation, and the reproduction of almost the same presentation format—for example, all news media networks have a news crawl at the bottom of the screen (see figures)—most news information carried by these media outlets is already framed at the source. Usually, it is in their representation to the viewers through translation mediation that the frames are reframed.

Turner (1991) argues that the phenomenon of global news the CNNization of the world, does not mean “just the advent of globally available television services, but the fact that such services have begun to play a role in international politics” (MacGregor, 1997:5) and regional
social and political change. But as noted elsewhere (Darwish, 2005), Aljazeera, and other Arabic media networks, such as Al-Arabiyyah, are contributing to social and cultural change in an unbridled and unplanned manner, and there seems to be a lack of a clear strategy on how to implement this agenda. The newly found “freedom” of the press suffers from oscillation and sporadic instrumentalization of inter-state feuds and rivalries, detected in innuendos, insinuations, indirect contextualization and below the belt punches. Here is a sample from Aljazeera’s tabloid program al-ittijah al-mu’akis (The Opposite Direction), presented by Faisal Al-Qasim, aired on January 3, 2006.

[Original text]

فaisal القاسم: تجربة طبية مشاهدة الكرام، لماذا لا يترحم الرئيس الأمريكي بمواقبه الديمقراطية السخيفة إلا على سوريا؟ يتسائل أحدهم، هل الأنظمة العربية الأخرى ديمقراطيات أفلاطونية؟ لماذا لم يتحدث بوش يوما عن تطبيق الديمقراطية في السعودية المحكومة على طريق القرون الوسطى؟ أم أنه من فرط إيمانه بارك حكم الشريعة فيها؟

[Translation]

FAISAL AL-QASIM: Good greeting[s] my dear viewers. Why doesn’t the American President deign to make his absurd democratic sermons except to Syria? Someone wonders: Are the other Arab regimes platonics democracies? Why hasn’t Bush ever spoken out about applying democracy in Saudi Arabia, which is ruled in the manner of Medieval Times? Or is it because of his too much faith he has already blessed the Shari’a law over there?

This kind of contextualization and framing is used over and over in the same and other programs.

The following example from Aljazeera may highlight this problem.

الإعلان بعد أيام من تعهد مشرف عبر محامي بخجل بزته العسكرية والتخلي عن قيادة الجيش إذا ما أعيد انتخابه لولاية رئاسية جديدة

Literal Translation:

The announcement came days after Musharraf undertook through his lawyer to take off his military uniform and give up the command of the army should his election be returned [that is, re-elected] for a new presidential term.

The problem with this Arabic news item, which was also carried in the same way by other leading English language news outlets, is that
Musharraf was not elected in the first place. Musharraf seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999. Here is the same news from the BBC and Reuters.

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf will give up his post of army chief if he is re-elected for another term of office, his chief lawyer has said.\(^\text{16}\)

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) - Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf will give up his post of army chief if he is re-elected president and will be sworn in for a new term as a civilian, his lawyer told the Supreme Court on Tuesday.\(^\text{17}\)

**Framing Reality**

The general view among media researchers and practitioners alike is that the news is a representation of the real world; it is not the real world. It is a window on the world, as Tuchman (1978) puts it, through the frame of which we learn about the world. However, she contends that like any frame that delineates a world, the news frame is problematic in its characteristics and the perspectives it presents. Echoing this view, Schudson (2003) states, “news is not a mirror of reality. It is a representation of the world, and all representations are selective. This means that some human beings must do the selecting; certain people make decisions about what to present as news and how to present it” (33).

Journalists are at the forefront of those making such decisions, and as Alan Knight (2000) explains in *Reporting the Orient*, “Journalists inhabit a culture of ideas which shape the way they report, select, edit and prioritise news. These ideas reproduce and reinforce themselves in the news making process, re-creating apparently flexible ways for imagining the world outside the newsroom.” (21).

To understand the role of news frames, we may turn to framing theory for answers. As a theoretical perspective, the concept of framing has become increasingly common in understanding mass communication, “whether in the fields of social psychology, public opinion, or media studies” (Norris et al, 2003:10), because it offers plausible explanations for the way news
is constructed and presented to the viewers and readers. A frame is a property of a message, and as Hallahan (1999) confirms, “a frame limits the message’s meaning by shaping the inferences that individuals make about the message” (207), [emphasis in original].

According to Kauffman, Elliott and Shmueli (2003), “framing involves both the construction of interpretive frames and their representation to others”. These interpretive frames reflect judgments made by the creators or framers of the message (Hallahan, 1999:207). Furthermore, Rhoads (1997) defines a frame as “a psychological device that offers a perspective and manipulates salience in order to influence subsequent judgment.” This definition focuses on two relevant elements of framing: perspective and manipulation. One of the major problems of translating news or any kind of text for that matter is a phenomenon known as shift in focus. This shift in focus is practically a shift in perspective through linguistic manipulation and reconstruction. One could argue that obligatory syntactic shifts in translating news reframe the message through shifting the focus from the subject to the verb in Arabic for example. To illustrate, the standard simple sentence structure in Arabic is Verb + Subject + Complement as opposed to the English simple sentence structure Subject + Verb + Complement. This constraint requires an obligatory shift to conform to the linguistic syntax norms of the target language. By doing so, a shift in focus is introduced that frames the message differently.

English sentence structure: The boy went to school.

Arabic sentence structure: Went the boy to school.

**News Frames and Translation Frames**

Ryan (1991) contends that “far from being an objective list of facts, a news story results from multiple subjective decisions about whether and how to present happenings to media audiences” (54). The selection
process produces a news frame where “an entire newscast rather than a single story can carry news frames” (Ryan, 1991:54). These news frames “are almost entirely implicit and taken for granted. They do not appear to either journalists or audience as social constructions but as primary attributes of events that reporters are merely reflecting” (Katy Abel, 1985, cited in Ryan, 1991:54).

Baker (2006) defines frames as:

“structures of anticipation, strategic moves that are consciously initiated in order to present a narrative in a certain light. Framing is an active process of signification by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of reality” (167).

The following excerpt form a news item broadcast recently by Channel Nine may illustrate this selection and construction process.

These are images of the three young men police want for questioning for the cowardly stabbing.

Detectives are now focusing the investigation on what they call a pack of young Middle Eastern men who allegedly went on a vicious rampage, following the December eleven riot. [Channel Nine, 2006]

Of special interest in this example is the use of the American month-day format instead of the standard Australia day-month format. In analyzing this news excerpt, one is inclined to conclude that this shift of date format is a subtle (conscious) semantic framing at the micro level, which is operating in a larger frame or meta frame—that is the frame of terrorism and the September 11 events.

How this news excerpt translates into other languages and retains the same news frame will depend on the translation strategy and approach chosen by the translator and on the editorial intervention of the news editor. Most likely, the word “cowardly” would be edited out of the translation as it might be deemed culturally inappropriate, while the “December eleven” would be lost to both the translator and the news editor, since making the semantic connection requires active elicitation of the original news frame. In either case, a new news frame is created.

Chapter 4
Translating the News
Semantic framing

One of major areas of translation reframing of news occurs at the semantic level. The choice of words frames the news report to produce a specific semantic meaning. Consider the following excerpts from a newspaper headline and Arabic news broadcasts showing how the words “deposed” and “toppled” have been mirror-translated into Arabic. In the first instance, the Arabic word (مخلوع “makhlu”) is used. This word means “plucked out, torn off, and pulled up by the roots”. Colloquially, the word also means someone who is of weak or loose character”, akin to the standard Arabic word (خليع “khalee”), which means “wanton”, among other things. In the second, the Arabic word (مطاح به “mutah bihi” is used. This Arabic word is a derivative of the verb (طاح “taha”, which means “to perish or almost perish, to get lost in the land”.

[al-Hayat online]

الرئيس العراقي المخلوع للمرة التاسعة أمام القضاء اليوم ... الإدعاء سيعبر صدام ويرزان بالقوة على حضور المحكمة والمحامون بقاطعون الجلسة ويطالبون بإقالة القاضي.

[Translation]

The deposed Iraqi president for the ninth time before justice today...Prosecution will force Saddam and Barzan by force to attend the court and the lawyers boycott the session and demand the dismissal of the judge.

[Aljazeera, 18/10/2005]

محاكمة الرئيس العراقي المخلوع صدام حسين

[Translation]

Trial of deposed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

[BBC, Arabic, 13/06/2003]

قال بول بريرمر الحاكم الأمريكي للعراق إن القوات الأمريكية تواجه مقاومة منظمة من الموالين للرئيس العراقي المخلوع صدام حسين والذين يخترقون على حد قوله في ما أسماه بعمليات تخريب سياسيا محض.]

[Translation]

Paul Brimmer, the American Ruler of Iraq, said the American forces are facing organized resistance from loyalists to the
deposed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, who are getting involved, as he says, in what he called sheer political sabotage operations. [ash-sharq al-awsat]^{20}

[Translation]

[... at the time when the American soldiers are asserting that they are about to deal with the remnants of the regime of the toppled Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

Let us now consider how English media framed the event.

From only a short distance away, the toppled Iraqi president coldly watches witnesses testify about unspeakable torture under his regime. At times Hussein's rage forces him to his feet and a judge orders guards to silence him. [CNN, December 5, 2005]^{21}

The New York Times first reported the withdrawal saying Saddam's son Qusay and one of the toppled Iraqi president's personal assistants, Abid al-Hamid Mahmood, carried a letter from Saddam authorising the huge cash removal. [The Guardian, May 6, 2003]^{22}

The chief lawyer for deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein says he has been denied access to his client for the first time in more than a year. [BBC, 5 February 2006]^{23}

Ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is in custody following his dramatic capture by US forces in Iraq. [BBC, 14 December 2003]^{24}

In recent newscasts, Aljazeera opted for “the former Iraqi president”, a more neutral descriptor, thus creating a new semantic frame.

**Truth in News Translation**

Generally, journalism is often seen as the pursuit of truth. However, as Windschuttle (1997) explores, this view is not widely held, and the belief that journalism can report the world truthfully and objectively is considered by various scholars not only wrong but naïve. To a large extent, this is an indirect admission of the numerous constraints imposed on the process of news reporting. Arguing against this view, Windschuttle contends that “the claim that journalism is a pursuit of truth and an attempt to report what really happens is not refuted by the fact that many
journalists often fail to achieve these goals. It is obvious that there are good and bad journalists just as there are good and bad scientists, doctors and builders. One of the most common fallacies made by contemporary media criticism is to draw from the premise that some reporting is misleading and inadequate, the conclusion that all reporting is misleading and inadequate, or even more fallaciously, that news reporting is inherently misleading and inadequate” (Windschuttle, 1997:5) [emphasis in original].

By the same token, the famous Italian proverb “traduttori, tradittori” (translators, traitors) is essentially an admission of the limitation of translation in conveying the truth of the original message. In his book About Translation, Newmark (1991) decrees that translation “is concerned with moral and factual truth. This truth can be effectively rendered if it is grasped by the reader, and that is the purpose and the end of translation” (Newmark, 1991:1). However, this is not any easy goal to achieve. As BeDuhn (2003) contends, accurate, unbiased translations are based on three major factors: linguistic content, literary context and cultural environment. “The very same three things are consulted to assess a translation once it is done” (xvi).

Finally, neither journalism nor translation is an exact science. Both belong to human behaviour, and human behaviour is the least exact. Human behaviour is complex, adaptive, unpredictable and individual. However, human behaviour can be organized, rationalized and controlled. This will vary from individual to individual and from situation to another. No two individuals are the same. Different individuals acquire languages differently, and languages are dynamic and constantly changing in response to the changing environment. Moreover, apart from their inherent structural and developmental differences, in interlingual interaction, languages converge and diverge on a continuum of proximity. Yet pursuit of truth in translation is predicated on the notion that
translation is a rational, objective-driven, result-focused process that yields a product meeting a set of specifications, tacit or expressed, and not a haphazard activity (Darwish, 2003)—and mechanisms must be found to ensure the process remains under control.

As Wolfgang Iser (2000) maintains, “each interpretation transposes something into something else” (5). Interpretation is primarily a form of translatability, Iser confirms, and as such, interpretation is bound to be different in three situations: (1) when different types of texts are transposed into other types, (2) when cultures or cultural levels are translated into terms that allow for an exchange between what is foreign and what is familiar, and (3) “when incommensurabilities, such as God, the world, and human kind—which are neither textual nor scripted—are translated into language for the purpose of grasping and subsequently comprehending them” (6).

Furthermore, translators and or translation-journalists work under the same conditions, influences and constraints, and their work is essentially an act of interpretation, which is an act of translatability, to adopt Iser’s view. In news translation in particular, the interplay of all of these factors and variables is more pronounced, intense, immediate and complex.

**Applying the three-tier model**

A serious example of erroneous translations is the initial rendition by Arabic media networks of the US President George W. Bush’s reportedly improvised phrase “crusade” in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as a “Cross-ade War”\(^{25}\), which has framed the US response ever since in the minds of viewers of these Arabic networks. The translation-mediated framing of the President’s message forced the White House to explain the pragmatic aspects of the usage of the term “crusade”, with a small “c” rather than “Crusade” with a capital “C”. In a damage-control exercise, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer soon
afterwards told reporters that President Bush only meant to say that this is a "broad cause" to stamp out terrorism worldwide.

"I think to the degree that that word has many connotations that would upset many of our partners or anybody else in the world, the president would regret if anything like that was conveyed. But the purpose of his conveying it is in the traditional English sense of the word, it's a broad cause," said Fleischer. [source: Newsday, Inc.]

Other examples do not have immediate reactions as this one, but the incremental effect contributes to the reframing of the original message. Consider the following excerpt from the British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s statement on the brutal killing of British hostage Ken Bigley in Iraq, aired on Aljazeera in October 2004 and the Arabic translation voiceover.

Original English text:

I feel desperately sorry for Ken Bigley, for his family, who have behaved with extraordinary dignity and courage. I feel utter revulsion at the people who did this, not at the barbaric nature of the killing, but the way frankly they played with the situation in the past few weeks.

Arabic voiceover:

أشعر بأسف عميق لمساحة عائلة بيغيلي والتي أظهرت نبلا وشجاعة. وأشعر بمنتهى الإشمئزاز إزاء هؤلاء الناس الذين فعلوا ذلك ليس فقط بسبب الطبيعة البربرية لما أقسموا عليه، ولكن أيضا للطريقة التي فعلوا بها ذلك.

Back translation:

I feel deep sorrow for the tragedy of Bigley’s family who showed nobility and courage. I feel utter disgust towards those people who did this, not because of the barbaric nature of what they committed, but the way they did it.

Here, we can immediately see the extent of reframing that has taken place in the translation, which is inaccurate, imprecise and stripped off its original rhetorical effects. Most serious is the shift in focus from the victim, the man who lost his life, to the tragedy of his family (sorrow for the tragedy of Bigley’s family). There is no mention of “Ken Bigley” in the translation. Moreover, the expression “they played with the situation”
is rendered as “the way they did it”. These infelicities can be summarised in the following Translation Analysis template.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semiotic Source</th>
<th>أشعر باصف عميق لأسأة عائلة بيغلي والتي أظهرت نبلا وشجاعة. أشعر بانتهى الأشمنزار إزاء هؤلاء الناس الذين فعلوا ذلك. ليس فقط بسبب الطبيعة الباردلة لما أقدموا عليه، ولكن أيضا للطريقة التي فعلوا بها ذلك.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Text</td>
<td>I feel desperately sorry for Ken Bigley, for his family, who have behaved with extraordinary dignity and courage. I feel utter revulsion at the people who did this, not at the barbaric nature of the killing, but the way frankly they played with the situation in the past few weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Translation</td>
<td>I feel deep sorrow for the tragedy of Bigley’s family who showed nobility and courage. I feel extreme disgust towards those people who did that, not because of the barbaric nature of what they committed, but the way they did that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraint</td>
<td>Lexical x Semantic x Pragmatic x Rhetorical x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Tier</td>
<td>Primary x Operative Interpretive x Ideological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Translation Operation</td>
<td>Direct Matching x Interventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Lexical constraints dictated by collocations in the source text (for example, desperately sorry) seem to be the cause of operating at the operative level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following recent example further illustrates the risks of news mistranslation.

![Figure 18— Iran Bans CNN or Translation Error](Source: Bloomberg, January 16, 2006)

**Figure 18**

**Iran Bans CNN for Misquoting Leader on Nuclear Issue**

Due to an error in translation, CNN incorrectly quoted Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in his speech given on Saturday, as saying that Iran has the right to build nuclear weapons,” the network said in today’s statement. In fact, President Amadinejad said Iran has the right to nuclear energy, and that ‘a nation that has civilization does not need nuclear weapons,’ and ‘our nation does not need them’.

CNN apologized on all its platforms which included the translation error, including CNN International, CNNUSA and CNN.com, and also expressed its regrets to the Iranian Government and the Iranian ambassador to the UN,” the network said.

Chapter 4

*Translating the News*
Moreover, as I have discussed elsewhere (Darwish, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005), translation is at best a process of approximation where two systems of approximates—individual and general—coexist and sometimes compete. On the individual level, these approximates; lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic, are dependent on the individual’s own competence and system of classification. On the general level, a speech community may choose by convention to adopt a system of approximates that filters through to the individual system of approximates. Sometimes, there are irreconcilable differences between the two systems. In cross-lingual mediated communication, the translation act is always an act of intervention to reconcile these two systems of approximates. Excluding individual differences among translators in terms of competence and performance, the process is subject to the laws of relativity, optimality and approximation.

Again, while translation is an attempt to communicate aspects of the original message in another language, it is not immune to the translator-writer’s idiosyncratic features of style, diction and convictions. These will be brought to bear on any rendition, motivated or otherwise, and which play a crucial role in the extent of loss, interference and perspective of the translation.

It is therefore necessary for journalists, news producers, news translators and translation educators to forge an understanding of the relationship between translation and news framing in order to define, develop and employ effective translation strategies that ensure objectivity of news reporting, or at least raise awareness of the potential risks of translation to news framing.

Fairclough (2003:8) argues that texts have immediate causal effects in that they bring about changes in our knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and so on, and long-term causal effects. It can also be argued that by
subjecting text to the translation process, there is the possibility of introducing new causal effects that are not intended in the original text.

**Conclusion**

Straddling tradition and modernization, Aljazeera has set out to be something different. With a clear agenda to lead the Arab world into the twenty-first century and a dream of western-style democracy, it has for the main part managed to strike a balance between two opposite poles. However, its overnight rise to fame in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and US-led war on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that followed, has forced other countries in the Middle East to set up their own copycats—a case in point is the launch of the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya in March 2003. This has placed a great deal of demand on these Arabic satellite television stations to vie for influence as international Arab media players and as presumed regional democratization and normalization agents in the Arab world. Consequently, these television stations have experienced a marked increase in news and current affairs programs that rely on juxtaposing different and contrastive views of East and West. These networks have been quickly pressed into service to provide live world-class news and current affairs programs, and have been undergoing a process of refinement, adjustment and sometimes spells of atavism.

While there are similarities between Aljazeera and Al-Arabiya in terms of news production and presentation, there are also stark differences in the way they frame the news. For example, in their recent coverage of Saddam Hussein’s trial, Aljazeera has referred to Saddam as “the former Iraqi president”, while Al-Arabiya as “the deposed Iraqi president”, despite the fact that both channels have used the same news feeds provided by the international news agencies and despite their claim to objective and unbiased reporting. There are also serious discrepancies within the same television channel across news stories, indicating internal
inconsistency of editorial policies and that the concept of framing and translation-induced framing is not fully understood, discussed or addressed. For the Arabic news media, the definition of truth seems to be a viscous one depending on the duty editor. Ironically, Al-Arabiya’s slogan is: “Al-Arabiya keeps you closer to the truth”.

Nonetheless, in their over-reliance on translations of news from international providers, these television networks are contributing to the reframing of news events and creating information and cultural misfits, often unintended by the original sources and sometimes unwelcome by the intended viewers. Over-reliance on translation as the main source of information is certainly a major contributor to the creation of target language news frames.

Notes

1 http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/etccs/research/tgn/events/tgn/.
3 The influence of global media processes has certainly caused linguistic shifts in English speaking countries. Evidently, the impact of these processes on non-English speaking countries is different and is still very little understood, especially in the case of Arabic. American English remains part of the body of the English language and its logic and the fact that English speaking countries have adopted Americanisms has no relation to the effects of English on other languages, especially Arabic.
5 From the title of a poem by Marianne Moore (1887 - 1972).
13 http://english.aljazeera.net/IR/exeres/4B3ABFB8-9082-4B05-B399-7BF68D4A39D6.htm
15 http://www.aljazeera.net/IR/exeres/22C26017-A9C5-4A97-BE3B-1C1845968113.htm

Chapter 4
Translating the News
16 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/south_asia/7000120.stm
17 http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSISL1129520070918?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews
18 Source: al-Hayat online: http://www.daralhayat.com/arab_news/levant_news/01-2006/Item-20060131-22115bd6-c0a8-10ed-0013-5f0aeba0db69/story.html
21 Source: http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/12/05/robertson/
22 Source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,950307,00.html
23 Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4684238.stm
24 Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3317429.stm
25 The conventional Arabic translation of “Crusade war” is “harb salibiyyah” (حرب صليبية), which literarily translates into English as: “cross- + (attributive article meaning) pertaining war”.

Chapter 4
Translating the News
Chapter 5
Framing Realities in Arabic News

In this chapter:

- Overview
- Epistemic Knowledge versus Linguistic Knowledge
- Translation-induced metaphoric shift
- Waking the dead and dormant metaphors
- Metaphoric imperialism
- Metaphor, collocation and the clash of domains
- Metaphor and genitives
- Reductive and Summative Metaphors
- Euphemism, dysphemism and socio-cultural circumlocution
- Verticality
- Sensory-perceptual epistemic inference
- Sources of Influence and Normalization
Aims

This chapter presents a discussion of salient features of translation-mediated reframing of Arabic news broadcasts transmitted by Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite television channels. It aims to identify the relationship between the linguistic and epistemic realities of news discourse in the translation-mediated process of reframing, focusing on the dissonance that this kind of mediation causes between the epistemic and linguistic knowledge as embodied in the discourse of news broadcasts. This chapter takes a different approach to the discussion of framing and reframing in that it focuses on cognitive dissonance as a psychological state of contradictory cognition of the same reality expressed in two different languages, which creates discourse that contributes to sociocultural change.
Overview

Modern languages have developed linguistic patterns that are often in consonance with the epistemic knowledge of the world. For the main part, epistemic knowledge is inferred from such linguistic patterns and when dissonance occurs between linguistic and epistemic inferences, language compensates by utilizing certain linguistic patterns and rhetorical techniques to realign linguistic and epistemic realities. For example, the English hypothetical conditional antecedent "If I were you" is a compensatory linguistic technique to achieve concordance between linguistic and epistemic inferences when it is physically impossible for one person to be another person physically. Languages differ in their linguistic representation of epistemic knowledge and when any two languages are juxtaposed, they are bound to produce cognitive dissonance due to the disagreement that ensues between the linguistic forms within the language pair used to express the same epistemic phenomena. Left irreconciled, such infelicities are bound to change the shared experience of a speech community or surreptitiously reconstitute its social and cultural model.

This chapter examines aspects of translation-induced dissonance in linguistic and epistemic inference and aspects of reframing that such dissonance creates in translated newscasts and argues that translation mediation is a primary causative factor of dissonance that plays a major role in reframing news items, not just immediately but also incrementally over time.

This chapter draws on examples from Arabic news and current affairs corpus of the Aljazeera satellite television network.
Epistemic Knowledge versus Linguistic Knowledge

Our knowledge of the world’s phenomena is often expressed in linguistic-epistemic forms that express these phenomena metaphorically or define them conventionally. As our knowledge of these phenomena changes through discovery and scientific enquiry, a shift in the epistemic definitions of these phenomena occurs causing dissonance with the epistemic forms used to express them linguistically. Other epistemic forms may include pictorial and audio-visual representations of epistemic knowledge. Sherry and Trigg (1996:38) define *epistemic forms* as models of information. “An epistemic form is a target structure that guides the inquiry process. It shows how knowledge is organized or concepts are classified, as well as illustrating the relationships among the different facts and concepts being learned”. ¹ Epistemic forms include charts, maps, process flows, that visually organize information.

![Figure 19— Pictorial Representation of Epistemic Reality (Picasso, Girl before a Mirror)](image)

*Chapter 5*

*Framing Realities in Arabic News*
Translation-induced metaphoric shift

When epistemic shifts occur, the linguistic patterns in most situations do not concur with the epistemic knowledge. For example, “the sun rises” is a linguistic form that originally described a natural phenomenon as observed by people who understood it that way. While our knowledge of this phenomenon has changed—that is, we now know that the sun does not rise—the epistemic form remains in use. To avoid this dissonance between our epistemic knowledge and linguistically represented epistemic form, the form is transferred into a metaphor that invokes a perceptual and cognitive representation consistent with the new epistemic reality, which for all intents and purposes may be in disagreement with its ontic nature. Consequently, metaphors act as re-constitutive epistemic forms that reconcile linguistic and epistemic realities. When such reconciliation occurs, metaphors become dead or dormant metaphors—they lose the idea or phenomenon they initially denoted. A good example of such metaphors is the term “heartburn”, once believed to be related to ailments of the heart, and now known to have nothing to do with the heart. Yet we continue to use the term metaphorically to refer to the burning sensation in the stomach.

Heartburn (n) an uneasy burning sensation in the stomach, typically extending toward the esophagus, and sometimes associated with the eructation of an acid fluid. [American Heritage Dictionary]

However, readjustment does not happen right away and a metaphoric lag persists until the cognitive epistemic schema is reset. Only then does complete reconciliation take place. This is an important aspect of metaphors because “their meanings (the ground of the metaphor) are captured by terms that are not lexically related to the lexical items in the metaphors” (Hasson and Glucksberg, 2005: 4). This property of metaphors makes them susceptible to epistemic shifts, when subjected to a translation process that focuses on the lexical items of the metaphor.
rather than on the terms that are related to the meaning of the metaphor. The following figure illustrates this dynamic nature of metaphors.

![Figure 20 — Smoking Gun Metaphor: the terms that are related to the meaning of the metaphor](image)

In this connection, Searle (reported in Johnson, 1987) contends that “every literal utterance ultimately presupposes a nonrepresentational, nonpropositional, preintentional “Background” of capacities, skills, and stances in order to determine its condition of satisfaction. The meaning of any metaphor will be determined only against a preintentional background that cannot be represented propositionally” (Johnson, 1987:72).

Reinforcing this notion of metaphor, Benzon and Hays (1987) make a distinction between physiognomic and propositional representations as one between a photograph of a scene and a verbal description of the scene. They argue that the filtering or extraction process which underlies metaphor, which in the context of our discussion creates consonance between two types of epistemic representation, “is fundamentally one involving physiognomic representations. The linguistic form of the metaphor is propositional. Hence metaphor is a device for regulating the interaction of propositional and physiognomic representations, that is to say, for recognition” (59), and subsequently for creating or restoring consonance between the epistemic and linguistic realities.
This semiotic status of metaphors, according to Hatim and Mason (1990:69), constitutes the crucial factor in deciding how a metaphor should be translated, since metaphoric use of language invariably conveys additional meaning. “Solutions to problems of translating metaphor should, in the first instance, be related to rhetorical function” (Hatim and Mason, 1990:233), and should seek to understand the “writer’s whole world-view” (4). This world view is actually the epistemic reality which is for the main part in congruence with the linguistic reality as expressed by the chosen epistemic form of metaphor and with the epistemic schema.

**Waking the dead and dormant metaphors**

The purpose of metaphor, according to Newmark (1988) is twofold: cognitive-referential and aesthetic-pragmatic. “Its referential purpose is to describe a mental process or state, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language; its pragmatic purpose, which is simultaneous, is to appeal to the senses, to interest, to clarify ‘graphically’, to please, to delight, to surprise” (Newmark, 1988:104). However, beyond their textual considerations, one of the functions of metaphors, according to Kövecses (2000:17), is that they “can actually “create,” or constitute social, cultural, and psychological realities for us”. Kövecses contends that conceptual metaphors do not simply reflect cultural models; they are in fact constitutive of cultural models. It can be argued however, that metaphors do both. For a child, for example, hearing the metaphors constructs the model; for an adult, hearing and using the metaphor reflects and constitutes the model for others.

Based on this constitutive view of metaphor, culturally bound metaphors that seek to align these realities are particularly problematic in translation. Applying the three-tier model outlined earlier in this thesis, whichever is the level of operation, the translation of these metaphors is bound to frame the original message in a way that is not intended in the source text. For
instance, take the verb (create) in English and its metaphoric sense of “make, invent”, as in “create a peaceful environment”, “create web pages”, “create an illusion”, and so on. The Arabic counterpart for the verb “create”, (خلق) (khalqa), which means (1) “to create or cause to come into being from nothing”, (2) “fabricate; fake”, and (3) “to assess or evaluate” [old usage], is usually an attribute of God in sense (1). In translating English expressions comprising the word “create” into Arabic, dissonance between the epistemic knowledge and linguistic form occurs, which is increasingly left irreconciled in daily usage of both the colloquial and standard forms, causing cognitive dissonance in alert minds when encountered, gradually changing the frequency, currency and foregrounding of the primary and secondary meanings of the verb and eventually causing metaphoric shift. Operating at the primary level and applying an absolute literal translation, Arabic news editors and translators at Aljazeera and elsewhere are contributing to the framing of metaphors in such a dissonant manner. The concern here is not merely with how the original message is reframed to produce a certain primary interpretation by the audience, but rather with the social semiotics of such reframing and its compounded and incremental effects on the thought patterns and cognitive schemata of the recipients.

Another example of this kind of dissonance is the Arabic translation of the word (astronomical) in the sense of “extremely large; exceedingly great; enormous”, as (فلكية) (falakiyah) in the sense of “pertaining to astronomy”, a rendition no less moronic and retarded than the Arabic rendition of (create) which has been obstinately circulated and repeated by Arabic media producers and news editors. In this example, the concrete sense of the word (falakiyah) is reversed, producing faulty metaphors. Faulty metaphors resulting in metaphoric shifts cause cultural and linguistic changes and mismatches of shared experience among members of the same speech community. When this happens, the likelihood of communication breakdown or misunderstanding increases.
Chapter 5
Framing Realities in Arabic News

1.1

1.1a  *ujurun* falakiyyah tafuqu at-tawaqq’at.

1.1b Astronomical wages exceed expectations.

1.1c Pertaining to astronomy wages exceed expectations.

The problem with this infelicitous metaphor is that the word (*falakiyyah*) does not invoke the same (back)ground meaning of (as considerable as the vastness of the universe) as its English counterpart in the same context. It always invariably refers to astronomy in its epistemic reference to “outer space, especially the positions, dimensions, distribution, motion, composition, energy, and evolution of celestial bodies and phenomena”⁵.

Another example of metaphoric shift occurs when a source language metaphor is erroneously translated to produce a different pragmatic application of the translationally reproduced metaphor. For example, the idiomatic expression (to break the ice) has been translated into Arabic verbatim as (*kasru* al-jalid) (*kasru al-jalid*) and is now being used in quite a different fashion from its English counterpart.

**Break the ice:** (1) make people who have not met before feel more relaxed with each other. (2) start a conversation with someone you have not met before. (3) make a start, pave the way

Normally Arabic would loosely express the same notion with a similar metaphor⁶ that emphasizes the state, condition or action of the object rather than the object itself as in (2.1).

2.1

2.1a *kasru al-jumud.*

2.1b To break the freeze.

The word (*jumud/jumud*) means freeze, solidity and by extension, standstill. The rendition in (2.1) is normally used in sense (3) of *break the ice*. However, the new metaphor is used in senses (1) and (2) however in situations where *breaking the ice* is not called for. This is a clear case of
compounded linguistic-epistemic dissonance. Consider the following example.

Example (2.2), which describes aspects of the current Lebanese political crisis, is typical of this infelicitous usage of “breaking the ice”. Breaking the ice usually happens between total strangers and not with bedfellow politicians who have had rounds and rounds of private talks and discussions and vicious and flagrant mud slinging matches in public and in the media. It is rather ironic that in a region, where the next war is predicted to be over water and where whatever is left of its water resources is rapidly drying up or filling with refuse, that such an expression (break the ice) is insanely spreading in media and political circles and fatuously parroted by laypeople at large. As a point of interest, Flavell and Flavell (1992) trace the origin of this metaphor to Europe:

“This idiom is at least five hundred years old. It is not unique to English, but it is found in other European languages also. The allusion is thought to be to the hard ice that formed on European rivers in severe winters centuries ago. In years gone by it was indeed possible to skate on the Thames. But ice was not enjoyed by those whose livelihood depended on plying a small boat up and down the river. Their first task was that of breaking it up so that work could begin.

Originally the expression was used to mean just that, making a start on a project. Gradually it came to mean embarking upon a relationship and breaking down the natural reserve one feels in the presence of strangers [emphasis added]” (Flavell & Flavell, 1992:113).
This is definitely an alien metaphor culturally and geographically. So, to go back to example (2.2), if (break the ice) is used in the sense of “making a start”, then why “break the ice between the parties”? If it is used in the sense of “breaking down the natural reserve one feels in the presence of strangers”, these seasoned politicians are no strangers to one another and have the temerity, audacity and brazenness to conduct any meeting with anybody in the same manner as they have reportedly run down the country and brought it to ruins. Long before the advent of Arabic satellite television and the rise to prominence of inept translators, journalists and copycat news editors, the expression (دَفْع الكَلْفَة) (raf’u al-kulfa) had been naturally used in this context. This expression literally means (to lift the shyness). The word (kulfa) is an interesting one because it has compounded conceptual and metaphorical meanings: (1) unusual redness of the face, sometimes associated with bashfulness, (2) discomfort and inconvenience, which may result in redness of the face, (3) formality, which implies redness of the face because of discomfort or shyness, which sometimes occurs when meeting total strangers, and (4) outlay or cost; and since cost is sometimes associated with discomfort and discomfort with redness of the face, it makes perfect sense to express the notion of (break the ice) in a manner that is native to the environment and culture where ice does not occupy a large area of consciousness. So when one “lifts kulfa”, in this context, one removes formality, discomfort and inconvenience.

To this end, Casnig (2003) contends that “[a] metaphor's only cause of death is the acceptance of its poetic meaning into the normal vocabulary of the host language. It is difficult to clearly distinguish the living metaphor from the dead because a language is dynamic, and individualistic – and therefore never a singularity. If one has never heard a given word in a specific metaphorical context, they will more likely see it as a living metaphor; where one who has accepted the use of this word in this same context as normal, will not likely identify it as a metaphor at
Furthermore, Grey (2000) confirms that “[t]he difference between live and dead metaphor is that dead metaphor is just an ordinary part of our literal vocabulary and quite properly not regarded as metaphor at all”. Grey also reminds us of an intermediate category of metaphors: dormant metaphors which consist of expressions “which we use without being conscious of their metaphorical character, but if we attend to them we can see at once that they [are] unmistakable metaphors. These are metaphors in the process of expiring”, but they can be easily revived. Consequently, a dead or dormant metaphor in one language may translate into a live metaphor or a live metaphor into a dead or dormant metaphor in another causing major epistemic dissonance. Furthermore, most discussion of metaphor has assumed a progression from live metaphor to dead metaphor. But not all metaphors start out as live metaphors and they then die or become dormant and so on. Certain metaphors start out as concrete, physical expressions of epistemic reality, as in our earlier example of “the sun rises”. Both the pre-metaphoric state of expression and the metaphoric lifecycle (pre-metaphoric, metaphoric, and post-metaphoric) are not necessarily in full correspondence across languages and cultures.

Furthermore, regardless of the translation strategy or level of operation (within the three-tier model), once a metaphor in one language is transplanted in another, the potential of the metaphor losing its nexus to the original meanings and applications in its native environment and taking on a life of its own in the host environment is real, as illustrated in (2.2) and in the following examples.

2.3 هل ستكون الانتخابات المخرج العصر من (عُنق الزجاجة) لإيقاف أمريكا من المستقبل العراقي؟

2.3a Will the elections be the hard way out of the “bottleneck” to save America from the Iraqi quagmire?
Building bridges of the trust between the student and Arabic language through various communication and conversation activities in the classrooms.

In example (2.3), it is not clear whether parenthesizing bottleneck is motivated by the awkwardness of usage or presumed newness of the metaphor. But it is clear from the combination of (bottleneck) and (quagmire) and the missing (or implied) subject of the metaphor (bottleneck) that the latter metaphor is applied incorrectly. One picture that this metaphor might evoke when linked to the (quagmire) metaphor in this sentence is that the (quagmire) has a (bottleneck), which further illustrates the confused application of the metaphor (bottleneck). In example (2.4), using the metaphor (building bridges of trust) “between students and the Arabic language” is a clear case of a metaphor gone awry, since bridges of trust are normally metaphorically built between individuals or between corporal entities.

**Metaphoric imperialism**

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have argued that our conceptual system “plays a central role in defining our everyday realities” (3). It is fundamentally metaphorical in nature and essentially culturally based. Making several observations on the role of metaphors in defining the structures of our daily activities, Lakoff and Johnson confirm that our metaphor-based conceptual system governs our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Consequently, metaphors act as social framers. In this regard, Phillipson (1992) alludes to the imposition of new mental structures in language contact. He asserts the following.
“What is at stake when English spreads is not merely the substitution or displacement of one language by another but the imposition of new ‘mental structures’ through English” (Phillipson, 1992:166).

Elsewhere, he argues that asymmetrical interaction is a central feature of such imposition of imperialist structure as can be clearly seen in what he terms “media imperialism”, one of the branches of cultural imperialism (Phillipson, 1992:61). This downward asymmetrical interaction is nowhere more obvious than in news media translation, and more specifically in Arabic satellite television. Culturally dissonant metaphors are creeping into the language and are defining and redefining viewers’ mental structures and world views. In this connection, undoubtedly, the idiom (carrot and stick) is a culture-specific condescending, downward expression. It is always used in reference to a higher authority or a domineering power enticing and threatening a subordinate group, community or nation. It is unheard of for example to say: “the trade union is resorting to a carrot and stick policy to secure wage increases”, or “Iran is using carrot and stick diplomacy in its negotiations with the US and Europe over its nuclear energy program”. Yet this culturally dissonant metaphor seems to be used ad nauseum in both Arabic media and politics. Most Arab journalists use it without a second thought. This kind of stubborn insistence on absent-minded, politically and intellectually inept journalism is unwittingly causing a metaphoric shift in Arabic that smacks of linguistic imperialism, or more accurately social and cultural submissiveness through metaphoric acculturation. Not only are the journalists adopting faulty metaphors, but they are also importing culturally dissonant ones and they seem to be at home with the obsequious roles such downward metaphors define for them. By collectively indulging in this practice, they are unwittingly embracing the linguistic forms of social and cultural subordination models, which compound the problems of already repressive social, political and cultural systems.
Tehran stressed yesterday that the “stick and carrot” policy which the West is using to convince it to stop its sensitive nuclear activities is doomed to fail.11 Eleanor Roosevelt has been quoted as saying, “No one can insult you without your permission”. From a social semiotics viewpoint, metaphors such as this one (carrot and stick) are indicative of subservience, deeply ingrained in the psychological and social makeup of those who adopt them without adjustment. It is wholly reasonable to expect that over time, these metaphors of subservience cause a social and cultural shift through the imposition of new mental structures and epistemic realities.

Another role- and relationship-defining metaphor that seems to have equal appeal to Arab journalists and political commentators, and which is used mindlessly in Arabic news, is the metaphor (a game of cat and mouse). This English metaphor is usually used to describe a situation where one person is more powerful than another and uses this advantage in a cruel or unfair way. Yet it seems these journalists are oblivious of this skewed relationship of cops and robbers, heroes and villains, cowboys and Indians, which the metaphor establishes to the extent of reinforcing submissiveness and acceptance of an imported, inappropriate cultural superiority model. Here, Bugs Bunny always defeats Daffy Duck, Road Runner outmaneuvers the resourceful and tenacious Wile E. Coyote, the dumb Tweety Bird outsmarts Sylvester the Cat, and Chuck Norris, with one bullet and a broken leg, overruns the clumsy and squint Arab and Vietnamese terrorists, who cannot for all the evil in their hearts shoot straight, where the forces of nature and laws of physics work in cahoots, being invariably bent and broken to favour the superior man, and where a feeling of injustice rankles in the hearts of the viewers or those reacting to this model with some sense of justice.

Chapter 5
Framing Realities in Arabic News
The game of cat and mouse has started between the Jordanian government and [political] parties over the priorities of the joint committee.

It seems that Washington and Tehran are playing the game of cat and mouse and that the meetings of the five countries have become part of the necessary means required for the game.

In these examples, the epistemic reality is defined by the metaphor (a game of cat and mouse). In the logical progression of the sentences, the cat and mouse tally with the Jordanian government (the cat) and parties (the mouse) in example (2.5) and Washington (the cat) and Tehran (the mouse). This rhetorical matching is not always adhered to and cognitive dissonance ensues between the epistemic reality of the metaphor and the linguistic reality. Consider the following examples.

When will the game of cat and mouse between the peddlers and the municipality end?

There is also the game of cat and mouse, sometimes in societies that have this margin of movement [leeway] between the press and the government.

The sequence in both examples requires additional cognitive acrobatics to link the cat to the municipality and mouse to the peddlers in example (2.7) and the cat to the government and the mouse to the press in example (2.8). This may be a moot point, but it shows how the epistemic reality of the
parts of the metaphor is organized in the writer’s mind or epistemic schema in each instance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Vehicle</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Chase, harass, bully, intimidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peddlers</td>
<td>Mouse</td>
<td>Chased, harassed, bullied, intimidated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Chase, harass, bully, intimidate, coerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press</td>
<td>Mouse</td>
<td>Chased, harassed, bullied, intimidated, coerced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) again suggest, “[m]etaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies”(156). Consequently, a submissive metaphor will reinforce submissiveness and a defeat metaphor will engender defeatism.

Boorstin (1993) argues that peoples cannot be expected to share the intellectual product of a certain nation if they have not shared the processes from which it came. Calling for encouraging peoples of the world to make their own metaphors, Boorstin, asks: “How does it benefit the world when people freeze the metaphors of alien history into ideology? For ideology itself is a contradiction and denial of man’s endless powers of novelty and change which are suggested by the very idea of progress”. The carrot and stick metaphor is one such metaphor that is turning into ideology. If the Internet is anything to go by, a search in Google for “carrot and stick” returns around 445,000 results.

Such metaphoric infelicities are seldom encountered in borrowings or transfers from other languages say into English in the normal course of
knowledge transfer. For instance, when the then Egyptian foreign minister
and current general secretary of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, told a
press conference at Sharm al-Shaikh in Egypt in October 2000 that “the
position of the Arab countries towards Israel is clear” in Arabic ( موقف الدول العربية من إسرائيل واضح), the interpreter conveyed this statement in English as: “the attitude of the Arab countries towards Israel is clear”. With no
access to the Arabic utterance, the CNN reporter relayed the interpreter’s
rendition in English as: “the position of the Arab countries towards Israeli
is clear”. This immediate reconciliation of epistemic reality and linguistic
reality, that is the swap from attitude to position, is a good indication of
how these realities are normally reconciled. Arabic news media seem to
be ill at ease with this kind of treatment and a blinkered approach is
almost always invariably the prevalent solution resulting in absolute
literal translations.

The social semiotics of metaphors cannot be discounted in assessing
linguistic-epistemic dissonance. An example of such social semiotics is
the metaphor “money laundering” (concealing the source of illegally
gotten money). This metaphor has its origins in the use of public
Laundromats in American cities. The idea is that when one washes dirty
clothes in one tumbling washing machine, they get mixed up. It also
stems from the fact that Laundromats were owned by the mafia as a
legitimate business front for illicit earnings—a combined social semiotic
that does not exist in this fashion elsewhere. This metaphor is translated
into Arabic as (غسيل الأموال) (ghasil al-amwal) (money washing). Now,
whether (money washing), as a new metaphor in Arabic, conveys the
same metaphoric meaning as its English counterpart is extremely
debatable. But one thing is certain: it does not convey the same epistemic
reality.

Within this category, the Lebanese metaphor (Lebanon is a country of
minorities)\textsuperscript{12} has been recently translated verbatim by both Lebanese

---

\textsuperscript{12} Chapter 5

\textit{Framing Realities in Arabic News}
politicians and Western news media reporters, such as Octavia Nasr, Senior Editor of Arab Affairs at CNN in a recent comment on the events in Lebanon. The Arabic original (لبنان بلد الأقليات) (lubnan baladu al-aqalliyyat) (that is, Lebanon is a country of minorities) was a clever if not devious invention by pre-civil war politicians as group therapy for a sick, irredeemable, census-resistant, endemically corrupt, anachronistically feudal and sectarian, and superficially democratic social and political system, where the concepts of safety in numbers and divide and rule overlapped. Thin-slicing the social composition into small constituents of more than sixteen sects and small denominations; mass (inbound) ethnically and religiously driven immigration and naturalization policies designed to tip the demographic balance in favour of certain denominations, and divisive foreign language policies have certainly changed the social tapestry of the country in the sixty years that followed its independence from colonial France in 1943. However, while an analysis of this complex and peculiar sociopolitical phenomenon is interesting in its own right, what is relevant to our discussion here is the fact that the Arabic metaphor was treated as an absolute truism when translated into English. Also, the metaphor seems to have lost its metaphoric sense over time even in Arabic as revealed in the translation by Arabic speaking “experts”. Apparently, people have come to believe their own lie and are lost forever.

**Metaphor, collocation and the clash of domains**

Metaphors permeate language and no language can be effective and efficient without metaphors. They enable language to operate on the basis of the economy principle, expressing a world of knowledge in a few words. They paint a mental picture worth a thousand words, thus abbreviating and compacting the number of words needed to express thought. Let us go back to our example at the beginning of this chapter (the sun rises). Apart from the elevation of the expression to a metaphor
to restore the linguistic-epistemic consonance, to express the phenomenon as we now know it would take a few sentences. By the time we finished, we would probably need to describe the sunset!

Words such as *digest* (as in digest a report) and *absorb* (as in absorb an idea, absorb a loss), for example, are metaphors that resemble the act of mental assimilation to the act of digesting food and the act of taking in, utilizing and incorporating ideas, loss, and other notions, to a sponge soaking up water respectively. For these metaphors to maintain their linguistic-epistemic consonance, collocations of all types (such as free, restricted, idiomatic) are used to denote a figurative condition. McKeown and Radev (no date)\(^\text{16}\), argue that because of the arbitrary, recursive and language-specific nature of collocations, “substituting a synonym for one of the words in a collocational word pair may result in an infelicitous lexical combination” (3-4). The infelicity they refer to is a result of the disruption in the epistemic form causing linguistic-epistemic dissonance. For example, to say in English “cast a question” instead of “raise a question” is an infelicitous lexical combination that would cast doubt on the epistemic reality of the expression since “cast” belongs to the throw-domain and “question” to the question-domain. By the same token, to say *(يفتح تحقيقاً)* yaftah tahqiqan “open an investigation”, in Arabic, instead of *(بتاريخ/بداية تحقيقاً)* yubashir/yabda’ tahqiqan “start/commence an investigation” is an equally infelicitous lexical combination. The disruption in the epistemic form of these miscollocations is a direct result of a clash between two incongruent domains, where usually (after Johnson, 1987) a system of implications in one domain interacts with the implicative system of another domain. This interaction is essentially metaphorical in nature. For example, the English collocation (jump to conclusion) is a metaphoric relationship between (jump) that is to leap, spring over or skip (rather than walk) and (conclusion) being the end or final part of something, (the finish line), which is represented physiognomically.

---

Chapter 5
Framing Realities in Arabic News
When these collocated metaphors are translated verbatim, they create epistemic dissonance in the target language. A case in point is the Arabic rendition by Arab journalists of the preceding idiomatic expression “to jump to conclusion” as (يقفز إلى النتائج) yaqfizu ila an-nata'ij, which literally means to jump to the results. This rendition is an inane expression since (يقفز) yaqfiz and (نتائج) nata’ij do not collocate to create an acceptable metaphor and consequently fail to invoke the same mental picture as their English counterpart in English. In other words, it is a dud, born-still metaphor. Not only do these incongruities “make a perspicacious reader laugh at something you want him to take seriously”, as Gowers (1948) reminds us, but they also distort the epistemic reality of the original metaphor.

Two factors make such renditions infelicitous: “scope of metaphor” (Kövecses, 2000) and “metaphor creep” (Darwish, 2004, 2005). Kövecses (2000:35) argues that conceptual metaphors have a limited scope. “…the source domains of conceptual metaphors do not have unlimited applications. That is, particular source domains seem to apply to a clearly identifiable range of target concepts”. Changing the original application of the metaphor in translation renders the metaphor out of scope. Similarly, the infelicity in translating the metaphor, ironically by adhering to the lexical items of the metaphor, introduces new metaphors in the target languages that distort the meaning of the original metaphor, resulting in metaphor creep (Darwish, 2004, 2005).

**Metaphor and genitives**

Another aspect of translation-induced linguistic and epistemic dissonance is seen in the genitive construction of metaphors. In most situations the discrepancy (which is also found in non-metaphoric constructions) is caused by a mismatch between the functions and categories of genitive relationships across languages: attributive, partitive, possessive, subjective, objective, descriptive, and so on. In English genitives,
prepositional phrases beginning with “of” are used to describe nouns. They can be used to change nouns into adjectives to indicate a number of relationships, and typically an “objective” grammatical relationship while the possessive forms and adjectives are used to express the “subjective” grammatical relationship. This latter aspect is important because it causes inaccuracies of rendition into languages with different genitive constructions, such as Arabic, and creates different epistemic realities.

Arabic distinguishes between two major types of genitives: real and metaphoric, which serve to define or specify. Real genitives (also known as semantic genitives) express an intrinsic relationship between the nouns. Metaphoric genitives (also known as lexical genitives) express an extrinsic or transient relationship between nouns. The following table illustrates how genitives are constructed in Arabic.

The Arabic genitive is marked morphosyntactically. Stand-alone indefinite nouns are usually realized with full terminal nunation—that is, doubling the inflectional sound (nūn) (for example, aynun). When the noun is added to another noun in the genitive construction, the nunation is suspended to a single inflectional sound as in our example (aynu + ar-rajuli). The suspended nunation works in exactly the same way as the English (of). The relationship between the genitive constituents is determined by the type of genitive in this construction; that is, real or metaphorical, denoting possessive, explicative or partitive.

Let us consider the current English metaphor (bridges of trust).
2.9 Successful collaboration depends upon *bridges of trust* between people working together.

In this example, the genitive type of the metaphor (bridges of trust) is nonsensical if it simply means (trust).

2.9a Successful collaboration depends upon trust between people working together.

However, if the genitive type indicates a type of bridge, and if the *of-genitive* can be used to change nouns into adjectives, it should be possible to express this adjectival relationship by inverting the genitive construction to produce (trusted bridges).

In other words, *trusted* bridges, or bridges that can be trusted. The metaphor goes something like this: entity A and entity B need a connection between them to improve relations: a bridge. What kind of bridge? A bridge that can be trusted (a confidence-building measure or device). Otherwise, why need a bridge? It would be simpler and less convoluted to say *building trust*.

In contrast, the Arabic literal translation of (bridges of trust) (*jusuru ath-thiqa*) points to a bridge that belongs or leads to (trust). This usage can be gleaned from English translations of this borrowed metaphor as (bridges of *confidence*), since both (trust) and (confidence) usually...
translated into Arabic as (thiqah/ثقة)، which could be either trust or confidence.

2.10

بناء جسور الثقة المتبادلة بين المواطنين ورجال الشرطة في المجتمع المحلي...

2.10a Building bridges of mutual trust between the citizen and the police (policemen) in the local community...

As the back translation reveals (2.10a), the genitive (bridges of the mutual trust) does not denote a description of the bridges, but a partitive relationship between (bridges) and (trust), which is further reinforced by the insertion of the word (mutual). In contrast, the English expression (build bridges of trust) may imply mutuality. After all, a bridge by definition “provides passage over a gap or barrier” in either direction.

Reductive and Summative Metaphors

Finally, as Benoit (2001) maintains, “[m]etaphors help us understand and interpret the world and the events, ideas, and people in it […] They can influence audience perceptions or interpretations of the world”. By explaining one thing in terms of another, metaphors function as a terministic screen (Burke, 1965, 1966, cited in Benoit, 2001). In effect, they act as epistemic frames, which are reductive, summative and exclusionary in nature. They highlight a one-dimensional representation of reality to the exclusion of other dimensions since depending on the vividness and force they evoke, metaphors set a frame around only one aspect at a time of epistemic reality, Here is an example from Arabic news.

Chapter 5
Framing Realities in Arabic News
3.1 Al-Maliki is looking for a lifeline to pull him out of the Iraqi quagmire [swamp].

In this example (3.1), the metaphor of quagmire, which is compounded and reinforced by the (lifeline) metaphor, evokes a one-dimensional pictorial summary of Iraq. This tunnel vision is reinforced in a host of borrowed metaphoric expressions such the following example.

3.2 The country is [sitting] on the mouth of a volcano after things have reached the point of no return and the language of dialogue has been replaced with the language of challenge and confrontation.

Of interest in this example (3.2) is the expression (point of no return). Not many speakers are aware that this expression comes from aviation, “where it signifies the point where an aircraft does not have enough fuel to return to the starting point”21 and has come to mean “the point in a course of action beyond which reversal is not possible”. In the latter sense, the deterministic expression has been exported to other languages, including Arabic. But neither the original expression nor the translation implies continuing on the course of action yields positive results when in fact either outcome is possible.
Euphemism, dysphemism and socio-cultural circumlocution

Euphemism is another area of cross-cultural communication where linguistic-epistemic dissonance occurs. Allan and Burridge (no date) define Euphemism as follows:

“A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one’s own or, by giving offense, that of the audience, or of some third party”.

According to Neaman and Silver (1983), we tend to substitute another word free of negative associations when unpleasant elements of response attach themselves strongly to the word used to describe those negative associations. They argue that “[h]owever culturally and historically based euphemisms may be, the psychological and linguistic patterns underlying their formation are the same” (9). Furthermore, euphemisms are intrinsically language and culture-specific, reflecting the social mores of the times and the system of beliefs of the people who belong to a certain language and culture. They are dynamic and adaptive to the internal and external social changes and are more relied on in taboo-governed societies and oppressive political systems. The famous Arab poet-philosopher Abu al-Alaa al-Ma’arri (973 - 1058) lived in an era of religious and political despotism. Through euphemism and symbolism he was able to express his thoughts and escape the wrath of the rulers. The first call ever for family planning and contraception may be ascribed to him in the following verse (Darwish, 1989-2001).
In this verse, the word (al-wata’a) (الوَطَف) is an infinitive root noun that has two meanings: (1) to tread on and (2) euphemistically, to engage in sexual intercourse. While the latter meaning has been demoted in terms of currency, frequency and distribution in Modern Standard Arabic (that is, restricted to religious text), in Al-Ma’arri’s days, it functioned as a strong secondary meaning. Being the cynical and satirical philosopher that he was, it is highly likely that his euphemistic message was “to go easy on sexual intercourse because the earth is being covered with the remains of too many people.”23 Such a call would have been a certain death sentence in those times.

In modern times, various social and political movements have introduced euphemisms, from affirmative action to political correctness to international conflicts, which are linguistically and culturally driven. For example, the use of “partner” to refer to “a husband or a wife; a spouse, or the other person in a relationship with equal status, irrespective of their sex”, is a social euphemism that is specific to Anglo-American cultures and is made feasible linguistically by the gender-neutrality of the English language. This is not so feasible in gender-sensitive languages such as Arabic, where the word “partner” is normally morphologically marked either as a male partner (شريك) or a female partner (شريكة).

Consequently, a complete congruence does not always exist across languages, and while certain euphemisms in one language may find their...
counterparts in another, the register and pragmatic usage of such euphemisms may not coincide. Furthermore, certain euphemisms lose their euphemistic nature when translated verbatim, or worse still become dysphemisms. Allan and Burridge (no date), again define dysphemism as follows:

A dysphemism is an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or euphemistic expression for just that reason.

In other words, dysphemism is euphemism in reverse. While euphemism is employed to make negative or offensive things sound less offensive or neutral, dysphemism is employed to make positive things sound euphemistically offensive or negative.

Both euphemism and dysphemism are frequently used in political and social discourse, defining the social or political stance of those using them. Words such as “war on terrorist”, “insurgents”, “martyrs”, “line of duty”, “bring to justice”, “target” (versus “liquidate”), are all euphemisms or dysphemism used for maximum effect, that constitute a specific epistemic reality. These and similar euphemisms and dysphemisms are translated verbatim into other languages and in this case Arabic. For example, the word “space” used in combinations such as “Eurospace”, “Euro Mediterranean space”, is a euphemism that has been transmitted literally into Arabic, however with “space” meaning “outer space”. While the Arabic word (fadha’/ فضاء) originally means “vast and unlimited space, empty space or void”, it has gradually come to mean “outer space” in its primary meaning.

**Verticality**

Verticality is a common feature across languages. Verticality is a conceptual metaphor of action, condition or state invoking an upward or downward movement or direction to express intensity. In English, it occupies a large space in idiomatic expressions. For example, almost all
positive things are expressed in terms of being “up”, “high” and “highly”, as in “cheer up”, “high quality” and “highly appreciate”; and almost all negative things are expressed in terms of being “down”, “low” and “under”, as in “downturn”, “low quality”, “under siege”. Consequently, verticality constructs an epistemic reality consistent with native English speakers’ vertical view of the world. This elevatory experience is a universal feature of all languages and cultures and is also found in expressions of elation and “high spirits”.

7.1 I am so happy I could fly.

7.2Sa atiru mina al-farah.

7.2a sa atiru mina al-farah.

In his classic, much-quoted and controversial article, Robert Kaplan (1966) observes different rhetorical movements in discourse patterns across languages. He confirms that English employs a top-down linear (vertical) pattern while other languages exhibit a variety of circular, parallel, zigzag patterns. “An English expository paragraph usually begins with a topic statement, and then, by a series of subdivisions of that topic statement, each supported by example and illustrations, proceeds, to develop that central idea and relate that idea to all the other ideas in the whole essay, and to employ that idea in its proper relationship with the other ideas, to prove something, or perhaps to argue something” (Kaplan 13-14). The linearity of discourse is extended to and enforced by its building blocks, which create the epistemic forms of verticality.

At this level also, other languages favour a horizontal perspective and express intensity in degrees of energy, severity, strength and weakness. For example, Arabic traditionally expresses these notions in terms of intensity, immensity or enormity. Yet a peculiar translation-induced
phenomenon in Arabic today is the all-pervasive adoption of the English language perspective of verticality in the daily parlance, idiomatic expressions and specialized terminologies of modern Arabs. Wholesale borrowing of English expressions, such as *highly appreciate, high quality, high competence, high performance, high skills, high professionalism, high definition, deep concern, deep doubts, deep regret, deep crisis, deep conflict, under the circumstances, under construction, under siege, raise awareness*, and so on, are being used willy-nilly everywhere in the Arab world, by laypersons and specialists alike, in every quarter of human thought and action.

This alien usage, which is in stark violation of Arabic norms, standards and rules, is causing a surreptitious linguistic-epistemic shift. Teachers, doctors, engineers, politicians, journalists, translators, thinkers and tinkers are daily parroting these expressions in such a bizarre fashion unaware of this incongruence. Instrumental in all of this mass linguistic chaos is the media. With the profusion of hundreds of satellite television channels beaming across the Arab region, translation-induced, flawed journalistic styles and expressions are being propagated at an unprecedented rate and are being adopted in other areas of human activity. For over a decade now, Arab viewers have been bombarded with literal translations of the examples above, and a generation of children has grown up in this linguistically contaminated environment. This psychosomatic linguistic disorder is set to change modern Arabic forever thanks to translation and journalism.

**Sensory-perceptual epistemic inference**

Linguistic-epistemic dissonance occurs with perceptual expressions such as (sound) and (seem). English uses both to express an epistemic reality visually and auditorily.
8.1 That *sounds* good to me.

8.2 It *seems* the Republicans will lose the next presidential elections.

Arabic in this instance normally expresses both perceptual notions visually and it is almost impossible to express the notion of (sound) in Arabic without producing affected forms.

8.3 هذا يبدو لي جيداً.

8.3a *hazha yabdu li jayyidan.*

8.3b This seems to me good. [this seems good to me].

8.4 يبدو أن الجمهوريين سيخسرون الانتخابات الرئاسية القادمة.

8.4a *yabdu anna al-jumhuriyyeen sa yakhsaruna al-intikhabat ar-ri’asiyyah al-qadimah.*

8.4b (it) seems that the Republicans will lose the next presidential elections.

This clearly demonstrates the different perspectives of both languages and the different epistemic forms that express the sensory perceptual experience of epistemic realities. While the difference does not cause a major problem in knowledge transfer it certainly does change the epistemic form.

**Deictic inference**

Another point worthy of note in our discussion of linguistic-epistemic dissonance in translation is deixis. Curiously, the shift from (that), which refers to someone or something more remote in place, time, or thought in (8.1) to (this), which refers to someone or something nearer in place, time, or thought in (8.3) changes the perceptual distance of reference.

The distinction between the existential and referential functions of deictic elements is sometimes confused.
While the existential (there) and referential (here) can occur in the same sentence in English, Arabic normally avoids this combination, given the compacted nature of the syntactic structure (as illustrated in 9.1b). Both instances of (there) and (here) may be construed as referential deictic elements, at least on first reading/listening.

**Sources of Influence and Normalization**

Cross-cultural interaction through translation is unavoidable. In modern times, news and current affairs satellite television is playing a critical role in causing epistemic-linguistic dissonance through adherence to literalization of form irrespective of the pragmatic function of language both in the source and target. The bulk of news is translated from daily news feeds supplied by major news agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press and Agence France Press, into all languages of the world. Time-critical deliveries and poor translation skills are causing these news feeds to be translated verbatim into most languages, including Arabic.

It can be said with confidence that translation reveals the way one understands the source language. It is a window to the cognitive processes of the translator or journalist-cum-translator. The volume of literalizations causing epistemic shifts in translations from English into Arabic, for example, is considerable. Apart from the literal transfer of technical terms and basic discourse, idiomatic expressions such as *carrot and stick*, *go back to square one*, *the ball is in your court now*, *the devil is in the details*, *break the ice*, *bridge the gap*, and *bring to justice*, are brazenly
transferred into Arabic in their literal sense, changing as we have already seen the perspective and perception of these epistemic phenomena.

During the recent conflict between Israel and Lebanon (July 2006), some Arab politicians and their media mouthpieces described Hezbullah's military operation of capturing the two Israeli soldiers, as (مغامرة غير محسوبة) (mughamarah ghayr mahsubah), literally meaning (uncalculated adventure). The Arabic term, which is actually a bad translation of the English term (uncalculated risk), uttered by installed, undemocratically elected or parachuted Arab politicians, most likely under the influence of English language instructions from their masters and or negative translations by inexperienced, sloppy or absent-minded Arabic translators was back-translated into English as (uncalculated adventure*).

Neither the Arabic term in Arabic nor its English translation makes much sense in either language. Yet both the Arabic and English oxymora have been parroted in news reports in Arabic and English language news media, and no one seems to be any the wiser. By definition, the Arabic word (مغامرة) (mughamarah) is a reckless, thoughtless act. Consequently, (mughamarah) and (غير محسوبة) (ghayr mahsubah) do not collocate. By the same token, (uncalculated) and (adventure) do not normally collocate in English either. This dissonance between the epistemic reality and linguistic reality in both languages remains unreconciled.

**Framing through Quotatives**

Quotatives are employed to frame the news item in a manner that attributes the content of the message to its source.

A quotative evidential is an evidential that signals that someone else is the source of the statement made. Statements are attributed through the use of quotations, which can be direct purporting to be the exact utterances of the person who made them (sensory evidential) as in example (A), or
indirect reporting the utterances but not necessarily in the same exact words (quotative evidential) as in example (B).

Example A

As President Bush said in an address to Congress on September 20, 2001, “Our war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.”

Example B

President Bush has told Congress that the war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there and that it will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated, according to a White House source.

While Aljazeera has been increasingly using quotative evidentials (such as according to him, as he described it, as he alleges) in reporting the news to attribute utterances, problems of the kind seem to filter through.

In a bid to create a perception of objectivity and neutrality of news reporting, Aljazeera is guilty of using these quotatives in such an irritating frequency. Consider the following example from a recent Beyond the News program (16 March 2009) about a new Bin Laden voice recording.

Arabic original

وقال بن لادن إنما سماعا بما سماعا بمحرقة غزّة حذد تاريخي مهم وفاجعة فضائية.

وأضاف أن الطريق إلى الأقصى يحتاج إلى قيادات صادقة. ودعا بن لادن من

سماعا بعلماء العالم الإسلامي الصادقين إلى إنشاء ما سماعا هيئة مناصحة.

Translation

And Bin Laden said that what he called the Gaza holocaust is an important historic event and a decisive calamity. He added that the road to Al-Aqsa required honest leaderships. Bin Laden called upon whom he called the truthful (honest) scholars of the Islamic World to establish what he called a consultation commission.

This is short of comical in Arabic since it ignores the intrinsic grammatical functions of articles, words and sentence structures that signal to the listener that what follows is a speech ascribed to the person reported to have uttered it.
Not only that, most recently, Aljazeera has abandoned the use of phrases such as "war on terror", “terrorists”, “terrorism”, which Western media have been using unconditionally in describing events in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and other hotspots in the “greater” Middle East, in favour of the conditional quotatives “what is called the war on terror”, “the so-called terrorism”, and the like. These attributives reframe the original message in Arabic signalling to the audience that Aljazeera does not embrace these source language descriptors. While Aljazeera might think that the use of such quotatives is its way of ensuring neutrality, they are producing an opposite effect. Assessed within the three-tier translation model outlined in this thesis, these quotatives fall within the “interference” category, which from a purely translation perspective are unjustifiable. However, from an editorial viewpoint, they overemphasize the point that Aljazeera does not adopt the descriptors in the original message. This all too obvious and ‘in your face’ technique is in a way forced by the fact that the news source is not Arabic and that within the bounds of the original text, certain adjustments are made, which are a poor and too explicit a way of ensuring neutrality and objectivity.

**Conclusion**

Languages normally compensate for epistemic-linguistic dissonance within the same language environment by elevating the linguistic form to a metaphor or by adjusting existing metaphors through metaphoric shifts. However, epistemic-linguistic dissonance that occurs in translation between divergent languages is usually the result of culturally incongruent, skewed epistemic frames. Apart from the immediate distortion of source-language epistemic realities, skewed epistemic frames contribute to psychological and social change, which is not always necessarily positive, by changing the social and cultural perspective, and cause communication breakdown due to loss of shared experiences and to the way they frame reality.

---

*Chapter 5*

*Framing Realities in Arabic News*
In translating news sources, unreconciled linguistic-epistemic dissonance seems to be more prevalent in translations into Arabic than in translations from Arabic into other languages. This is largely due to incompetence and short deadlines that force journalists-cum-translators to adhere to the surface structures of source text and operate at the primary level of rendition. It is also a deep-rooted translation tradition that seems to be further entrenched in the psyche of most translators and translation-reliant thinkers and intellectuals across the Arab world. Furthermore, framing and reframing through linguistic-epistemic dissonance is an ongoing process that has implications beyond the immediate message of the original to the fundamental thinking patterns of those who adopt such dissonant forms. Since going to air in 1996, Aljazeera has been contributing to linguistic-epistemic dissonance in the Arabic language through adherence to a primary level of rendition and literal translation strategies.

This chapter has taken a different approach to the discussion of framing and translation-mediated reframing by focusing on cognitive dissonance as a psychological state of contradictory cognition of the same reality, expressed in two different languages.

Notes

3. It can be argued that the expression (the sun rises) is relatively speaking not a metaphor, but rather a propositional representation of a physiognomic perception of an epistemic reality. To our perception the sun still rises. For a farmer and a sailor for example, dawn/daybreak and sunrise are different, and we need a term to describe the latter. We know it does not rise, but that is not the point. It appears to, and it often looks beautiful when it does.
6. It must be noted that even this metaphor (2.1) is a calque translation of the English expression (to break the standstill) introduced into Arabic during the Cold War era.
Chapter 5

Framing Realities in Arabic News


10 Interestingly, using air quotes or intonation with a dead metaphor in speech or typographically emphasizing it in writing immediately brings it back to life.


12 An assumed representational metaphor of a country comprised of minorities, where everyone is a minority.

13 One orphan census was conducted in pre-independence Lebanon in 1932.

14 “Corruption is widespread in Lebanon. The reasons are, inter alia, low salaries and high living, education and health costs and red tape which provides civil servants with opportunities. High profile cases of corruption among politicians have had a negative impact on the public perception of the integrity of the political class. An anticorruption law was drafted in 2002, but has not yet been presented to the Parliament” (Commission Of The European Communities, Commission Staff Working Paper, Annex to: “European Neighbourhood Policy”, Country Report: Lebanon, {COM(2005) 72 final}), ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/lebanon_country_report_2005_en.pdf.

15 For quite some time, Lebanon has been divided along sectarian-driven foreign language lines. Being the second official language, French has been the second (if not the first) language of most Christians while recently introduced English the second language of most Muslims. The introduction of English in the early fifties may be seen as a direct result of US intervention. The landing of the Fifth Fleet in Beirut in 1958 at the request of the Lebanese President Camille Chamoun to quell pro Pan-Arab civil unrest marks the beginning of American influence in Lebanon. Roughly around that time, English was introduced to primary schools of private and charity organizations (such as al-Maqasid Islamic Charitable Association, owned by the late Sunni Prime Minister Sa’ib Salam) and later to government schools in predominantly Muslim areas. For largely Christian Lebanese francophones, cultural affiliation to French was a straightforward matter, given the French colonial legacy in Lebanon and France as a single francophonic point of reference. In contrast, cultural affiliation to English was not as straightforward given the bipolarity of Anglophonic reference (American and British). While American culture was more attractive to most youths aspiring after freedom, democracy and American values, especially in the sixties, there was ambivalence towards affiliation to American culture given the prevalent official and popular attitude towards American foreign policy in the region. British culture did not offer such dynamism or have the same appeal.


19 The way nunation works is by terminating the word with and additional (unn) sound. For example, the Arabic word for heart is (قلب) qalb (zero inflection); with full inflection: qalbun (subjective), qalban (objective), and qalbin (dative/genitive). In genitives, the nunation is reduced to a single inflection.

20 In colloquial and lazy spoken Arabic, the inflection is omitted (zero inflection), for example, ayn ar-rajjul.


Chapter 5
Framing Realities in Arabic News

23 This is based on the Quranic verse “You have been too busy propagating until you have visited the graveyards” (Propagation, 1).


27 http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/
Chapter 6
Mediating Live Broadcasts

In this chapter:

- Aims
- Overview
- Impact of Live Television on Simultaneous Interpreting
- Simultaneous Interpreting Models
- Interpreting Mediation at Arabic Satellite Television
- Analysis and Discussion
- Modes of Operation
- Conclusion and Recommendations
Aims

In the previous two chapters, I explored the central role of translation in news production at Aljazeera. In this chapter, I examine the emerging styles of delivery of simultaneous interpreting in Arabic satellite television and highlights aspects of two distinct modes of operation, expository and rhetorical, that seem to vary in salience of specific functional qualities that reframe the original message.

The role of interpreter-mediated, real-time, cross-cultural and multilingual communication becomes crucial in live debates, talk shows and newscasts that seek to effect regional change through international interaction with officials, political observers, analysts and commentators. Soon enough, in a fledgling industry that is growing at an amazing pace, house style modes of delivery are beginning to evolve through a refining development process. These modes of delivery reframe the original message and produce variances and infelicities, which are for the most part unintended by the producers of such mediated programs.
Overview

The preceding chapter established, through examination of the predominant translation models at Aljazeera and other Arabic television networks, the role of translation as a framing process of news making and reconstruction of constructed realities. The primitive method of literalization, which is motivated by an equally primitive notion of fidelity, and which ignores the dynamic nature and pragmatic functions of languages, is unmistakably a distinctive hallmark of Arabic translation not only in the media but almost everywhere translation is required. Whether by tradition or lack of scientific translation methods, Arabic translators seem unable to deviate from the literal surface translation of text so much so that the United Nations General Assembly passed a critical resolution at its fifty-fourth session on 21 June 2000 regarding literal translation in UN Arabic documentation. Article eleven highlighted the problem:

11) It notices with concern that some of the documents produced in Arabic tend to follow a consistent pattern of excessive literal translation, by focusing on words rather than on the purport of the original language, and calls on the Secretary General to ensure that this situation is corrected.1

Typically however, when the broadcasters move away from the literal sense, they more often get it critically wrong. The original intentions of the message are lost especially when the concepts are culture-specific, unfamiliar and or colloquial. In this chapter, I examine another aspect of translation mediation that plays an equally crucial role in transmitting news and current affairs programs live as they unfold and in framing the messages they carry to the viewers: simultaneous telecast interpreting.

What is Simultaneous Interpreting?

Simultaneous Interpreting (SI) today is an important aspect of live international satellite broadcasts since it facilitates ad hoc cross-lingual communication and brings to the viewers arguments and
counterarguments by foreign experts, analysts and observers about domestic and international issues in a time-critical manner.

For Arabic satellite television stations eager to portray themselves as standard bearers of western-style democratisation, political and cultural change, and to engage “the other” in the debate, simultaneous interpreting has become the bread and butter of live current affairs programs and news broadcasts. It is a recent phenomenon that has rapidly gained prominence. At the same time, it has highlighted major operational and performance shortcomings and weaknesses relating to the competency standards of interpreters hired for this crucial task and inconsistent broadcasting policies pertaining to telecast simultaneous interpreting (TSI).

The overnight success of Arabic media networks such as Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya and LBC (Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation) has been partly attributed to their ability to bring to the Arab viewers ad hoc views and opinions through simultaneous interpreting as the program unfolds. None of these outfits however seems to have been prepared for this kind of delivery or has anticipated the pivotal importance of simultaneous interpreting. This can be gleaned externally from the quality of interpreting and linguistic and paralinguistic skills of the interpreters hired for these roles, and the high levels of interpreting staff turnover.

This chapter focuses only on the modes of delivery of simultaneous interpreting at these satellite television stations monitored over the period of research and examines the role this type of mediation plays in framing and reframing the original message.

Impact of Live Television on Simultaneous Interpreting

Live simultaneous interpreting for television broadcasts is a form of interpreting that requires skills and modes of delivery that are quite different from other forms of simultaneous interpreting, such as conference interpreting. While conference interpreting has a long
developmental history that goes back all the way to 1945 when the first United Nations conference on international organization was held, live television interpreting is somewhat younger. In Europe for example, simultaneous interpreting for television had an early beginning at the height of the cold war in the early 1960s. More recently, simultaneous interpreting has gained global significance with the dramatic changes on the world stage. Embedded reporting, live broadcasts from war zones, on-the-go interviews with local figures, analysts and observers, and on the scene press conferences, on CNN, BBC and other international cable television stations, have given impetus to simultaneous interpreting into English (and other languages).

In the Arab world, live simultaneous interpreting is quite a recent phenomenon dating back to the early 1990s. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the discovered popularity of the Cable News Network (CNN) among the Arabs, particularly during the first gulf war and the invasion of Kuwait, “triggered [a] series of developments that led to the establishment of private television in Arab countries, inaugurated with the 1991 launching in London of the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) by Saudi business interests with the support of the royal family” (Kraidy, 2002). According to Alterman (2002), the rise of these Arabic satellite-broadcast television stations in the last decade has caused a revolution in the Arab world. These stations have challenged traditional state monopolies over television broadcasting, and “have played a significant role in breaking down censorship barriers in the region. They have encouraged open debates on previously taboo subjects like secularism and religion, provided fora for opposition political leaders from a number of countries, and given a voice to perspectives that were previously absent from the Arab media” (Alterman, 2002). Undoubtedly, the advent of these Arabic satellite television stations in the Arab world has dramatically changed the way news and current affairs programs are presented in Arabic today. The supposedly fortuitous rise to fame of
Aljazeera in the aftermath of the September 11 events and US-led war on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, has placed a great deal of demand on Arabic satellite television stations to vie for first place as an international Arab media player and as a regional democratization and normalization agent in the Arab world. Consequently, these television stations have experienced a marked increase in news and current affairs programs that rely on juxtaposing different and contrastive views of East and West. This in turn has created a critical demand for professional, qualified simultaneous interpreters. The obvious lack of experience on the part of these satellite stations in simultaneous interpreting on the one hand, and the scarcity of adequately trained competent Arabic interpreters on the other, have created a problem that presents itself to the viewers, as symptoms of a more serious problem, since no comprehensive academic field study has been carried out to date. These symptoms range from (1) a high level of staff turnover (discerned from the sudden absence of interpreters and change of interpreting voices and garnered through analysis of informal communication), (2) inconsistency of delivery modes, to (3) instances of on-the-spot corrective instructions by frustrated program presenters to these unfortunate interpreters (for example, it is not uncommon for a program presenter to chide the on-duty interpreter for supposedly making a mistake), and emergence of “mutual admiration societies” so to speak and camaraderie between interpreters and more appreciative and sympathetic program presenters (who in some instances try indirectly to aid the interpreter by explicating their Arabic utterances with English translations). In some respect, these symptoms give us a glimpse of the kind of pressure simultaneous interpreters find themselves working under at these television stations.

Attempts to compare and analyze live broadcasts of major world events on CNN, BBC and Arabic satellite television reveal major flaws, discrepancies and distortions in the messages conveyed. While it is not the intention here to focus on these aspects of telecast simultaneous
interpreting (TSI), it is worth noting that TSI suffers from poor standards relating to language, comprehension and information transfer competence. Standard Arabic, the high variety of the language, which is the medium of delivery for telecast simultaneous interpreting, presents serious difficulties for some of these simultaneous interpreters: idiom, grammatical inflections, syntax, enunciation, pronunciation, and suchlike.3

Comprehension problems have also been detected. A case in point is the live rendition of the controversial term “crusade” uttered by the US president George W Bush straight after the September 11 events, as a “Christian holy war”.4 As noted earlier, Arabic translation and interpreting work in general is characteristically literal. Thus, it is not surprising to hear English idiomatic expressions rendered verbatim in Arabic. Today, examples of clumsy and nonsensical literal renditions of idiomatic expressions—such as “in cold blood”, “fat chance”, “money laundering”, “throw a spanner in the works”, and “carrot-and-stick” to name a few—abound in Arabic translations.

Literal translation is an old legacy in Arabic literature and translation that has been perpetuated in both directions by both Arab and Arabist translators, and continues to make a serious dent in the lexis, idiom and structure of the Arabic language. In certain instances, this approach has been responsible for the evolution of new ideologies and cultural mismemes based on erroneous translations from other languages and cultures (Darwish, 2004). The approach is partly due to the foreign language teaching methods employed in Arab education institutions generally and the absence of professional development of translators and interpreters. Anyone with a smattering of another language and the right connections can become an interpreter overnight. Adequate formal interpreting and translation training remains out of reach of would-be interpreters and confined to a handful of universities and institutes.
Furthermore, despite repeated calls and recommendations⁵ (Darwish, 1988; Baker, 1998) dating back to 1979 and 1987, and major efforts to develop a pan-Arab program for translation by various organizations (Baker, 1998) no serious attempts have been made to set up a professional Arab organization for interpreters and translators. The recommendations by the Conference on Arab Cooperation in Terminology held in Tunis in 1986 called for “setting up national translator associations or unions at state level under the aegis of a pan-national Translators Federation”⁶. To date, endeavours of this nature have remained confined to virtual reality or have soon faltered. A report by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (Bancroft, 2004) was “unable to locate a professional [emphasis added] association of interpreters in the Middle East with the exception of Israel” and “no codes of ethics and standards of practice have been developed to date in Arab countries or Israel. However, paradoxically, a number of universities in the region offer four-year degrees in interpreting and translation, perhaps a signal that both are emerging professional fields. Arab[ic]-speaking countries in North Africa appear to be at a similar stage of development” (Bancroft, 2004: 36-37).

More importantly however, literal translation is caused by the lack of a structured translation-mediated knowledge transfer methodology, and as already stated in this chapter, the misguided and antiquated notion of fidelity and meaning in translation that posits that literal translation is faithful translation. Such persistent views, which ignore the fact that translation is first and foremost an act of dynamic communication, may have their strong roots in the tradition of translating the Holy Qur’an—a tradition that has strongly affected other forms of translation. According to Mustapha (1998), “[m]ost translations of the Qur’an are source-oriented; accommodating the target audience is not generally favoured given the Qur’an is the Word of God, revealed in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad. This may explain the extensive use of notes in many translations, and the lengthy introductions that tend to precede them” (in
This phenomenon can be illustrated within the three-tier model of translation outlined in this thesis. To remind the reader, this model consists of primary, operative and interpretive levels and four modes of orientation: source, target, reader and author (with their combinations), where the primary level refers to the closest point possible between the source and target languages, the operative level refers to the functional properties of rendition, and the interpretive level refers to the informative intention of the source text and the function of the translation in the target language. Most translators tend to work at the primary level of rendition, largely ignoring the dynamics of both languages in expressing the same notions with different rhetorical techniques, even in the presence of constraints that prevent the realization of both the communicative and informative intentions of the source. The tendency is to violate rather than satisfy the constraint, and to produce literal translations that basically compromise the integrity of information in terms of what is carried across to the other language and how it is perceived by the target language. Consider the following example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text</th>
<th>وعد الحر دين</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transliteration</td>
<td>wa’dū al-hurri dyn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbatim Translation</td>
<td>Promise [genitive] the free [unmarked] [implied copula] [zero article] debt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal translation</td>
<td>The promise of the free is debt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary level</th>
<th>Operative level</th>
<th>Interpretive level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A free man’s promise is a debt.</td>
<td>A promise made is a debt unpaid.</td>
<td>A promise made by a free man out of free will is like a debt that is unpaid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the Arabic nominal sentence rendered as a copula sentence in English at the primary level makes sense to the Arabic translator because it mirrors the Arabic construction and because of access to the source text, it forces native speakers of English to submit the sentence to further cognitive processing and analysis to arrive at the intended meaning. Primary renditions are valid only in the absence of constraints that prevent the realization of source meaning in the translation. Otherwise, the translator (or interpreter) tries to satisfy the constraint by moving to the operative level, and if the translation still does not convey the source meaning, a shift to the interpretive level is necessary. In the above example, the operative, target-oriented rendition is adequate to convey the intentions of the source message. Let us examine a more serious example within this three-tier model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text</th>
<th>اليد العليا خير من اليد السفلة.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transliteration</td>
<td>alyadū al-‘ulya khayrun min al-yadi as-sufla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbatim Translation</td>
<td>The hand the upper [post modifier] [implied copula] better from the hand the lower [post modifier].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal translation</td>
<td>The upper hand is better than the lower hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary level</td>
<td>The upper hand is better than the lower hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operative level</td>
<td>It is better to give than to receive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive level</td>
<td>It is better to give charity than to ask for alms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, most Arabic interpreters (and translators) would automatically render this example at the primary level, which clearly shows how they can inadvertently convey the wrong message through “metaphor creep” in this instance. In other words, by adhering to the literal form of the source,
the interpreter has introduced an English idiomatic expression “the upper hand”, which means “superiority or advantage” rather than being “charitable” or “magnanimous”, thus seriously distorting the intentions of the source and reframing the original message. Again, the operative level here should capture the essence of the Arabic metaphor.

On the interpreter’s side, the number of cognitive processing operations depends on two factors: (1) the distance between the languages coupled in the translation process and (2) the inventory of matched patterns. Efficiency in retrieving data will depend on the interpreter’s linguistic pattern recognition ability within larger patterns and his or her ability to match and align these patterns at appropriate levels of approximation. If the interpreter has confined such patterns to the rudimentary level, errors of the nature described above are bound to occur during performance. In time-critical decision-making, the path of least resistance is always taken. This is bound to be the shortest route between the two languages or routes routinized through pattern recognition and pre-alignment of these patterns. Prefabricated language makes up a large portion of the linguistic stock, and it is often said that we all speak in clichés—nothing is really invented. As such, the success of interpreting is governed by the interpreter’s ability to pre-align prefabricated linguistic data and bridge the distance that exists between the two languages, cultures and various communicative situations through such alignment.

**Model rationale and rules**

The rationale for this three-tier model was discussed in Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework and Research Model. To recapitulate, the model is based on the notion that translation is a process of approximation driven by constraints and that “the ultimate goal of any translation strategy is to solve the underlying problem of translation-mediated communication and to remove the external and internal constraints imposed on the translation process in order to unlock potential alternatives” (Darwish, 2003, 117-
The model enables us to address the question of accuracy, precision and appropriateness of TSI rendition and to determine whether the rendition is optimally approximated to the source in terms of its informative and communicative intents. The model, which is anchored in optimality theory, regards translation as a temporary system of conflicting forces that are embodied by constraints. Following Kager (1999), each translation constraint makes a requirement about some aspect of equivalent output. “Constraints are typically conflicting, in the sense that to satisfy one constraint implies the violation of another” (4). Empirical and anecdotal evidence has shown that no translation form can satisfy all constraints simultaneously. Therefore, there must be a mechanism of selecting [translation] forms that incur ‘lesser’ constraint violations from others that incur ‘more serious’ ones (after Kager, 1999:4). Logically, this must mean that the overriding consideration in selecting these forms is the preservation of the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the original message. To manage these conflicting constraints, the model provides explicit rules for translation production and analysis. These rules include the following as discussed in Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework and Research Model.

1. The point of departure is the closest point possible between source and target languages. This means the most direct translation is the primary option. Direct translation does not necessarily mean literal translation, rather a conventional equivalent or counterpart.

2. IF this fails to preserve the informative and communicative intentions of the source, THEN a shift to the operative level is warranted.
3. IF the operative level fails to preserve the informative intention of the source, THEN a shift to the interpretive level is required.

4. To make explicit in the translation what is implicit in the source so long as what is implicit in the source is readily accessible to the intended reader of the source by virtue of the intersubjectivity that exists between the source writer and the source reader.

In certain translation/interpreting situations, when a wide gap exists between the source and the target languages, the interpretive mode is the only mode of operation available to the translator/interpreter to produce a sound translation. However, if pre-alignment has been confined to the rudimentary level, as mentioned earlier, shifting to the interpretive mode in time-critical responses imposes a serious constraint causing linguistic incongruence between the two languages, thus producing interpreting dissonance. Let us examine one more example.

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

The power of this English text derives from the rhetorical technique of contrast between taller buildings and shorter tempers, wider freeways and narrower viewpoints, and so on, and from the collocations of adjectives. However, this rhetorical technique, which is an essential component of the original meaning of the message, does not work in the same way in other languages (for example, Arabic), mainly because of the condition of collocations. In English, a building is normally described as tall rather than high (tall and building collocate), while in Arabic a building is high rather than tall (high and building collocate, tall and building do not). Also in English both short and quick collocate with temper, while in Arabic sharp and temper collocate—hence the compounded problem of translating the above example in the primary or operative mode. To maintain the contrast without violating the norms of the target language, certain adjustments will have to be made at the operative level. Let us
consider one representative example of interpreting dissonance caused by faulty pre-alignment.

Original:

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice defended the unlimited detention of suspected terrorists saying, in an interview that it benefited the United States and the entire world.

Translation:

In the English construction suspected terrorists, the adjective (suspected) qualifies and delimits the noun (terrorists). In other words, the terrorists are not yet terrorists. In contrast, the adjective in the Arabic noun + adjective construction (obligatory syntactic transposition) describes and does not qualify or delimit. Nonetheless, the phrase suspected terrorists is almost invariably translated into Arabic as “terrorists suspected in (i.e. of) them” (obligatory transposition and anaphoric pronoun”), despite the fact that the Arabic post-modifier (suspected in them) is a descriptive permanent attribute, in this case producing an oxymoron. How can they be terrorists and at the same time suspected of being terrorists? This is how the noun + adjective construction works in Arabic, and the dissonance-free rendition of (suspected terrorists) in Arabic is normally a phrase meaning (persons suspected of being terrorists). However, by using the traditional Arabic method of analogy to coin new words, one can produce a word that captures the English phrase “suspected terrorists”. Without running the risk of being too technical here, Arabic is based on word patterns. In this instance, the pattern (mustaf’al) means
“someone or something deemed something”. For example, the word “musta’d’a’f”, which is based on this pattern, means “deemed weak”. In the same vein, one could coin the new word “mustarhab” to mean deemed terrorist and by extension, suspected terrorist.

In his remarkable work, the late scholar James S. Holmes (1994) proposed a system of hierarchy of correspondences between the source and target languages, where the translator may assign priority to close matching of the semantic content depending on the type of text, or to establishing correspondences of appeal “even at the cost of having to overhaul the semantic message completely” (86). The three-tier model described in this chapter is informed by the constraints and limitations imposed on the translation process rather than by the translator’s choices, where failure to satisfy the constraints results in a skewed translation that falls outside the acceptable range of approximation and the parameters of the original message.

Simultaneous Interpreting Models

For obvious reasons, simultaneous interpreting is often associated with conference interpreting. The image of a diplomat addressing the United Nations General Assembly or Security Council through an interpreter is conjured up whenever simultaneous interpreting is generally discussed. However, as Gentile (1988) contends, “conference interpreting as an umbrella term does not do justice to the varieties of interpreting which are carried out in Australia [and elsewhere] even though these can be considered varieties of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting” (480) [insertion added]. The term also fails to account for other forms of interpreting that have nothing to do with conference settings. For example, there is a fundamental difference between conference interpreting and telecast simultaneous interpreting in terms of modes of delivery, environment, physical presence of the interlocutors, and so on. It is therefore important for the purposes of this study to make a clear
distinction between telecast simultaneous interpreting and conference interpreting.

**Research into simultaneous interpreting**

Research into simultaneous interpreting began in earnest in the period that followed the Bay of Pigs Crisis in 1961. The crisis and the flurry of diplomatic activities that accompanied this major political event highlighted shortfalls in our understanding of the interpreting phenomenon. Initial research focused on intuitive accounts of the interpreting process, and by mid-1970s interest had shifted to theoretical analysis and empirical research culminating in a multistage view of interpreting by the late 1970s (Moser-Mercer, 1997).

Within this developmental framework, two types of simultaneous interpreting models developed by various researchers have been identified: full process and partial process. These information processing-oriented models offered formal representations of the interpreting phenomenon that did not correspond to real life (Moser-Mercer, 1997). Moser-Mercer concludes that “a powerful model of the interpreting process must be broad enough to include aspects that reflect the complex, time-constrained multitasking environment of simultaneous interpreting that involves a high degree of cognitive processing” (in Danks et al, 1997: 194).

**Conference interpreting**

Conference interpreting (CI) is a dyadic, one-way bilingual (or multilingual) communication that takes place between a speaker (dyad 1) and an audience (dyad 2) via an interpreter or several interpreters (in multilingual settings and relay interpreting, where the interpreter who does not know the speaker’s language piggybacks another interpreter who does)⁹. The speaker is usually visible and audible to the audience. His or her speech is air-transmitted via loudspeakers to the audience and via a one-way closed circuit communication system to the simultaneous
interpreter who usually sits in a special soundproof booth. In ideal conference conditions, the interpreter can see both the speaker and the audience. However, this is not always possible and sometimes “blind” booths are used that block the interpreter’s visual contact with the speaker and audience. During performance, the interpreter translates the speaker’s source discourse into the target language as it is received, and transmits the target rendition simultaneously to the target language audience via a one-way closed circuit communication system.

As Gile (1995) confirms, scripted simultaneous interpreting occurs frequently, especially in conference interpreting settings such as the United Nations. “Simultaneous interpretation with text occurs frequently, when speakers read [out] a text which has also been given to interpreters [beforehand]” (184). Gile observes that while this mode of simultaneous interpreting, which combines sight translation of the speech, offers the interpreter “visual presence of information, which reduces memory problems”, it presents new problems relating to the density and peculiar linguistic construction of written texts, as opposed to oral discourse, and the risk of linguistic interference (185). However, observation of simultaneous interpreters working from scripted speeches in settings of this kind shows that seasoned interpreters, being aware of the speaker’s potential departure from the scripted speech, would anticipatorily use the
script as prerecorded notes, and would pre-highlight key ideas in the
speech to help them cope with any deviation from the written text. To this
end, Gile concedes that scripted simultaneous interpreting “does seem to
make interpretation possible under acoustic and delivery conditions which
would be prohibitory without the text” (185). Nonetheless, this raises the
question whether this form or mode of performance (that is, scripted
interpreting) can actually be termed “simultaneous interpreting” or
whether it is pseudo interpreting or another form of revoicing.

**Telecast simultaneous interpreting**

Pöchhacker (1995) observes that simultaneous interpreting in live
broadcasts is one of the more specialized forms of language transfer in the
audiovisual media. It has a narrower scope of application than dubbing,
subtitling and other translation-mediated techniques since it is confined to
live unscripted interviews, discussions and talk shows. In recent years,
simultaneous interpreting has increasingly covered live *ad hoc* and
scheduled press conferences and speeches by statesmen and women and
politicians as well as news broadcasts utilizing sign language. Yet as
Pöchhacker (1995) confirms, as a rule, interpreting into the target
language is “broadcast as a voice-over, with the original speaker still
audible in the background” (207). However, as we shall see later in this
chapter, this is not necessarily the case in the study under investigation
and the rule is not always observed.

Generally, Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting (TSI) is a triadic, two-way
bilingual communication process that takes place between a foreign
language speaker (dyad 1), who may be in the same studio as the program
presenter and sometimes other guests, or at a remote location, and the talk
show presenter (dyad 2), and occasionally the other guests, via a
simultaneous interpreter, who may be at the same location where the talk
show is being produced or at a remote location, for the benefit of a
television audience (viewers) (dyad 3) who act as passive receivers in as
far as interacting directly with the other dyads is not possible. The foreign speaker is visible and audible to all parties in the studio, and to the audience through controlled camera shots. The talk show presenter and the onsite and offsite guests may or may not know the language of the foreign speaker.

Figure 22 - Triadic Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting-Driven Communication

During performance, the interpreter translates the foreign speaker’s source discourse into the target language of the audience as it is received, and transmits the rendition to the target language audience via a television broadcasting system. The interpreter also communicates the utterances of the program presenter (and the guests, as it may), via a closed circuit communication system. This is not audible to the viewers. The situation can increase in complexity when there is more than one foreign speaker at different locations and or in the studio where the talk show is being conducted. It is also not uncommon to have at least two interpreters; a primary interpreter and a relief interpreter assigned to the TSI task.
Unlike other forms of simultaneous interpreting, such as conference interpreting, Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting is seldom scripted. Given the ad hoc nature of most programs, TSI interpreters are increasingly under pressure to respond to live *ad libbed* discourse. This increases the potential for errors and other performance anomalies and reduces the quality of output to unacceptable levels, especially when “in some respects the level of output expected in media interpreting is even considerably higher” (Pöchhacker, 1995:207) than conference interpreting. Consequently, attentive listening skills and synchronicity of receiving source discourse, processing, and transmitting target discourse become more vital for effective performance. Many TSI interpreters fail to perform effectively because they tend to listen to the speaker pre-emptively without defining the various levels of communication in the source discourse and without recognizing the different levels of abstraction at which they can work within the parameters of the original

*Figure 23 - A Basic Model of Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting*
discourse. The advice frequently given to interpreters to concentrate on ideas rather than on words has been often misused and misunderstood. As noted in previous work, “moving from words to ideas does not mean to have a free rein to change, add or omit utterances at will. It is rather moving from one level of abstraction to another where the interpreter can separate the utterance from the words and content from form” (Darwish, 2003:170). In this regard, MacWhinney’s cue validity concept discussed earlier can be put to practice with effective results. Furthermore, the balance between listening and speaking may become affected by inappropriate acoustics, fatigue and too much concentration on rendition to the extent that the speaker’s voice may be drowned by the interpreter’s own voice at certain critical segments of the speaker’s utterances, causing major distortions or omissions.

In other TSI settings\(^\text{12}\), the public speaker addresses an immediate audience, physically or virtually present (in television broadcasts) in a monolingual environment. The public speaker’s address is broadcast to a global television audience through a simultaneous interpreter who may be physically located onsite or remotely at the television station.

**Relay telecast simultaneous interpreting**

In certain situations, relay interpreting is employed where the station’s primary interpreter is not qualified to work from the language of the foreign speaker (primary passive language) and piggybacks another interpreter at the same or another station who is competent to work into the primary interpreter’s passive language (from which the interpreter is competent to interpret professionally into his or her active language). For example, a Japanese Foreign Minister’s speech is interpreted into English by a CNN Japanese-English interpreter and relayed from English into Arabic by the Arabic satellite station’s English-Arabic interpreter. This scenario adds to the complexity of TSI, in these specific instances, since the station’s primary interpreter relies solely on the interpreter at the
source station. Speed, coherence and precision of delivery depend on the source interpreter’s quality of rendition and mode of delivery.

**Time-critical, Real-time Communication**

Much of the literature dealing with the types and modes of interpreting has focused primarily on three main types: simultaneous, consecutive and liaison. With the exception of liaison interpreting, which has attracted a great deal of attention in the last decade particularly in Australia, the literature at hand does not sufficiently examine the modes of delivery of each of these types. For example, paralanguage as a feature of interpreting mode of delivery has been discussed in forensic linguistics within the context of court interpreting, which is primarily consecutive or quasi-simultaneous. However, Poyatos (2002) contends that despite twenty-five years of research or rather recycling of poorly understood fundamental ideas about paralanguage, it has not been fully exploited as “the nonverbal long-term qualities of the voice, the many modifiers of it which result in marked formal and semantic changes, and the many independent word-like sound constructs, which we use consciously or unconsciously supporting, contradicting, accompanying or replacing the linguistic and kinesic message…either simultaneously to or alternating with them” (in Pöchhacker and Shlesinger, 2002: 240).

Pöchhacker (2004:150) also confirms that the interpreter’s spatial position and the co-construction of interactive spoken discourse, which involves the full range of communicative devices, including paralinguistic, kinesic and proxemic behaviours, has been the subject of few corpus-based studies on nonverbal communication in dialogue interpreting. The differences in modes and styles of delivery remain severely under-researched.

More specifically, a significant aspect of simultaneous interpreting seems to have received little attention, or at least has not been articulated...
explicitly. Simultaneous interpreting is live communication that takes place in real time. It is a time-critical performance that requires a heightened level of awareness and cognitive priming to enable the interpreter to make accurate time-critical decisions (Darwish, 2003). This crucial SI factor adds to the complexity of action as it affects the quality of performance, the rate of delivery, the Search, Locate, Retrieve and Match (SLRM) mechanisms, recovery strategies and synchronicity of performance. Moser-Mercer (1997) confirms that in time-constrained tasks, such as simultaneous interpreting, how and when to apply a particular strategy is of crucial importance leading to the conclusion that “the emphasis shifts from knowledge structures to the dynamic nature of their use” (194). That is because the organization of knowledge is more crucial for the retrieval and response times than possessing the appropriate knowledge structures.

Live satellite television “simultaneous” interpreting however is not quite simultaneous. Live broadcasts usually utilize time-delayed, multi-track asynchronous, resynchronized transmission. This technique sometimes enables the interpreter to gain a few seconds (the delay is usually 3 to 5 seconds or up to 10 frames per second) to formulate his or her utterances in advance of the actual broadcast. With poorly managed technologies, this delay sometimes results in the interpreter’s getting ahead of the speaker thus producing dissonance and voice lag. All the same, despite this inconspicuous advantage, simultaneous interpreting remains a high-powered, stressful real-time task.

As already noted, the unprecedented rapid success of Arabic satellite television stations has taken them by surprise. With the sudden demand for simultaneous interpreters, the stations seem to have recruited interpreters drawn primarily from the United Nations pool of interpreters and retired interpreters as well as others from regional countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria. Those interpreters were not
initially equipped to perform “live, simultaneous” interpreting proper probably because simultaneous interpreting as practised at the United Nations is for the main part pre-scripted, as already noted. In this regard, al-Ashmawi (1983) asserts “…hardly anyone [at the United Nations] listens to simultaneous interpreting except those who are utterly ignorant of the other language. Consequently, they accept whatever they hear with no argument. UN meeting rooms have seen a great deal of argumentation, disagreement and paroxysms of anger because of errors, misunderstanding or inaccuracies on the part of the simultaneous interpreter, or because the interpreter has skipped a sentence or two while trying to catch up to the speaker.”

Twenty years on, the situation does not seem to have considerably improved, and pre-scripted translated speeches are routinely distributed to participants beforehand. With English having become the predominant language of communication globally, it is quite rare and indeed surprising to find a UN delegate who could not speak or comprehend English. Delivering lengthy speeches in the UN official languages other than English is just another formality that the United Nations is still unable to get rid of. Simultaneous interpreting has reportedly become more of a cushy “mimesis” job. Having said that and in light of the new mode of performance required by live television broadcasts and the obvious lack of a consistent simultaneous interpreting policy, a general mediocre competency standard seems to prevail. Notwithstanding the various serious to trivial interpreting errors that are detected from time to time, two major styles of delivery are observed.

**Interpreting Mediation at Arabic Satellite Television**

Initial informal observation of Arabic satellite television indicated major discrepancies and variations of styles and modes of delivery of Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting (TSI). To further explore the different styles of TSI delivery, Aljazeera and LBC were chosen for the case study.
Empirical evidence was gathered from live and repeated broadcasts over a period of research with the majority of programs recorded in the second year due to a marked increase in international and regional activities requiring live TSI.

The major focus of this study was to examine the delivery modes of TSI at Aljazeera, with LBC occasionally utilized where possible for comparison purposes only, to define these modes and provide an analysis of identified styles of delivery in order to determine their salient features, idiosyncrasies and communicative effectiveness in live television broadcasting. In addition, the impact of these modes on framing and reframing the original message was also a major consideration of the study.

**Research Design, Data and Methods**

The modes of delivery of simultaneous interpreting at these satellite television stations were monitored over a period of two years. First regular talk shows, newscasts, ad hoc conferences and international events were recorded, analysed, compared across stations, and against English language stations, such as CNN and BBC, broadcasting the same events, transcripts and other documentary evidence. These programs were later grouped into two major categories: ad hoc live events, and live talk shows and current affairs programs, and were further analysed within the three-tier model outlined earlier in this chapter.

**Scope and limitations**

Ad hoc live events included unscheduled, on-the-scene press conferences and statements by US and British political leaders. These events provided good data for analysis. However, due to the ad hoc nature of these events live recordings had their limitations in terms of completeness and coherence. Nonetheless, it was possible, albeit in a very limited fashion, to compare segments of recorded statements and speeches to source
discourse aired by English language television stations such as CNN, and BBC and more so to scripts available from other sources on the Internet.

In contrast, scheduled live talk shows and current affairs programs, including the news, offered more reliable recordings, providing a better platform for gathering information. However, due to Aljazeera’s muting of the voice of the source language speaker, recourse to the original discourse was not feasible and analysis of data focused solely on the production of discourse in the target language in terms of what is natural and conventional elocution. Consequently, any elocutionary features perceived to be similar to English elocution relied on what is known to be the accepted mode of delivery at CNN and the BBC. The programs in the latter category included the following talk shows: al-ittijah al-mu’akis (opposite direction), hiwar maftuh (open dialogue), min washinton (from Washington) and akthar min ra’y (more than one opinion). For comparison of styles and modes of TSI delivery at Aljazeera to those employed by interpreters at LBC, one LBC current affairs program that occasionally hosted American and European guests was primarily used, namely al-hadath (the event). It is worth noting that Aljazeera and LBC do not necessarily broadcast similar types of programs to enable a comparison of content and performance levels across the two stations.

Technical and operational problems

The technical management of simultaneous interpreting at these satellite stations has been inconsistent. Without a close examination of the internal operations and work conditions in which simultaneous interpreting takes place, analysis of technical operations is currently restricted to the product itself and its on-air delivery. The following features have been observed over a period of two years.

- In initial broadcasts, the foreign speaker’s voice is muted and dubbed over with the interpreter’s voice. In recent broadcasts, the policy
seems to have shifted to allow the speaker’s voice to be slightly audible with the interpreter’s overlapping voice dubbed over.

- The interpreter is never on camera. Only the voice is heard. Generally, the voice quality of the interpreters was not suitable for broadcasting. Unnatural nasal pronunciation has been a distinct feature of certain deliveries.

- While a two-way simultaneous interpreting is taking place, only the Arabic rendition of the foreign speaker’s utterances is heard. The English translation is always inaudible (except on rare occasions where there is cross talk due to technical fault or signal interference).

- It seems that at times two interpreters perform in different language directions: One for Arabic-bound rendition (which is always audible) and one for English-bound rendition (which is always inaudible).

- On occasion, where more than one foreign speaker is present, two separate interpreters have assumed the alternate roles in a dramatization of the communication transaction, sometimes with the original voices muted or slightly audible. Contrastive modes of delivery have been detected.

- Certain interpreters have employed a rhetorical simultaneous interpreting (RSI) approach to interpreting, incorporating paralinguistic properties and theatrics into their performance. This will be discussed later.

- Because of the time-delayed synchronicity, the interpreter is often getting ahead of the speaker. Given that the speaker’s voice is audible, such out of step performance sometimes produces comic relief effect.

- Linguistic standards have varied in terms of grammatical correctness, enunciation, elocution, and public speaking skills from good to very poor, with semiliterate renditions occasionally detected. Faulty parsing and word grouping have contributed to distortion of original
discourse. Furthermore, regional accents were easily discernable despite the neutralizing nature of standard Arabic elocution, thus reflecting the educational levels of interpreters and presenters alike.

Generally, Aljazeera seems to have adopted the BBC recommendations set out in The BBC News Style Guide, which warn against "singsong" and staccato sentences. Most Aljazeera newsreaders (including interpreters and translators who are expected to do voiceovers)\textsuperscript{16} are BBC voice-trained. They seem to have adopted English language rules of elocution, presentation style and news-reading mechanics most-suited to English broadcasting. Moreover, there seems to be confusion among the ranks of presenters regarding the interpretation of end of sentence word stresses and pauses normally recommended for English language broadcasting.

**Analysis and Discussion**

Analysis of simultaneous interpreting has to be carried out within a clearly demarcated framework that ensures the following aspects of simultaneous interpreting performance are examined and assessed.

- Information integrity: completeness, precision and accuracy of information content.
- Communicative integrity: elocution, articulation, enunciation, fluency, comprehension.
- Linguistic integrity: sound, error-free grammar, syntax, lexis, idiom and so on.
- Propositional integrity: original thesis, line of argument, sequencing and thought patterns.
- Performance: confidence, effective and efficient delivery, attitude, recall, recovery strategies.
- Modes of delivery: rhetorical and expository.
Assessment of these features has been rated in translation metrics as minor, major and critical defects within the three-tier model of translation described earlier. Minor defects are localized self-contained errors. Major defects are generalized errors causing major distortions, and critical defects are serious errors and discrepancies causing serious communication breakdown. The shift of mode from primary to operative or interpretive has been assessed in terms of constraint satisfaction or violation.

While these features have been analyzed and assessed within the three-tier model, part of a larger scope of study, the main focus of analysis for the purposes of this chapter has been the modes of delivery utilized to carry across the message in terms of deviation from the norm within the model rules.

**Information integrity**

Based on a previous definition (Darwish, 1995), linguistic integrity refers to the ability to render the text in a sound language in terms of grammar, structure (both micro and macro levels), coherence and cohesion. Information integrity refers to the completeness of the information content of the text. In interpreting, information integrity refers to the ability to retain the same information in terms of accuracy, correctness, completeness and original intentions (both informative and communicative).

Information integrity has been examined in as much as it has been possible to compare recorded performances to original speeches and statement broadcast by English-only media companies such as CNN, BBC, Sky News and other local television and radio stations. Validating content is not possible in current affairs and talk shows since the original speaker’s voice is either muted or hardly audible to make enough sense of
the information content of source discourse. The same applies to validating the communicative integrity of English source discourse.

Where it has been possible to compare target rendition to source discourse, analysis has shown major discrepancies, omissions, distortions and inaccuracies ranging from minor to major to critical.

**Linguistic integrity**

Linguistic integrity refers to the ability to render the text in a sound language in terms of grammar, structure (both micro and macro levels) and coherence and cohesion by conforming to the lexical and syntactic norms and conventions of the target languages. Linguistic errors that compromise the meaning of the source text are of serious nature. Analysis of the linguistic standards of delivery has revealed serious problems of basic grammar, lexical transfer, and syntactic conventions.

**Communicative integrity**

Communicative integrity refers to the ability to preserve the communicative intentions of the source discourse in terms of elocution, articulation, enunciation, fluency, comprehension. Again, communicative integrity has been examined in as much as it has been possible to compare target rendition to source discourse and vis-à-vis known conventions, standards and norms in both source and target languages. The analysis has revealed discrepancies and defects in elocution, articulation and comprehension of source discourse. These have also been rated minor, major and critical.

Arabic is a stress-timed language, with word stress predictable and regular. Phrase and sentence rhythms are similar in Arabic and English. While intonation patterns in Arabic are similar to those of English in contour and meaning, especially with primary stresses, suprasegmental features, that is intonation and vocal stresses, of Aljazeera’s Arabic interpreters are noticeably non-Arabic. Boyd (1997) points out that “a
common failing of untrained newsreaders is to imagine that due stress and emphasis means banging out every fifth word of a story and ramming the point home by pounding the last word of each sentence” (159). Both Arabic newsreaders and interpreters at Aljazeera have exhibited the tendency to pound the last word of each sentence in an unnatural rising pitch (for example, al-\(\text{ira}^\text{Q}\) = al-Iraq) as in English. In the absence of clear standard training for interpreters in the Arab world and for TSI interpreters in particular, one assumption is that TSI interpreters have been given the same guidelines as the newsreaders.

To illustrate the significance of these features to the overall integrity of the rendition, let us now examine the following excerpt from statements by US President George W. Bush at his press conference with the interim Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi in Washington on 23 September 2004, together with simultaneous interpreting as carried by Aljazeera.

Transcript of original utterances

“And I believe that if we wilt [beat] or leave, America's security will be much [beat] worse [beat] off [beat]. I believe that if we fail in Iraq, it's the beginning of a [elongated voice] loooong struggle; we will not have done our duty to our children and our grandchildren. And so that's why I'm consistently telling the Iraqi citizens that we will not be intimidated. That's why my message to Mr. Zarqawi is, you cannot drive us out of Iraq [beat] by your brutality.

“It's tough work, everybody knows that. It's hard work. But we must not allow [beat] the actions of a few [pause] - and I emphasize that. I say that because there are 25 million Iraqis, by far the vast majority of whom want to live in a free society. [beat] And we cannot allow [beat] the actions of a few to determine the fate [beat] of these good people [beat] as well as the fate of the security of the United States.[stop]”

Arabic simultaneous interpreting

وأعتقد أنه إذا ما قمنا [beat] [بهذة الأحداث] [rising pitch ending in a pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [ audible ] [لا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاجندة] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع للاحسناد] [pause] [للمواطنين] [rising pitch with end pause] [لذا يمكن أن نتخضع L
Chapter 6
Mediating Live Broadcasts

Back translation

“and I believe that if we get up [beat] and leave [beat] Iraq [beat], the American security will be in a worse situation. And I see that it is in the interest of Iraq that we begin this [elongated voice] looong battle against terrorism...and we [not audible], but for our children and grandchildren and the citizens. We will not be humiliated and subjected by these [rising pitch] events. And we cannot yield to what [rising pitch with end pause] az-Zarqawi is doing and that brutality and that cruelty.

“We all know that it is harsh work [beat] and hard work [beat], but we must not allow such acts by the few [rising pitch with end pause]. And I stress [beat] and I said that [beat]. Twenty five million Iraqis, the majority of whom want to live in a free society [rising pitch with end pause]. And we cannot submit to this small group [rising pitch with end pause] to change the future of those or these [elongated voice] milliiiiions of the Iraqi people. And this is also America’s security. [pause]”

This back translation, which follows the formal contours of the Arabic text, clearly shows a few major problems in the Arabic rendition relating to accuracy, precision, informative and communicative intentions and completeness. The following is a summary.

- The verb “wilt” was probably mistaken for “will” and was translated as such in the Arabic rendition.
- “America’s security” became “American security”. The intensifier “much” in “much worse off” was omitted.
- The addition of “it is in the interest of Iraq” changed the informative and communicative intentions of the utterance; it distorted the propositional integrity and rhetorical technique of the sentence.
Chapter 6
Mediating Live Broadcasts

- The conflation of “…our children and our grandchildren. And so that's why I'm consistently telling the Iraqi citizens” into “…our children and grandchildren and the citizens” produced a serious translation error.

- Breaking down the sentence “And so that's why I'm consistently telling the Iraqi citizens that we will not be intimidated” into two and changing the rhetorical technique of the sentence “That's why my message to Mr. Zarqawi is, ‘you cannot drive us out of Iraq by your brutality’” from a direct quotative to an indirect quotative changed the evidential integrity of the sentence.

- Breaking down “brutality” into “brutality” and “cruelty” also changed the rhetorical technique. This may be seen as a recovery technique with the “elliptical rather”, or a form of hendiadys [two words with overlapping meanings to express a single notion] often used in Arabic.

- Another significant mistranslation is the rendition of “fate” as “future”.

- The modulation of the sentence “And we cannot allow the actions of a few to determine the fate of these good people as well as the fate of the security of the United States” into “And we cannot submit to this small group to change the future of those or these millions of the Iraqi people. And this is also America’s security” is also a major distortion.

The Arabic rendition is said to be carried out in RSI mode, with the following distinctive contours:

1. Mimicking of source discourse beats, pauses and stops
2. Pitched up emphasis of words
3. Elongated words [long and million]
4. High rising pitch with end pauses
5. Fast-pace of strings of words mimicking source discourse
The following is a typical example of high rising pitch.

“We will not be humiliated and subjugated by these [rising pitch] events. And we cannot yield to what [rising pitch with end pause] az-Zarqawi is doing and that brutality and that cruelty.”

Figure 24 - A Typical Example of RSI Rendition

Interpreting and the rhetorical situation

Interpreting-mediated communication is a response to a rhetorical situation. Bitzer (1968) defines the rhetorical situation as a complex of sociocultural features that include elements such as “persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence, which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence”. Understanding how these elements apply to the simultaneous interpreting situation enables us to understand the significance of interpreting vis-à-vis the rhetorical discourse and the situationality of the interpreter in the rhetorical situation.

A rhetorical situation must exist as a necessary condition of rhetorical discourse whereby interlocutors engage in rhetorical exchanges to inform, influence and persuade one another. In live simultaneous interpreting, the rhetorical situation is extended to include the interpreter as a mediator.
The nature of this mediation is both epistemic and rhetorical. It is epistemic because it carries knowledge about a specific topic that the interlocutors intend to exchange and rhetorical because it seeks to reproduce the rhetoric of the interlocutors that seek to persuade and influence. The question here is whether it is the function of the simultaneous interpreter to recreate the verbal rhetorical effects of rhetorical discourse or to provide a coded-switching interface between two distinct systems of communication that are temporarily coupled in a translation domain within the communication environment.

Figure 25 - Translation (Interpreting) Interface in Bilingual Communication

**Modes of Operation**

The literature on Telecast Simultaneous Interpreting (TSI) rarely discusses the modes of delivery in terms of elocution and their effect on mediated communication, perhaps because the languages studied do not exhibit stark elocutionary differences as those that exist between say Arabic and English.

*Chapter 6*  
*Mediating Live Broadcasts*
Pöchhacker (1995) discusses TSI in terms of accent and voice, fluency of delivery, cohesion, consistency, completeness and correctness. Since Arabic TSI interpreters use Standard Arabic (SA), the native accent is not an issue. While regional features are sometimes detected in the timbre, prosody, and vocabulary of interpreters, delivered properly, SA has the tendency to remove or level regional accents, and where regional variations are detected they are accepted as native variations. Moreover, while fluency of delivery, cohesion, consistency, completeness and correctness are critical factors in elocution so far as defects and poor performance are concerned, they are not a defining element of style of delivery. Similarly, segmentation of input and rate of input and output have been treated as part of cognitive management and elicitation of meaning. Russo (2005) describes a mode of delivery in simultaneous film interpreting where “sufficient emotional involvement”, high register, and the interpreters being “to a certain extent part of the same communicative context” are features of delivery.

In the present study, an analysis of the modes of operation by the various interpreters across Arabic satellite television stations has revealed two major modes of simultaneous interpreting that have nothing to do with a clearly defined interpreting policy on the part of these stations. These modes, which are not documented or described in the reviewed literature, are here termed: expository simultaneous interpreting (ESI) and rhetorical simultaneous interpreting (RSI). The distinction is drawn from the definition of exposition as informative discourse, and rhetorical as the persuasive effect of informative discourse realized by means additional to the informative content of discourse.

**Expository simultaneous interpreting**

The ESI mode carries the informative and communicative intentions of the speaker’s utterances without the verbal paralinguistic features such as quality of voice, pitch, speed, interjections, fillers, or vocalizations. This
mode of delivery takes into account the communication medium used to
deliver the message and the visual and auditory presence of the speaker.
Expository simultaneous interpreting focuses primarily on the content and
propositions of the speaker’s utterances or discourse and seeks to convey
these qualities by alignment of linguistic patterns. It does not focus on the
speaker’s actions or body language. Consider the following example of an
English utterance rendered in Arabic.

Is that a joke? [laughing] huhhh! [angrily, with a rising pitch]
I don't. [emphatically and punctuated] I [beat] honestly [beat]
don't.[stop] Umm…[beat] I really respect everybody's
opinion and [pause] umm…but that was sort of – umm… a
tough decision.

هل هذه مزحة؟ أنا لا! بكل أمانة لا! أنا حقا أحترم آراء الجميع و ولكن كان ذلك
نوعا ما … قرارا صعبا.

The speech fillers were not transferred into Arabic. Only the rhetorical
techniques—orders and logical patterns—were aligned. Rhetorical
techniques are “those elements that bind together the items of information
in a piece of discourse” (Trimble, 1985:52). Orders include time order,
space order, causality and result.

**Rhetorical simultaneous interpreting**

In contrast, the RSI mode attempts to re-enact the speaker’s utterances
with full verbal (and sometimes nonverbal) paralinguistic features
including auditive information such as intonation, emphasis, volume,
pitch, speech patterns, interjections, fillers, false starts, tone of voice,
vocalizations, and other rhetorical and illocutionary theatrics. RSI is
usually employed in missionary stage-bound performances. Consider the
previous example rendered into Arabic this time with the speech fillers,
stops, and verbal paralinguistic features.
Is that a joke? [laughing] huhhh! [angrily, with a rising pitch]
I don't. [emphatically and punctuated] I [beat] honestly [beat] don't.[stop] Umm...[beat] I really respect everybody's opinion and [pause] umm...but that was sort of – umm... a tough decision.


RSI has been used successfully in religious settings by evangelists and other preachers for maximum illocutionary effect. It has also been used in the courtroom in certain countries and by interpreters who chose this form of delivery. Controversially, Gonzalez et al (1991), confirm that “the interpreter has an obligation to convey every aspect of the witness’s testimony, not only words but also paralinguistic elements such as pauses, false starts, and tone of voice. The importance of these paralinguistic or non-verbal elements cannot be overemphasized” (480). However, for the reasons expounded in this chapter, overemphasis of these features in TSI is a serious distracting factor.

In most situations RSI is scripted and rehearsed. Consequently, it ceases to be RSI proper, since an essential element of simultaneous interpreting is arguably the extemporaneity of delivery.

It is important to note that the term “rhetorical” in reference to this mode of delivery refers to the performative features of rhetorical artistry in a speech act, which include tone of voice dynamics, pacing, interaction with an audience, and kinaesthetic gestures.

**The interpreter’s role within the communication process**

The interpreter’s role within the communication process can be viewed within the following rhetorical communication model of interpreting. The model assumes that all interpreting is rhetorical communication, as defined by McCroskey (1978) since no interpreting is produced but with
the intention of communicating the message of the original in another language.

Following McCroskey’s (1978) definition of rhetorical communication as goal directed, translation-mediated communication is always rhetorical irrespective of the type of communication in the source language text, since translation is always motivated and goal-directed; it seeks to stimulate a source-selected meaning in the mind of the target language reader by converting source language code into target language code to evoke more or less the same meaning and the same effect, however circumvented, and by striving to reconstruct the source language textual reality in the target language by desperately working to an ideal hypothetical model or blueprint. This blueprint is often conditioned by a number of variables.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 26—Duality and Centrality of the Simultaneous Interpreter’s Role**

This figure illustrates the cyclic process of converting information into knowledge as part of the extended rhetorical situation created by the transmutative interpreting process in which the interpreter plays a dual role of receiver and transmitter of the source discourse as target discourse for a target language audience. Within this process, the distinction between information and knowledge is a critical one. As Carey (1988)
confirms, information and knowledge are generally regarded as identical and synonymous. “It is assumed that reality consists of data or bits of information and this information is, in principle, recordable and storable. Therefore, it is also possible, in principle, for a receiver to know everything or at least to have access to all knowledge” (195). Carey contends that “information” about the world does not exist without conceptual systems that create and define the world. In line with this distinction, information can be defined as inactive knowledge comprising data, known facts or things used as the basis for inferences or reckoning. When the text is submitted to translation, the information is converted into knowledge as perceived by the translator.

Knowledge is active information that involves recognition, understanding and identification. In other words, in simple terms, information becomes knowledge when the receiver makes meaning of it. At this point, the text is reframed into another text in another language.

Within the two modes of operation described above, the simultaneous interpreter plays two different roles in the cross-cultural communication process. These roles are fundamentally different. In the ESI mode, the interpreter assumes a detached role acting as a conduit of source discourse to target language. This role enables the interpreter to remain neutral in as far as the paralinguistic and extra-linguistic properties of rendition are concerned. It also enables the viewer to feel comfortable with a clearly demarcated division of roles within the communication process. By contrast, in the RSI mode, the interpreter assumes an engaged imitative role that transforms the triadic cross-cultural communication process into a tetradic communication process. In recreating the paralinguistic properties of source discourse, the simultaneous interpreter runs the risk of mimesis, role shift and becoming the fourth dyad.

Simultaneous interpreting is characterized by rapidity. Assuming a Rhetorical Simultaneous mode of delivery tends to lead to a high
involvement style, which is an active, fast-paced, overlapping mode of delivery. An essential feature of interpreting is the ability to guard against becoming emotive towards the dyads in the communication. To remain empathetic without becoming sympathetic is of paramount importance ethically and operationally to ensure the interpreter does not become a passive yet influential dyad in a tetradic communication transaction. The high involvement imitative style tends to shift the role of the interpreter in this direction and leads to elocutionary errors and errors of meaning.

Given the emotive involvement of the interpreter in RSI, regional dialectal contours and extra linguistic features become more pronounced in Arabic. This observation is crucial in simultaneous interpreting for television broadcasters who aim to appeal to the full spectrum of Arab society spread over two continents. Regional dialectical idiosyncrasies and personal traits may distract viewers and undermine the credibility of content in a region where traditional national and tribal rivalries have weakened and divided the region along superimposed political borders. Moreover, when the source speaker’s voice is audible, RSI is bound to cause verbal dissonance between the source speaker’s and the interpreter’s paralinguistic features. Such dissonance occurs when these features are out of synchronization with one another in terms of voice qualities and rhetorical and illocutionary aspects. In live broadcasts, verbal dissonance may distract from or distort the speaker’s message and lower the quality of delivery.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Telecast simultaneous interpreting is certainly an important phenomenon that must be analysed in order to understand its implications for the Arabic satellite stations’ credibility and relevance and for the interpreting profession in general. It is important for the simultaneous interpreter to remain professionally detached from the interpreting setting. To maintain cognitive empathy with the subject-matter and broadcasting event is
equally important. It is not the role of the simultaneous interpreter to mimic the speaker and theatrically reproduce the utterances of the speaker in the target language. Such behavioural mirroring is not acceptable as a mode of delivery for two main reasons: (1) it runs the risk of transiting the interpreter from empathy to sympathy, and (2) it is superfluous and distracting in a visual medium where all participants in the broadcasting event can see and hear the speaker. It is only reasonable to think that we are all human beings and our expressions of emotions, feelings and actions, while may have slightly different contours, are basically and essentially the same. An interpreter is not an actor who is seeking to win an Oscar or Amy award for his or her performance.

For these reasons, the Expository Simultaneous Interpreting mode of delivery is recommended. Furthermore, un-muting the original voice of the speaker in this communication medium also adds to the authenticity and realism of the source discourse and to the richness of the viewers’ experience, especially in a culture that has a long history of subtitling experience. Certainly, hearing the original voice obviates the need for artificial and faulty mimicry of the paralinguistic features of voice. Finally, Arabic satellite television stations have been quickly pressed into service to provide live world-class telecast simultaneous interpreting (TSI). Despite their initial state of unreadiness and apparent teething problems, these stations have made major inroads into professional telecast simultaneous interpreting within a very short developmental timeframe. The current study has yielded useful information that will contribute to our understanding of telecast simultaneous interpreting at Arabic satellite television in particular and broadcasting at large. New modes of delivery seem to have emerged over that period of study that will certainly undergo refinement and enhancement. Further research into these modes of delivery and other aspects of TSI at these stations is bound to reveal new data and should consolidate these initial findings.
Chapter 6

Mediating Live Broadcasts

Notes

1 Original text in Arabic, my translation. A copy of the resolution obtained from the Syrian Ambassador to Australia.

2 Standard Arabic is a highly inflectional language. In some instances, basic inflections indicating the person of the speaker have been violated by interpreters. For example, the inflection of the suffix “t” in the verb “qul-t” indicates whether it refers to the first or second person. “qul-tu” means “I [have] said”, with “tu” being the pronoun “I” and “qulta” means “you [have] said”, with “ta” being the pronoun “you” — a fundamental norm that has been violated in interpreting renditions.

3 Many interpreting courses focus primarily on the students’ foreign language to the neglect of their “native” language needs.

4 It might be argued that this is not a comprehension problem as such, but rather a conditioned reflex caused by dictionary-based second language acquisition.

5 Proposed by the author to the Conference on Arab Cooperation in Terminology, Tunis, 1986 and adopted as a recommendation.


7 Attributed to Prophet Muhammad.

8 To express the notion of tall, Arabic usually uses the compound word tawil (long) + al-qama (stature).

9 Relay interpreting is used when more than one interpreter is required to complete the bilingual communication transaction.

10 Most recently, Aljazeera has introduced sign language interpreted news broadcasts using a claimed “Universal Arabic Sign Language”.

11 These guests may act as dyad 1 or dyad 2 during interaction in a variety of combinations.

12 This is not a full inventory of TSI settings. Other TSI settings may vary.

13 Original text in Arabic, my translation.

14 Due to the highly protective nature of operations at this network, access has not been feasible. Additional information for the purposes of this study has been obtained through informal lines of communication with staff members and colleagues.

15 The audio and video signals of a television program are transmitted simultaneously on separate high frequency radio waves and at different speeds causing a “lip sync” problem in television broadcasts. This is usually fixed by using audio-video synchronizers. With digital television systems and geosynchronous satellite transmissions, the video is delayed and the audio is received first. In this case, audio-video resynchronization is achieved by delaying the audio signal to match the associated video signal. The same time delay synchronizers allow the TSI interpreters to listen to the audio stream.

16 A condition of hiring translators and interpreters at these outfits, including the BBC, is for applicants to have “a voice suitable for broadcasting”. At LBC, newsreaders occasionally perform simultaneous interpreting.

17 Adapted from Darwish (1998).
Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions: The Taming of the Shrew

In this chapter:

- Aims
- Overview
- Summary
- Research Findings
- Implications
- Conclusion
Aims

In the preceding chapters, this thesis has examined the process of translation-mediation framing of news within the phenomenon of Arabic satellite television. The research aim of this thesis was to explore the nature of the translation-mediated reframing process of news in Arabic television.

The focus of the study has been Aljazeera television. In this concluding chapter, I present a brief summary of the study, the implications of the findings for future research and the conclusions.
Overview

It has been argued throughout this thesis that translation mediation causes a message already framed in one language to be reframed in another and that in news making such mediation plays a critical role in reconstructing realities at different levels of multimodality in satellite television. By analysing this phenomenon at Aljazeera within the framework of a unique three-tier translation model, I have found sufficient evidence to establish causality between translation and the way the message is ultimately framed in the target language.

Translation-mediated news is illusory in the sense that while the overall news report or broadcast for that matter is packaged without translation mediation, translation mediation substantially influences the overall news report at a lower level of construction. This gives the impression to the viewers that the news report is natively prepared and any frames (or reframes) are most likely accepted as such, including the language anomalies they contain.

Furthermore, translating between two linguistically and culturally divergent languages, such as English and Arabic, is not always a straightforward task. As we have already seen in the previous chapters, different syntactical structures, incongruent lexical fields, dissonant rhetorical techniques and dissimilar metaphorical representations—all contribute to the complexity of transfer. The task becomes more complex when the subject matter and the rhetorical techniques are so intertwined and the message is overloaded with cultural references that are alien to the culture of the target audience. Texts and discourses of this nature present tension between preserving the style and intentions of the original and producing a natural sounding translation. The result is discrepancy and dissonance and in more ways than one, incremental loss of vital information.¹ In news making, not only do editorial policy and ideology play a crucial part in the direction and outcome of translation, but also the

¹ Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions: The Taming of the Shrew
translation strategy chosen for translating news artefacts is even more critical as translation patterns and techniques become more habitual and customary.

**Aljazeera: from zero to pharaoh**

“When the history of the Arabs at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the following century is written, Aljazeera must be recorded as a prominent landmark in the maps of the Arabs and in particular, as an influential element in the collective conscience, with an effective role in raising the awareness and reconstructing memory,” writes Fahmy Howeidy, deputy chief editor and columnist at the leading Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, in an article titled Setting the News Agenda in the Arab World, in Aljazeera’s tenth anniversary publication The Aljazeera Decade 1996-2006. He continues:

“I am not in a position which allows me to determine what the relative influence of coincidence and actual planning were in the launching of Aljazeera Channel. Nor am I in a position to define the local, regional and international factors in giving birth to the Channel. But I can say without hesitation that its emergence constitutes a response to a pressing historic demand where Arabs, or if you wish, Muslims appeared to lack a different platform allowing an opportunity to read events with their own eyes—not through European or American eyes—and to express their yearnings with audacity and a loud voice, at the same time focusing on the principal causes of the Ummah (Muslim community)” (Aljazeera, 2006:128).

While these so-called Arab eyes are arguably not so Arab after all, as Fahmy and others have claimed, this passage, which is clearly a poor translation from Arabic, sums up the general view among both the skeptics and the believers of Aljazeera in the Arab world and elsewhere, and highlights Aljazeera’s importance not only to the Arabs but also as a significant manifestation of media power, influence and interplay with politics. The changes in editorial policy Aljazeera has recently gone through must also be seen in light of Qatar’s own shift of political stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Most recently, as a repercussion of the Israeli offensive on the Palestinians in Gaza, Qatar closed Israel’s Trade
Office in Doha and expelled its staff from Qatar. Qatar has also been establishing strong ties with Syria and Iran and has been accused of supporting Hezbollah and Hamas in what pro-Israel commentators call the Iran-Syria-Qatar-Hezbollah Axis. According to Carmon, Yehoshua, Savyon, and Migron (2009) from the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI):

“as part of Iran's bid for regional hegemony, a political and military axis has formed, comprising not only Iran and the Shi’ a in Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen, but also various Sunni forces that have an interest in opposing Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It was during the 2006 Lebanon war that a distinct Iran-Syria-Qatar-Hizbullah axis first emerged to oppose the Saudi-Egyptian camp. At a later stage, this axis expanded to include Hamas, which has in recent years received increasing support from Iran, as well the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Lately, Syria and Iran have been striving to add Turkey to their ranks, and have met with some cooperation on the part of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.”

While Aljazeera strives to portray itself as a neutral and objective news and current affairs television network, the fluctuation of its editorial policy runs in tandem with the about-face change of the Qatari government’s political position.

Yassin (2006) contends that in the aftermath of the occupation of Iraq in 2003, there has been a fundamental shift in how the Western media have handled the Arab situation.

The West and particularly the United States have resorted to two means of communication with the Arab people: (1) direct communication in Arabic through radio networks such as the BBC and Voice of America, and satellite television networks such as the failed BBC Arabic channel and the American channel Al-Hurra, which began broadcasting in February 2004 using the official frequency of the pre-invasion Iraqi satellite television, and (2) indirect and more influential communication behind the façade of Arab media networks through funding, secret buyouts, and advertising, or through buying and even bribing writers who have embraced the American view (45). As Seib (2008) observes, the battle for
the hearts and minds in the Middle East is not only being fought on the streets of Baghdad but also on the news casts and talk shows of Aljazeera and other news media. Seen as a symbol of a new media-centric world, Aljazeera is claimed to affect global politics and culture and help foster unprecedented cohesion in the worldwide Muslim community, through broadcasting in Arabic and English, and probably later in other languages, providing a new paradigm of new media’s influence.3

As a new phenomenon in the Arab world, Aljazeera has undergone major transformations since its inception. These transformations can be loosely summarized into the following three overlapping phases. Phase 1: Idealistic journalism that followed a utopian and somewhat naïve model of journalism that sought to provide neutral and objective reporting of news and current affairs. During this phase which ends in 2003, values and concepts of democracy, freedom and human rights were promoted within a crude western model of television news reporting. Phase 2: Indeterminacy and oscillation (2003 -2006) where editorial policy teetered between neutrality and adoption of a pro-Arab stance towards the events in the region. This was more prominent during the US invasion of Iraq. Expressions such as “war on terrorism”, “terrorists” and ‘insurgents” were used to describe the resistance in Iraq and Palestine. Phase 3: Coverage post the Bush plot to bomb Aljazeera, characterized by a clear pro Arab stance towards the events in the region, and in the reporting of the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006 and the latest Israeli military operations in Gaza Strip in 2008. Characteristically however, a common feature of these phases is the role translation plays in framing and reframing the news to produce news stories and create new constructs of reported realities as demonstrated in this research.

With the realization that Aljazeera has become a force to be reckoned with in the media, this research has set out to examine the role of translation in its quest to be a neutral and objective media network.

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions: The Taming of the Shrew
Summary

Recent attempts to describe and explain the phenomenon of transnational Arabic satellite television and more specifically Aljazeera have been largely concerned with the political ramifications and impact of increased freedoms on the Arab viewers. While research has tackled the problem of language in general, no study has so far addressed the role of translation in framing and reframing already constructed realities and the effects of translation-mediated reporting of news.

This research examined the causative relationship between translation and news making at Arabic satellite television, with Aljazeera as the main focus of the study. It explored the social semiotics of Arabic television and projected socio-cultural impacts of translation-mediated news in Arabic satellite television on the Arab viewers. This is a multi-layered research problem of how translation operates at two different yet interwoven levels: translation proper, that is the rendition of discourse from one language into another at the text level, and translation as a broader process of interpretation of social behaviour that is driven by linguistic and cultural forms of another medium resulting in new social signs generated from source meaning reproduced as target meaning, bound to be different in many respects. While words and expressions may find their matches across languages, they more often do not correspond within the context of communication. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this condition creates new linguistic expressions that bear little relation to the meanings intended in the source language.

Throughout the preceding chapters it has been emphasized that translation plays a critical role in framing news and current affairs programs broadcast by Aljazeera. It has been argued and demonstrated that without a structured approach to translation, the translation process is bound to be affected by a host of internal and external factors. This has implications for both the translators reproducing text from foreign language sources.
and those seeking to implement a specific editorial policy. Naturally, within any given program there is considerable variation between translators and interpreters in their style of delivery and competence. However, without a clear method of translation that considers the role of reframing, infelicities and distortions will result that are bound to change the character and logical patterns of the target language.

When news in January 2006 about a leaked British government memorandum that US President George W Bush wanted to bomb Aljazeera reached Aljazeera, it was received with disbelief. The immediate editorial reaction was anti-American. A shift in the editorial policy soon became more pronounced as Aljazeera abandoned its adoption of the terms “terrorism” and “war on terror”. Instead, Aljazeera has since then increasingly adopted quotatives to qualify the use of such terms. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the use of these quotatives gives the impression of neutrality and objectivity. However, total neutrality and objectivity is a myth, and the use or rather overuse of quotatives may alienate the very people Aljazeera is trying to win over—namely, its Arab audiences. This is so because in this instance quotatives distance the news reporter from the political and socio-cultural context of the news report or event and give the impression of indifference (or sitting on the fence) to the ills and woes, aspirations, serious concerns and sentiments of the majority of the Arab viewers.

To understand how other researchers and commentators viewed Aljazeera, Chapter 2 presented a critical review of the literature that had been produced about Aljazeera and Arabic satellite television in the last ten years, in order to tease out the main arguments that appeared in the current debate of this largely translation-mediated social and cultural phenomenon in the Arab world. This chapter consisted of two major sections: one section dealing with the literature specific to Aljazeera and another covering translation theories, methods and models relating to
mediated news reporting. The aim of this chapter was thus to review the landmark publications that have examined Aljazeera to identify the main arguments and the gaps in the literature in relation to the centrality of translation in news reporting in Arabic television. In examining the current theories and models of translation that have relevance to the present research, this chapter aimed to gain insight into these theories and models and to identify relevant arguments and shortcomings with respect to the impact of translation on news making of television. As discussed in this chapter, a major gap in the literature was identified vis-à-vis the role of translation in news reporting, giving significance to the current research.

Chapter 3 outlined the conceptual framework and methodology employed in addressing the research questions and described the theoretical framework in which the research was grounded. This chapter also described the methods used for data collection, sampling and analysis, including the research model employed in the analysis of the data. Employing a qualitative-interpretive method of analysis within a three-tier model of translation analysis, this chapter lay the grounds for the analysis of examples from the corpus of data collected from Aljazeera over the period of research and enabled a structured approach to examining the role of translation in reframing already framed realities.

Chapter 4 examined the impact of translation on news making and argued that by submitting news to translation it undergoes a reframing process that entails a reconstruction of a constructed reality already subjected to professional, institutional and contextual influences. This chapter paved the way in the subsequent chapters for a discussion of the specific aspects of news translation at Aljazeera.

Chapter 5 presented a discussion of salient features of translation-mediated reframing of Arabic news broadcasts transmitted by Aljazeera and other Arabic satellite television channels. It aimed to identify the
relationship between the linguistic and epistemic realities of news discourse in the translation-mediated process of reframing, focusing on the dissonance that this kind of mediation causes between the epistemic and linguistic knowledge as embodied in the discourse of news broadcast. This chapter took a different approach to the discussion of framing and reframing in that it focuses on cognitive dissonance as a psychological state of contradictory cognition of the same reality expressed in two different languages, which creates discourse that contributes to sociocultural change.

Languages normally compensate for epistemic-linguistic dissonance within the same language environment by elevating the linguistic form to a metaphor or by adjusting existing metaphors through metaphoric shifts. However, epistemic-linguistic dissonance that occurs in translation between divergent languages is usually the result of culturally incongruent, skewed epistemic frames. Apart from the immediate distortion of source-language epistemic realities, skewed epistemic frames contribute to psychological and social change, which is not always necessarily positive, by changing the social and cultural perspective, and create communication breakdown due to loss of shared experiences and to the way they frame reality.

In translating news sources, irreconciled linguistic-epistemic dissonance seems to be more prevalent in Arabic than in the other direction. This is largely due to incompetence and short deadlines that force journalists-cum-translators to adhere to the surface structures of source text and operate at the primary level of rendition. It is also a deep-rooted translation tradition that seems to be further entrenched in the psyche of most translators and translation-reliant thinkers and intellectuals across the Arab world. Furthermore, framing and reframing through linguistic-epistemic dissonance is an ongoing process that has implications beyond the immediate message of the original to the fundamental thinking.
patterns of those who adopt such dissonant forms. Since going to air in 1996, Aljazeera has been contributing to linguistic-epistemic dissonance in the Arabic language through adherence to primary level of rendition and literal translation strategies.

Chapter 6 examined the emerging styles of delivery of simultaneous interpreting in Arabic satellite television and highlights aspects of two distinct modes of operation, expository and Rhetorical, that seem to vary in salience of specific functional qualities that reframe the original message. The role of interpreter-mediated, real-time, cross-cultural and multilingual communication becomes crucial in live debates, talk shows and newscasts that seek to effect regional change through international interaction with officials, political observers, analysts and commentators. Soon enough, in a fledgling industry that is growing at an amazing pace, house style modes of delivery are beginning to evolve through a refining development process. These modes of delivery reframe the original message and produce variances and infelicities, which are for the most part unintended by the producers of such mediated programs.

**Research Findings**

The fundamental finding of the research was to establish a causative-correlative relationship between translation mediation and news making. This was formulated into the following research hypothesis.

*Translation mediation reframes the original message.*

The employment of the multimodal three-tier model within a social semiotics, interpretative framework, enabled the critical analysis of news items broadcast by Aljazeera over the research period.

The research sought to answer the following questions.
The research questions were addressed by conducting a critical review of the literature that had been published about Arabic satellite television, with special attention to Aljazeera as the case study, and by a critical discourse analysis of sample data from Aljazeera broadcasts.

To answer the primary research questions: “How does the translation mediation reframe news in Arabic television?” and “How does the multimodality of television affect translation-mediated reframing of news?”, examples of news broadcasts were analysed within the three-tier model presented in this thesis.

Research analysis

The analysis was aided and guided by a three-tier model of translation, which provided the operational framework for analysing new broadcasts and gauge the extent of framing in terms of interference and intervention.

Implications

This research has explored the phenomenon of Arabic satellite television through translation mediation. It has revealed serious problems with the way programs are packaged and with the way news and current affairs are reported. Most importantly, the research has defined modes of operation in simultaneous television interpreting and translation. The conceptual framework and research model developed and employed in the analysis of news broadcasts provide an organizational schema for the implications of this research.

The present research has implications for both Aljazeera and news media in general. Examining the role of translation mediation within this conceptual framework has implications for news broadcasting that relies...
primarily on foreign sources for news making and packaging, since it provides a universal translation analysis method that can be applied to other translation-mediated situations in other languages. While the findings of this research highlight major problems with reframing already framed constructed realities at Aljazeera, they also pave the way for further research into other areas of translation-mediated television and other audiovisual multimodalities.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis was to examine the relationship between translation and news reporting and the social semiotics of packaged news.

When Aljazeera began broadcasting in 1996, it is said to have caused a shockwave across the Arab world. Aljazeera, however, was not the first satellite television channel to beam controversial programs to the Arabs nor was it unique in its style of presentation. Other television channels, such as LBC, MBC and ART, had been in operation and flooding the airwaves with culturally and socially more controversial programs and sometimes programs deemed religiously and morally offensive. With its coverage of the first second Gulf war and the Palestinian Intifada, Aljazeera brought something new to the region in terms of its daring and uncensored reporting of events close to home for many Arabs. With the airing of the Bin Laden tapes in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Aljazeera has captivated the Arab audiences and captured the attention and interest of observers both in the Arab world and in the west. The fact that the other channels did not have the same impact as Aljazeera has a great deal to do with the nature of its broadcasting. Its audacious news and current affairs programs have hit a raw nerve in the Arab viewers, which shows the degree of sensitivity and relevance news and current affairs are to the Arabs in a volatile and largely politically oppressed region.
There is no doubt that contemporary Arabic satellite is playing a critical role in introducing language practices that violate convention, norms and logic. These practices are becoming established and further entrenched not only in the media but also in the wider community of Arabic speakers. While it has been argued that these fundamental changes are restricted to journalistic writing there is strong anecdotal evidence and well as empirical data to support the view that the influence is widespread, encompassing all aspects of human intellectual activity in the Arab world, so much so that these new forms of expression are used reflexively and ironically intuitively.

**Beyond the news**

Certainly, the influence of Aljazeera has not been restricted to news reporting or to controversial broadcasting of the Bin Laden tapes in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks; it has also managed to frame these social, cultural and political issues in such a way as to make them appeal to a wider range of viewers; and has allowed, for the first time outside entertainment, interactivity with its audience. On this point, while interactivity is a mode of soliciting feedback or adding excitement and realism to current affairs and talk show programs in western media, the nature of interactivity on Aljazeera seems to be largely deeply divisive and polarizing with Aljazeera playing a synthesizing function of consensus building. While its vox populi program *minbar al-jazeera* (Aljazeera Forum) leaves the viewers feeling frustrated because of the abrupt nature of interactivity and perhaps because of the patronizing role the program facilitator usually assumes in the transactional framework that creates a state of reactance, other programs such *The Opposite Direction* (al-itijah al-mua’kis) seem to act as a good “physical” workout since it takes issues to their ultimate finalities. The old Arabic saying “like a (public) bath without water” epitomizes the commotion that is displayed on this program.
The role of translation, as the present study has established, is one of critical importance not only in terms of the translated content from foreign sources, but also in terms of producing live debates and live broadcasts that involve foreign personalities that do not speak Arabic.

**The ten year itch**

One may like or hate Aljazeera, but an undeniably unique characteristic of Aljazeera is that it is a learning organization. Unlike other Arabic networks that have modelled themselves on Aljazeera or that have benefited from the climate of freedom and increased latitude Aljazeera has created, or simply jumped on the bandwagon to attract viewers, Aljazeera is constantly trying to improve its performance and professional standards. In the past four years and during the period of this research, Aljazeera has taken great strides towards consolidating its leading position despite the uneven and sometimes harsh and heavy-handed criticisms that have been levelled at it. However, in doing so Aljazeera has been gradually transformed into an Arabic version of CNN. Over the past three years, Aljazeera has adopted presentation formats and delivery styles that smack of a deliberate policy to tone down Aljazeera’s programs and rationalize its style of reporting. Today there is hardly any difference in terms of the packaging of news and current affairs programs on Aljazeera and CNN. Ironically however, CNN in the meantime has been gradually emulating FOX News, by adopting a similar style of graphic representation and treatment of news, probably part of the globalization process of news media as illustrated in the following figure.
The transformation may also be seen as a response to the mounting criticisms against Aljazeera by the US administration and other western governments as well as Arab regimes. When Aljazeera began broadcasting it came across as a genie out of a bottle or a bull in a China shop, unbridled and uncontrolled. As alluded to in the literature review, for some observers, Aljazeera is now becoming more like Fox. This transformation may also be understood within an organizational capability maturity model that defines five levels of capability maturity: Level 1: Initial; Level 2: Repeatable; Level 3: Defined; Level 4: Quantitatively managed; and Level 5: Optimizing. As Aljazeera has settled in its role and processes, it seems externally that it has reached level 2 of capability maturity. Its operational environment is stable and its processes arerepeatable. Consequently, routine sets in and energy is dissipated into other areas of organizational management. This would be an interesting and productive area to explore in future research to establish whether
there is a correlation between Aljazeera’s outward transition and internal management processes.

In November 2006, Aljazeera celebrated its tenth anniversary with Hollywood-style glamorous self-indulging accolades. Whether this marks the beginning of a new phase for Aljazeera settled in the larger landscape of Middle Eastern politics or indicates running out of steam and entering a cycle of rehash is quite interesting to watch in the coming years. Describing the former dictator of Nicaragua Anastasio Somoza, the twenty-sixth American President Theodore Roosevelt is said to have remarked: “He may be a son of a bitch – but he's our son of a bitch”. Many Arabs today may echo the same sentiment about Aljazeera:

“Aljazeera may be a son of a bitch—but it is our son of a bitch!”

However, it is by transforming Aljazeera into a CNN Arabica, or “Al-Foxeera” as Danny Schechter (2007) puts it, that Aljazeera will cease to be Aljazeera and Arab viewers will start once more looking for an alternative, no matter how difficult this might prove to be. Nonetheless, observations of changes that have taken place at Aljazeera suggest that it has come full circle.

Finally, I have observed in chapter 1 that Aljazeera has become etched into the consciousness of the Arabs and has become an integral feature of their daily life. By the end of this research, one could easily deduce that Aljazeera has become little more than background noise, especially among the young generations. This is so because Aljazeera is largely seen to have failed in becoming the Fourth Estate that keeps governments and politicians in check. Arab viewers can easily discern biases and old-style reporting through modern-looking and gadget-enhanced particoloured presentations of contemporary Arabic television.
A sense of superiority: outshining the master

In the aftermath of its coverage of the Israeli aggression on Gaza, Aljazeera seems to have developed a quick sense of superiority in journalism that exceeds coming of age. Now Aljazeera is challenging the western media and questioning the objectivity and professional and moral ethics of western journalists. In as late as 18 March 2009, Faisal Al-Qasim, host of *The Opposite Direction* (al-ittjah al-muaakis) taunts and scolds his guest Hugh Miles, British journalist and author of *Al-Jazeera: The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel that is Changing the West*. In this special episode about the role of western media in covering the Gaza conflict Al-Qasim asserts:

You, western journalists, are nothing but a parcel of cowards. You cannot confront the Israelis or the Israeli or Zionist lobby in the West. You are afraid! You are afraid! You are afraid for your morsel of bread (livelihood). [...] You can't tell the truth.

This euphoric feeling of superiority, which is also being expressed on other programs and by other hosts and guests, is giving Aljazeera greater influence over its viewers as it addresses their deepest concerns, and as they say in Arabic, *scratches the scab of their wounds*, or soothes their fevered brow, and becomes a voice that expresses these concerns seemingly without fear or favour. For the purposes of our discussion of the role of translation mediation, such influence and power over its increasing popular base of viewers will enable Aljazeera to further establish translation-mediated language as unquestionable norms and standards of expression irrespective of the anomalies and aberrations that such mediation creates in the Arabic language.

To this end, the problematic of translation mediation of news reports is fundamentally connected to translator competence and translation quality on the one hand and to the ideological views of the news editors on the other. As previously argued, translation quality is a central issue in the translation profession and one of the most controversial topics in translation studies today. From one aspect, translation quality is a direct
result of the translation process, which cannot be separated from the principal actor in the process, namely the translator. Subsequently, translator competence is always called into question whenever the quality of the translation product is questioned. In news organisations such as Aljazeera, where mediated language is intrinsic to its news products and central to the concepts of objectivity and bias, critical translation mediation awareness should not be limited to the translator/editor. It should rather encompass a broader editorial policy that takes into account the effects of mediation on the framing of news. This approach is predicated on the notion that translation is not a haphazard activity. It is rather a rational, objective-driven, result-focused process that yields a product meeting a set of specifications that are implicit or explicit.

The investigation of translation mediation in news making has yielded results that have significance to the future studies of this phenomenon in the news and probably beyond. Despite the ongoing debate about the objectivity and bias of the media, one thing has to be reaffirmed at the conclusion of this chapter. Journalists genuinely seek to tell the truth the way they see it. If they have no critical awareness of the way translation operates in mediated reporting and the interplay of language, translation and discourse, chances are that reframing will undermine objectivity of reporting.

Finally, from a semiotic viewpoint, as Best and Kellner (1991) put it, “dramatic changes in society and culture are often experienced as an intense crisis for those attached to established ways of life and modes of thought. The breaking up of once stable social orders and patterns of thought frequently evoke a widespread sense of social incoherence, fragmentation, chaos and disorder” (viii). There is sufficient evidence in this research that translation mediation of news is playing a critical role in the dramatic changes to the social and language patterns that transnational satellite television, particularly Aljazeera, is introducing to Arab society.

Chapter 7
Summary and Conclusions: The Taming of the Shrew
The importance of this catalytic process lies in the fact that foreign expressions that reinforce certain perspectives and social frames are being naturalized in Arabic through the media. As Thorne (2006) explains, the naturalization process of a militarized language, such as English, adversely affects the way we interact with others and renders us incapable of living peacefully. While this claim might be a little exaggerated, there is no doubt that the transmission of such expressions into other cultures causes changes to these cultures. This becomes even more evident and critical in translation-mediated meaning-making since the relationship between language and the phenomenal world is organic, where the latter is continually constituted and reconstituted in a perceived world through the dynamically changing mode of language that responds to a dynamically changing system of meaning.

Notes


References


References


References


References


Byrne, B. (2001). Structural equation modelling with AMOS. Lawrence Erlbaum Associate, . New Jersey


References


References


References


References


References


Dirkx, J. M. and Barnes, B. J. (2004). What Do We Really Mean By A “Qualitative” Study? An Analysis Of Qualitative Research In Adult And Continuing Education. 2004 Conference (Indianapolis, Indiana : IUPUI).


from the Middle East and Asia, Veer, P. V. & Munshi, S. (Eds.) (pp. 61-71). New York: Routledge.


References


Haugen, E. and Bloomfield, M. (ed.) (1975), Language as a Human Problem, Guilford: Lutterworth Press.


References


References

Higgins, T J (1968), Basic Ethics, New York: Benziger.


Hunt, S. 1(991). Modern marketing theory. South-Western Publishing Co, Ohio


References


References


Kane, T and Peters, L (1966), A Practical Rhetoric of Expository Prose, Oxford University Press, New York

References


Karlgen, J (1995), Text Usage, Internet online publication


References


Keltner, J W (1972), Interpersonal Speech-communication Elements and Structures, Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co.


References


Lane-Poole, S. (1898). Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.


References


References


References


References
References


Neubert, A (1990), The Impact of Translation on Target Language discourse Text vs System, Meta, XXXV, 1, 1990


References


References


References
References


Rohrmann, B; Beach, L R; Vlek, C; Watson, S R, (ed.) (1989), Advances in Decision Research, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers, BV.


References


References


References


References


References


References


References


References


References


References


Weaver, C (1988), Reading Process and Practice from socio-linguistics to whole language, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.


References


References


Yengoyan, A. A. (2003). Lyotard and Wittgenstein and the Question of Translation. In Translating Cultures : Perspectives on Translation and


References


Index

A
appositive translation, 149, 150, 153

C
communicative intentions, 157
compensatory, 155, 157, 159
compensatory techniques, 157
culture, 151

D
Definitional translation, 157, 158
Descriptive translation, 158
Disjunctive translation, 148

E
Equative translation, 143
explicative translation, 159
Explicative translation, 158, 159
explicatory, 157
explicatory techniques, 157
Explicatory techniques, 157
Extrinsic constraints, 169

F
form extrication, 156

I
identitive translation, 148, 154
Implicative translation, 148
interpretive appositives, 153, 154
interpretive modulatory, 156
Intersectional translation, 148
intervention, 154
interventional techniques, 157
Intrinsic constraints, 170

L
loan translation, 147, 150, 159

M
metonymy, 150, 151
mirror-image, 147
modulatory, 156
Modulatory substitution, 147, 148
modulatory techniques, 156

O
obversive translation, 156
operative, 151, 153, 156, 157
operative appositives, 153

P
primary modulatory, 156
Privative (negational) translation, 149
reductive and expansive techniques, 155
referential integrity, 153

S
Substitution, 151
substitutive calque translation, 143
substitutive techniques, 151
substitutive translation, 147, 148
supplantive translation, 149, 150
Supplantive translation, 149
supplemental, 151
supplemental techniques, 151
Supplemental techniques, 151

T
Translation, 156
translation technique, 147, 149, 157
translation techniques, 159
transplantive translation, 153
Transplantive translation, 150
transposition, 144, 157