



**An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**REFRAMING POLITICS: THE ROLE
OF TRANSLATION IN SHAPING ARAB
POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE POST
COLONIAL ERA**

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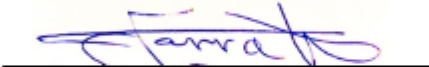
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my superheroes mom and dad

To the ultimate supporter.. my big brother Saif Ed-din

Acknowledgments

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah Almighty for granting me the power, ability, and opportunity to undertake this study. Without Allah, nothing would be possible.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

REFRAMING POLITICS: THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN SHAPING ARAB POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE POST COLONIAL ERA

I declare that the work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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REFRAMING POLITICS: THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN SHAPING ARAB POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE POST COLONIAL ERA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the pivotal role of translation in shaping Arab political thought from the colonial era to modernity by exploring the mechanisms through which translation has been used as a tool to shape political awareness and reshape concepts in the Arab context. Adopting a qualitative research methodology the study employed case studies and collected data through semistructured interviews and textual analysis of historical documents and contemporary texts with data analyzed using content analysis and critical analysis techniques. The results revealed the ideological social and cultural influences of Western political translation on Arab political thought and the mechanisms of translation manipulation during the colonial period through deletion, addition and rephrasing as well as the strategies of reappropriation and reinterpretation in postcolonial contexts through adaptation domestication and foreignization. The study concluded that translation was not merely a neutral linguistic transfer, but rather an effective tool in shaping political discourse and cultural identity and emphasized the importance of developing accurate and culturally sensitive translation practices to foster constructive political dialogue.

Keywords: Reframing politics, role of translation, Arab political, modernity

Chapter One

Introductions and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this introductory chapter is to establish the overall framework for the study and lay the groundwork for the research landscape from which all subsequent analyses will develop. This chapter not only provides a brief overview of the research components but also constructs a solid theoretical and methodological foundation that serves as a bridge between the complex historical problem and precise contemporary methodology. It deconstructs the study's constituent elements and elucidates the dialectical relationships between them, thus providing the reader with the intellectual map that will guide them through the research. This process begins with diagnosing the problem in its temporal and contextual dimensions, continues through formulating the research questions, and culminates in constructing the theoretical frameworks that will serve as crucial analytical tools. The chapter comprises five main, integrated sections. It starts with a precise diagnostic of the research topic and a critical presentation. This part not only describes the nature of the problem, but also digs into its layered analysis, noting knowledge gaps in prior studies as well as the key issue of translation's dual status as both an instrument of hegemony and a source of resistance and renaissance. Secondly, he moves to defining multi-layered research objectives, dividing them into analytical and diagnostic objectives related to deciphering the mechanisms of translation; interpretive and interpretive objectives focused on understanding the interaction between translation practices and intellectual shifts; and developmental and forward-looking objectives aimed at building new analytical models and proposing criteria for more culturally conscious translation. Thirdly, he focuses on formulating diverse research hypotheses and questions, presenting a central hypothesis on political translation as a field of ideological conflict, along with sub-hypotheses covering historical mechanisms and contemporary strategies, while developing a network of research questions covering linguistic, discursive, historical, and cultural levels. Fourthly, he constructs a multi-layered theoretical framework and conceptual foundation, combining major theories in postcolonial studies and discourse analysis with specialized translation theories, precisely defining key concepts, and reformulating the relationships between them. Finally, it concludes by highlighting the multi-dimensional importance of the study, from its academic value in enriching

intersecting fields of knowledge, to its societal importance in raising critical awareness, and its practical applications in developing more accurate and faithful translation practices, while providing a detailed outline of the thesis structure as a whole, showing how its successive chapters integrate to achieve the stated objectives and answer the questions posed.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Bassnett (1980, p. 1), translation is “not merely a minor branch of comparative literary study, nor yet a specific area of linguistics, but a vastly complex field with many far-reaching ramifications”. The complexity of translation stems from the intricate relationship between politics and translation because translators are arguably the actual representatives of shaping political, cultural and ideological thoughts and beliefs. Put differently, translation is an integral part of the domain of politics. The process of translating Western political concepts into Arabic has historically been fraught with manipulation and reinterpretation, see, for example, (Baker, 2006; Hermans, 1985). This is because colonial powers have focused on serving their interests by changing the original meanings of political terms to meet the colonial agenda. In this regard, Zeina (2020, p. 342) maintained that “the translation movement, at the turn of the century stressed the concern that importing western knowledge production would further confirm European supremacy and present hegemonic schemes to dominate Egypt, culturally and ideologically”. For example, translations of terms like "colonialism" (استعمار) were framed in ways that masked their exploitative nature, presenting colonial rule as a civilizing mission in the Arab world. However, the attitudes of Arabs towards the west, through translation and borrowing, is one that is based on the clash between two different cultures that “had historically clashed and continue to do” (Faiq 2004, p. 9). Because this conflicting relationship is authoritarian, it is marked by refusal of the discourse of the dominant master to the dominated/colonized inferior in the colonial context. In the post-colonial era and modern times, Arab intellectuals and political leaders have sought to reclaim and adapt these terms to fit local cultural and political contexts.

1.3 Objectives

The overarching goal of the current study is to explore the complex nature of how Western translations have influenced Arab political thought and discourse since colonialism until now. Although there is a long period of time between colonialism and the modern time, Western translation is still dynamic because of the current dominance of the West. More specifically, this study seeks to provide insights into the less-explored domain of political translation by addressing the following three key objectives:

- a. To analyze the mechanisms of manipulation and reappropriation in political translation

This objective encompasses investigating how colonial powers distorted key concepts (such as Jihad and Democracy) through translation to serve their interests, and how Arab intellectuals and leaders reappropriated and reinterpreted these concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts.

- b. To assess the impact of translation on Arab political discourse and movements

This aims to explore the role translation has played, both historically and contemporarily, in shaping Arab political thought and in the dynamics of political discourse and movements in the Arab world, from the colonial era to the Arab Spring.

- c. To establish a framework for accurate and culturally-sensitive political translation

This seeks to develop a theoretical and practical framework that underscores the critical importance of accurate and culturally-sensitive translation, not merely as a technical matter, but as a fundamental prerequisite for fostering constructive political dialogue and genuine cultural understanding.

1.4 Research Questions/Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that the translation of Western political concepts into Arabic has had a significant and lasting impact on Arab political thought and discourse. It posits that while colonial translations were manipulative, post-colonial and modern reinterpretations have played a crucial role in shaping contemporary political ideologies and movements in the Arab world. To verify this hypothesis, it seeks to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are the effects of translating key Western political concepts into Arabic on Arab political thought?
2. How could colonial powers manipulate translations to serve their interests during the colonial period?
3. What are the main ways used by Arab intellectuals and political leaders to reappropriate and reinterpret these concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts?

1.5 Theoretical Basis

This study is theoretically grounded in two main, complementary frameworks: postcolonial theory and the theories of Orientalism established by Edward Said, particularly concerning the role of translation in colonial contexts. In his pioneering work, Said presents a critical perspective that reveals how translation was never a neutral or innocent process, but rather a strategic tool of cultural and political hegemony, shaping perceptions and re-engineering power relations between colonizer and colonized. Through the mechanisms of translation, the East was represented as the antithesis of the West—a passive, stagnant, mysterious, and backward entity—while the West was presented as the embodiment of rationality, progress, and civilization. Said emphasizes that these representations were not objective reflections of reality, but rather discursive constructions serving the colonial project and justifying its domination.

The study deepens this analysis by referencing Hamdi (2014, p. 40), who elaborates on Said's demonstration of how the powerful colonizer imposed its language and culture, while the cultures, histories, values, and languages of Eastern peoples were ignored, or even deliberately distorted. This disregard and distortion were not random occurrences, but rather part of a systematic strategy aimed at subjugating these peoples and exploiting their resources under the guise of glittering slogans such as “enlightenment,” “civilization,” and “humanity.” Thus, the theory reveals that Western translation in the colonial context often served to obscure historical realities and the complexities of local societies, contributing to the creation of a one-dimensional stereotype that facilitated control. More importantly, this theoretical framework helps us understand that colonial translation concealed the true and enduring consequences of colonialism, which are still evident in many formerly colonized countries in the form of political chaos, coups,

corruption, civil wars, and bloodshed. These manifestations are not mere historical coincidences, but are, in essence, the direct legacy of the structures and relationships established by colonialism, whose influence translation—through its distortion of knowledge and perception—has perpetuated.

Building on this postcolonial foundation, the study also draws its foundations from the field of critical translation studies. This field of research does not view translation merely as a linguistic bridge between two texts, but rather analyses it as a highly complex social and political practice. These studies explore how translation not only reflects social and political reality but also actively contributes to shaping and producing it. They examine the mechanisms of power inherent in the choice of what is translated and what is not, in the methodology of translation itself (such as localization or foreignization), and in the role of the translator as a mediator with a specific agenda and consciousness. Through this critical lens, it is possible to analyze how translation is used to transmit and legitimize certain ideologies, or conversely, how it can be employed as a form of resistance and a means of reclaiming discourse.

The advantages of these intersecting theoretical frameworks are pivotal to this study, as they allow for a broader and deeper understanding of the complex interactions between Western political thought and Arab political discourse through the medium of translation. These frameworks allow us to trace this dynamic relationship through time, from the colonial era, where translation was used as a tool of domination, through the post-colonial period, where it became an arena for resistance and redefinition, to modernity and beyond, where influences intertwine in the age of globalization and digital media. Thus, these frameworks not only offer interpretations of the past but also provide vital analytical tools for deciphering continuities and transformations in the present, and for highlighting how translation remains a crucial factor in shaping the ongoing political and cultural dialogue—or conflict—between the Arab and Western worlds.

1.6 Importance of the Study

The Importance of this study lies not only in bridging a gap in academic literature, but also in shedding critical analytical light on the complex mechanisms through which translation intertwines with the processes of shaping political thought and discourse across successive historical periods. This thesis represents a pivotal contribution to the field of political translation studies, offering a multidisciplinary approach that connects history, linguistics, political theory, and cultural studies. The prevailing understanding of translation as a neutral linguistic conduit stands in stark contrast to what this study reveals: that translation, within the context of colonial and post-colonial relations, was—and remains—an active productive process characterized by intentionality, selectivity, restructuring, and even the deliberate shaping of meaning. Translation is not a mirror reflecting the original text, but rather a workshop where reality is reshaped through deliberate processes of selection (what is translated and what is omitted), synthesis (concepts within new frameworks), structuring (within specific ideological parameters), and fabrication (creating connections that did not previously exist). At its most extreme, translation becomes a tool for deliberate distortion, information denial, content falsification, and even the invention of new linguistic codes and semantic contexts that serve agendas of domination.

By focusing on dissecting the translation of pivotal political terms—such as “democracy,” “jihad,” “colonialism,” and “human rights”—this study not only traces semantic shifts but also unveils the hidden power dynamics that govern cultural exchange. It demonstrates how altering the meaning of a term at a critical historical juncture can distort collective consciousness, redirect political trajectories, and justify relations of domination. Therefore, this study functions less as a history of translation and more as a history of power through translation, illustrating the dialectical interplay between linguistic practices, political conflicts, and societal transformations.

Understanding these complex mechanisms is not a mere academic exercise; it is vital for reimagining the role of translation in our contemporary world. In light of current political challenges, from the rise of populist rhetoric to identity crises and culture wars, the urgent need for more accurate and culturally sensitive translation is paramount. This study aims to contribute to establishing ethical standards and frameworks for political translation practice, grounded in the recognition of contextual diversity and multiple interpretations.

Understanding how translation has been used as a tool of domination in the past enables us to transform it into a bridge for dialogue and understanding in the present. Consequently, the study has direct practical applications in the fields of foreign policy, public diplomacy, international media, and cultural policymaking, where conscious translation can mitigate conflicts and facilitate cross-cultural cooperation.

Finally, this study acquires added significance in the current Arab context, where projects of revival (Nahda) and renewal grapple with the legacy of imported and distorted discourses. It contributes to the process of reclaiming intellectual agency by providing researchers, activists, and translators with analytical tools that enable them to deconstruct dominant discourses and produce alternative discourses capable of authentically expressing Arab complexities and experiences. It is a call to reconsider translation not as a technical problem of communication, but as a pivotal issue at the heart of the struggle to cultivate an independent and enlightened political consciousness.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

This research thesis is built upon a coherent and sequential methodological structure, comprising six main chapters, each contributing integrally to achieving the research objectives and constructing a sound scientific argument.

The first chapter lays the foundation for the study by establishing a comprehensive preliminary framework. This chapter not only lists the components of the research but also constructs the theoretical and methodological landscape upon which all subsequent analyses will be built. It begins with a precise diagnosis of the research problem, clarifying the knowledge gap it seeks to fill, and then moves on to formulating the overall objective and specific goals in a systematic manner. Following this, it presents the research hypotheses and guiding questions that will inform the analysis. This is followed by the construction of the robust theoretical framework upon which the study is based, namely postcolonial theories, Orientalism, and critical translation studies. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the scientific and practical significance of the study and providing a detailed outline of the thesis's overall structure, thus offering the reader a clear roadmap for the research journey.

Chapter Two is dedicated to providing an in-depth critical review of relevant theoretical and conceptual literature. This chapter does not merely present previous studies, but

analyzes and critiques them, revealing points of convergence and divergence, and highlighting the place this study occupies within the academic landscape. The chapter focuses on exploring the complex dynamics of the role of Western translation in shaping Arab political thought across historical periods, beginning with Edward Said's framing of Orientalism as a tool of cultural hegemony. It then examines the applications of critical translation studies in exposing the mechanisms of power within translated texts, analyzing translation strategies during the colonial era and how they were employed to serve the colonial project. The chapter also addresses the concept of postcolonial reappropriation, how Arab intellectuals have transformed translation into a tool of resistance and redefinition, and traces the role of translation in contemporary political movements and the impact of digital media on shaping translated political discourse. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the crucial importance of producing accurate and culturally sensitive translations as a prerequisite for any constructive political dialogue.

Chapter Three is tasked with explaining the methodological design and research procedures in detail. The chapter begins by justifying the choice of a qualitative approach as a suitable framework for exploring the complex contextual nature of translation and its discursive impact. It then proceeds to establish the rationale behind the selection of data collection tools: semi-structured interviews for eliciting expert insights, textual analysis for tracing semantic shifts, discourse analysis for uncovering ideological structures, and comparative analysis for historical conceptual mapping. It also outlines the analytical techniques used, such as thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Rigorous attention is given to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity regarding politically and religiously sensitive texts.

Chapter Four presents the findings derived from the qualitative data analysis. This chapter presents the research findings in a systematic and clear manner, directly linking them to the research questions posed in Chapter one. It offers rich data drawn from interviews and documents, supported by direct quotations and illustrative textual examples, thus providing the reader with a deep and empirical understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Chapter five moves to a deeper level of analysis and interpretation. It does not merely present the results but discusses them analytically and critically. It connects the insights gleaned from various data sources (interviews, historical texts, and contemporary texts) to construct a comprehensive picture. It also compares these findings with those of previous studies reviewed in the literature review chapter, highlighting points of agreement and disagreement, and emphasizing the valuable contribution this study makes to knowledge.

Chapter six, the conclusion, summarizes the research journey. It begins by restating the research topic and the essential contributions of the thesis. It then presents a set of practical recommendations for translators, policymakers, and academics, aiming to foster a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Western translation and Arab thought. The chapter does not neglect to discuss the limits of the study frankly, such as methodological or time constraints, and concludes by suggesting paths and topics for future research that can build on what this study has accomplished and go beyond its limits.

1.8 Literature Review

1.8.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a critical and in-depth analytical review of the fundamental theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study. It focuses on the strategic role of translation in shaping and formulating Arab political thought throughout a complex journey spanning from the colonial era to the dawn of modernity and beyond. This chapter does not merely present a passive account of previous literature; rather, it undertakes a critical and deconstructive task. This involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing academic discourses and establishing a coherent conceptual framework that allows for an understanding of the complex and multi-layered dynamics of the interaction between translation as a cultural and political tool and the fundamental transformations in Arab political consciousness and theory.

The chapter is organized into six main, sequential, and logically structured sections, beginning with a general theoretical overview and progressing towards specific applications and contexts. Part One sheds light on the concept of Orientalism from Edward Said's perspective, not merely as an academic field, but as a comprehensive

discursive-authoritarian structure in which translation was one of its effective tools for producing the "Orient" as a passive entity that could be represented and controlled. This framework is the cornerstone for understanding the unequal relationship between the Western center and the Arab periphery, a relationship in which translation is central.

Part Two then explores the field of critical translation studies, which intersects with Said's legacy, shifting the focus from translation as a technical linguistic process to its analysis as a socio-political practice charged with power and ideology. This part examines how translation either reinforces or challenges dominant discourses, and how translation choices (such as localization or foreignization) can be interpreted as indicators of deeper conflicts related to identity and power.

Part Three focuses on concrete historical analysis, highlighting the key features of translation in the colonial era and how it was used as a tool for managing colonies and justifying domination through mechanisms such as selective distortion and the "enlightenment" of exploitative concepts. In contrast, this Part also addresses the phenomenon of postcolonial reappropriation, where Arab translators and intellectuals transformed translation from an instrument of domination into a means of resistance, self-redefinition, and reclaiming stolen or distorted concepts.

Part Four broadens the scope of the analysis to include the role of translation in contemporary political movements, particularly since the Arab Spring. It analyzes how the translation of concepts such as "democracy," "social justice," and "accountability" facilitated the mobilization of public opinion and the creation of a transnational protest discourse, and how these concepts were simultaneously approached and "sectarianized" locally.

Part Five delves into the crucial role of media, both traditional and digital, in transforming the landscape of political translation. This part discusses how the rapid pace of globalization and the nature of online media have created a new context in which translations (and mistranslations) circulate widely, instantly and massively influencing public opinion and creating new political realities. It also highlights translation biases in mainstream Western media coverage of Arab affairs.

The chapter concludes with Part 6, which discusses the importance of producing accurate and culturally sensitive translations. This part addresses this issue not merely as a technical matter, but as an ethical and epistemological imperative for any genuine intercultural dialogue or understanding. It explores calls for the development of translation practices that resist assimilation into Western conceptual frameworks, preserve the complexity and context of Arab and Islamic concepts, and contribute to building a more equitable and pluralistic global political discourse.

Through this gradual approach, the chapter seeks to build a strong and coherent theoretical foundation that links the philosophical critique of Orientalism, the linguistic-political analysis of translation, and historical and contemporary applications, in order to understand how translation has remained a crucial, albeit often hidden, factor in shaping the political and intellectual destiny of the Arab world.

1.8.2 Edward Said and Orientalism

Edward Said's remarkable and influential work, *Orientalism* (1978), provides a critical framework for understanding the power dynamics involved in the translation of Western political concepts into Arabic to the extent it could shape the Arab political thought. He claims that this power stems from the fact that the West has spoken for the rest of the Arab world by creating an untrue image about it. While the West is superior, higher and rational, the Orient is lower, inferior and irrational. This analysis demonstrates that translation functioned not as a neutral medium of communication, but as a mechanism for asserting a singular worldview. In doing so, it served the colonial objective of reconstructing the identity and historical consciousness of the colonized. In his words "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences (Said, 1978, p. 1). According to Harmon (2020), translation can be seen as a main instrument of power, where power influences the translation process and its outcomes. Power dwells on creating and disseminating particular sets of ideas and thoughts because language mediates reality and particular discourses tend to assume specific understandings of reality so that those understandings participate in the creation of the reality that they refer to (Said, 2003). The construction of the East as a negative and irrational 'Other' legitimized colonial projects under the slogans of 'enlightenment' and 'civilization.' Within this framework, colonial control was framed as the 'white man's

burden'—a mission to save supposedly backward peoples. It is worth mentioning that Said's views are highly influenced by Foucault's works (1980, 2001) that signal how power controls all forms of communication because it is the creation and dissemination of particular sets of ideas in translation to initiate, justify and support the colonial conquest. In his early book *Orientalism* (1978), Said argues that this phenomenon is a Western way to control and dominate the Arab and Islamic world. His analysis reveals how Western scholarship and translation practices have historically reinforced colonial power structures and distorted the understanding of Eastern societies. Thus, the translation of Western political and intellectual works into Arabic was not a neutral transfer of concepts in a vacuum. Instead, it inherited and transmitted these hierarchical sequences of value and existence, deeply shaping the trajectory of emerging Arab political discourse. In Said's words: "we must not forget that the orientalist's presence [through translations] is enabled by the orient's effective absence" (Said, 1978, p. 208). Such translations can be critiqued as a general patronizing Western attitude towards Middle eastern societies that are characterized as static and undeveloped (Baker, 2006). On the other hand, Western societies are praised as developed, rational, flexible and superior. Qualities such as lazy, irrational, uncivilized, crudeness were related to the Orientals, and automatically the Europeans became active, rational, civilized and sophisticated (Said, 1978). From this perspective, translation emerges as a site of conflicting representations, where meanings are produced and imposed. Consequently, the study of colonial translation practices becomes imperative for understanding the roots of many discursive tensions in contemporary Arab political thought. This gives cause and concern to rethink and revisit the relationship between colonialism and modernity through translation due to lack of impartiality and objectivity.

Such negative views of Orientalism that enhanced colonialism are transferred by the influence of translation, see, for example, (Salih, 2005). This reveals that the power to translate is the capacity "to transfer or turn from one set of symbols into another" (Merriam-Webster, 2023). In this sense, translation emerges as a radical transformative act that transcends linguistic transfer to alter fundamental cognitive and cultural paradigms. Consequently, it empowers the hegemonic force to reconfigure the history and subjective awareness of the colonized Other. Put differently, translation is to bear, remove, or change from one place, state, form, or appearance to another, which can be synonymised with transfer and transform. The study conducted by Ahmed, Salman, &

Noor (2023, p. 560) showed how colonial translation activities were critiqued as “avenues of conquest” because they “generated knowledge regimes that shaped the understanding of historical events and personalities”; Furthermore, these 'cognitive systems' demonstrate that colonial translation was not merely the translation of texts, but a project of knowledge production—one that serves the colonial narrative and subjects local realities to its own classifications and terminology. It can be argued that there is a close relationship between power and translation that has the ability to alter or change ways of thinking and manipulate facts. Accordingly, orientalism is used by Westerners or Europeans to view themselves as the superior race compared to the Orientals. They justified their colonization via this concept by focusing on how to civilize the uncivilized world. Through this logic, translation became a mechanism for 'sanitizing' colonial discourse, where invasion and economic exploitation were framed as an educational and moral mission. This resulted in a profound distortion of both self-perception and the perception of the 'Other. A good example is Said's initiative to analyze the public speeches and writings of the British imperialists of the early 20th century about Egypt (Zeina, 2020). This analysis demonstrates the synergy between translation and discourse in forging a colonial representation of 'Egypt.' By masking the intricacies and aspirations of the Egyptian people, this process highlights translation's role as an instrumental tool within the broader machinery of imperial control.

Another negative feature of Orientalism is related to Western misrepresentations and wrong judgements of Islam. Of course, such misrepresentations of Islam are usually conveyed and transferred by colonial translations simply because “the complexities of the translation process overlap with colonial mechanisms of power” (Ahmed, Salman, & Noor, 2023, p. 560). Such an interplay reveals that translating Islamic terminology was far from a neutral academic exercise; it was a deliberate political act. By re-embedding these concepts within a framework that served colonial interests, the translated text became a locus for the continuation of ideological struggle. Sadly, many Orientalists or Western scholars studied Islam with the purpose of distorting it. In his famous work, “Islam Through Western Eyes”, Said (1980, p. 26) explained the Western misrepresentation of Islam in the following excerpt: “So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and the Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists... the Islamic world [is] presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to militaZeiry aggression”. Said

argues that this distorted representation is not confined to the colonial past but is perpetuated in the contemporary era. Here, Islam and Muslims are essentialized into stereotypical roles that justify political and military interventions, fueling the 'clash of civilizations' discourse and constructing a perpetual enemy. It can be surmised here that Orientalism is critiqued as the source of the inaccurate cultural representations that are the foundations of Western thought towards Muslims and Arabs. Such Western misrepresentations of Islam “have served, and continue to serve, as implicit justifications for the colonial and imperialist ambition of the European powers and the United States” (Ranjan, 2015, p. 88). Hence, these representations functioned not as accidental misconceptions, but as strategic rhetorical instruments designed to legitimize expansionist agendas under the guise of 'moral' missions. Such a dynamic highlights the ideological lineage connecting classical Orientalism to modern-day geopolitical strategies.. A good example is that Islam is transferred into “*Mohammadism* because Mohammad was the founder of this religion” (Ranjan, 2015, p. 88). The systematic distortion of the name of the religion, rendered as 'Mohammedanism' in colonial discourse, cannot be dismissed as a mere philological or translation error. Rather, it represents a deliberate ontological transformation of the very essence of Islam. By framing Islam as a personal 'following' of an individual—analogous to certain Christian denominational structures—this terminology sought to strip the faith of its transcendent, monotheistic, and universal character. In doing so, colonial translators effectively reduced a global theological system to a localized personal framework, rendering it more susceptible to Western critique, subversion, and categorization within a hierarchical religious taxonomy that favored European traditions. Influenced by (Said, 1978; Hamadi, 2014, p. 4) claimed that colonial translations conveyed “false assumptions upon which the Western attitudes toward the East were built, justifying and encouraging the European and American colonial and imperial behavior towards the Arab-Islamic peoples and their cultures”. This observation underscores how colonial translation functioned as a critical nexus between abstract, flawed theoretical assumptions and tangible political maneuvers on the ground. It did not merely relay information, but rather synthesized a form of 'fabricated knowledge' that was indispensable for justifying the structural violence of occupation, systemic economic extraction, and the broader project of cultural hegemony. In this capacity, translation acted as a discursive bridge, transforming Eurocentric prejudices into seemingly objective 'truths' that paved the way for the administrative and

moral institutionalization of imperial rule. It seems clear that translation can be construed as a political activity that “shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism” (Niranjana, 1992, p. 2). Therefore, it becomes evident that translation within this specific historical juncture was never a neutral or peripheral activity; rather, it was intricately forged and recalibrated within the crucible of asymmetrical power relations. It functions as a sophisticated vehicle for the transmission of ideology, meticulously constructed to align with the imperatives of the prevailing colonial hegemony. Understood in this light, any critical interrogation of colonial translation practices transcends mere linguistic scrutiny; it necessitates a comprehensive deconstruction of power itself. By examining these translational choices, we are essentially uncovering the very mechanisms through which power is produced, naturalized, and sustained through discursive means, revealing how the act of 'carrying across' meaning is simultaneously an act of imposing authority.

1.8.3 Critical Translation Studies

Because translation can be viewed as “a political practice that reveals asymmetrical power relations”, there is a strong need to consider it critically to show its complex dynamics; Ultimately, this perspective elevates translation far beyond the realm of mere linguistic proficiency, reimagining it as a fertile site for critical inquiry. Through this lens, we are able to deconstruct the latent structures of domination and trace the precise mechanisms by which knowledge is weaponized as an instrument of control. This becomes particularly evident in the historical 'contact zones' where cultures meet under conditions of radical inequality, revealing how the act of translation—far from being a neutral bridge—often serves as the very machinery that institutionalizes cultural and political subjugation. A number of critical translation studies were carried out to highlight the political and ideological dimensions of translation during colonialism (Said, 2003). For example, Baker (2006) explores how translation can serve as a site of resistance and empowerment, challenging hegemonic narratives. "Baker's scholarly contributions offer a pivotal glimmer of hope, suggesting that translation—while historically weaponized as an instrument of colonial subjection—remains a double-edged sword. She illustrates how the colonized can reclaim this very medium, subverting it into a powerful tool of resistance to dismantle dominant discourses and reclaim their suppressed narratives. This paradigm shift fundamentally expands our conceptualization of the translator; they are no

longer viewed as a mere 'passive conduit' or a transparent bridge, but rather as a formidable social and political actor. In this light, translation becomes a site of active intervention, where the translator possesses the agency to challenge existing power structures and reconfigure the geopolitical landscape through linguistic choice. Rafael (1993) also highlights how translation practices during colonial rule in the Philippines were used to assert colonial authority, a dynamic that is relevant to the Arab context as well. "Rafael's analysis illuminates a crucial cross-cultural parallel, asserting that the mechanism of imposing authority through translation was a ubiquitous hallmark of the global colonial project. Whether in the Philippines or the Arab world, translation functioned as a sophisticated instrument of penetration—a means to permeate the fabric of local societies and institutionalize alien legal and epistemological systems. This process was not merely about linguistic substitution; it was a strategic attempt to domesticate the colonized subject and instill a sense of 'calculated loyalty' to the imperial center. By drawing this comparison, we can identify a recurring, structural pattern where translation acts as a bridge for colonial governance, transforming local realities into legible and manageable components of the broader imperial apparatus which shows how translation was “a form of conquest. Not only did one omit what was historical; one also added allusions to the present” (Nietzsche, 2012, pp. 67-68). Nietzsche's profound insight poignantly encapsulates the inherently hostile essence of the colonial translation project. This endeavor was never merely a passive disregard for the historical record; rather, it functioned as an aggressive, calculated distortion—a systematic rewriting of the past to align with the ideological imperatives of the colonial present. By selectively translating and reinterpreting historical narratives, colonial authorities succeeded in forcibly severing the colonized peoples' connection to their ancestral roots. This process facilitated the fabrication of an alternative, sanitized history—one meticulously designed to justify the dominance of the 'master' and ensure the perpetual intellectual and spiritual dependency of the colonized. It is worth pointing out that translation emerges from specific historical circumstances that make a political and ideological activity. In this regard, Sakai (2006, p. 76) points out that “The particular representation of translation as communication between two particular languages is no doubt a historical construct” because it reflects the politico-social importance of translation that conveys specific political messages to particular audiences. "Sakai fundamentally challenges the conventional myth of translation as a 'natural bridge' spanning the void between two pre-existing, isolated

languages. Instead, he positions translation as a rigorous historical construct—a discursive mechanism that both reflects and reinforces the power asymmetries of its specific temporal context. Crucially, Sakai suggests that the very conceptualization of 'distinct languages' is not a linguistic given, but rather a byproduct of complex political processes. In this sense, translation acts as the very apparatus that demarcates these linguistic boundaries; it is the force that defines where one culture ends and another begins, meticulously regulating the flow of knowledge to align with specific ideological agendas and geopolitical demarcations.

Another critical translation study was conducted by Allawzi, Ammari, & Awwad (2024) that made use of Baker's (2006) narrative theory to clearly show how the translator as a colonial agent because translation plays a vital role in reconstructing power imbalance and representing the image of the colonized, on the one hand, and the colonizer, on the other. This research underscores the potent agency of the translator, who transcends the reductive role of a mere 'instrument of implementation' to emerge as a pivotal protagonist in the production and reproduction of colonial discourse. Far from being a neutral intermediary, the translator becomes an active architect of representation; their nuanced linguistic choices function as deliberate mechanisms to consolidate the racial and cultural hierarchies between the colonizer and the colonized. By meticulously crafting these translations, they do not simply transfer meaning, but rather perpetuate an essentialized image of the 'Other'—reconfiguring the identity of the colonized to align precisely with the strategic desires and ideological fantasies of the imperial power. This means that political translation shifts the scale of power in favor of the colonizer. According to Simon & St-Pierre (2000), colonizers and orientalists focused on those translations that were in line with the image they wanted to establish of the colonized. "The calculated selectivity in choosing materials for translation functioned as a sophisticated strategy of discursive domination. By systematically marginalizing texts that showcased the intellectual sophistication and cultural achievements of colonized civilizations, and instead prioritizing narratives that amplified themes of 'primitiveness' or a 'providential need for guidance,' colonial authorities curated a skewed knowledge archive. This was not a passive omission, but an active epistemological filtering process. Consequently, this curated archive became the foundational 'truth' upon which the West constructed its conceptualization of the 'Other'—providing the pseudo-scientific and moral legitimacy required to sustain and justify the entire imperial project. A good instance is the Western

translation of the term “*Jihad*” into English as “*Holy War*” (Omar, 2020). The reductive transmutation of the profound and multifaceted concept of 'Jihad'—which inherently encompasses a spectrum of spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of struggle—into the singularly aggressive and militant construct of 'Holy War' serves as a quintessential case study in translational distortion. This is not merely a linguistic oversimplification; it is a strategic semiotic displacement that strips the term of its ethical and internal complexities. By grafting a medieval Christian framework (*Bellum Sacrum*) onto an Islamic concept, colonial and contemporary discourses have successfully forged a direct, visceral link between Islam and ontological violence in the Western collective consciousness. Consequently, translation functions here as a tool of 'othering,' framing an entire faith as an existential threat and providing the discursive justification for perpetual securitization and intervention. In a similar vein, Munday (2009, p. 134) emphasized that “translation has always played an active role in the colonization process and dissemination of an ideologically motivated image of colonized people”. Munday underscores that translation was never a neutral bystander, but an active partner in the colonial project. He views it as a delivery system for spreading ideologies and stereotypes that were essential for maintaining control and justifying the systemic inequality between nations. In this sense, translation wasn't just about language; it was a deliberate tool used to cement the power structures of the era. The Western culture is critiqued as a dominant or hegemonic culture because the translation it produces is viewed as exotic, mysterious, and difficult to interpret. "This critique is evident in the Western-centric nature of the translation process itself, where the 'Oriental' text is treated as a mysterious entity that must be deciphered by the Western specialist. This approach does more than just translate words; it reproduces colonial power dynamics by transforming local knowledge into a strange, 'exotic' object for Western consumption. In doing so, translation becomes a tool for distancing the 'Other' rather than understanding them on their own terms.

1.8.4 Translation During Colonialism and Post-Colonial Reappropriation

Said (1978) stresses that throughout the colonial period, translations of Western political concepts into Arabic were often manipulated to serve the interests of colonial powers; distortion was not random, but rather part of a systematic strategy to impose a political and intellectual model, where concepts such as "freedom" and "progress" were twisted to become justifications for hegemony instead of being universal liberating values. In this context, Hulme (1986) illustrates how colonial authorities used political translation to control and influence indigenous populations which shows that translation was a tool for day-to-day administration and psychological control; through the translation of laws, publications, and educational curricula, local consciousness was re-engineered to accept the legitimacy of the colonial system and absorb its values. It seems clear that there is an intricate relationship between politics and translation because "translation became a metaphor for the colony while European cultures enjoyed the superior status of being the original" (Kumari, 2017, p. 161). This profound metaphor reflects the essence of the relationship: just as the colony is seen as a distorted or incomplete version of the original (Europe), the translation is portrayed as an inferior version of the source text, thus reinforcing the hierarchy and making political and cultural dependency seem natural. A comprehensive and useful definition of political translation is provided by Nassar and Malaka (2024, p. 8) as "the translation of political texts, which requires a great deal of persuasion and communication, it relies on employing all the grammatical and rhetorical capabilities in tingling the public feelings to gain support and sympathy... to deliver a politicians' thoughts, ideologies and widely and beliefs". This definition underscores that political translation is fundamentally a rhetorical and dialectical act, aimed at influencing and mobilizing, making the study of its rhetorical tools and linguistic choices crucial for understanding how political legitimacy is constructed and ideology is transmitted across languages. Another important translation study was undertaken by Ahmed, Salman, & Noor (2023) to investigate the interlink between colonialism, power and translation by focusing on the English 'translation' of Tipu Sultan translated by Col. W. Miles in 1844. Here, the textual iteration in the English language- did not merely transliterate the figure of Tipu Sultan for a European audience, but created the subject of its operations. The translation of Tipu Sultan's biography was not merely a transfer of facts, but a process of "creating" an image of him that fit the colonial imagination – either as a brutal tyrant in need of taming, or as a noble, defeated adversary – thus transforming the historical figure

into a tool in the broader colonial narrative. Politically speaking, translation is not only a means of communication but also a means of administration and control and conquest. In their words, “translation was an exercise of power which justified and perpetuated colonial power structures, although it was also influenced by the dynamics of domination and resistance inherent in such relationships” (p. 569). This formulation acknowledges the dialectical nature of translation; it is not a one-way instrument of oppression, but rather an arena of conflict where forms of resistance and appropriation emerge on the part of translators and colonized societies, even within the constraints imposed upon them. Put differently, translators draw on complex linguistic repertoires, and can change the target language as they use their creativity to mediate the source text to new readers for hegemonic targets. They create and disseminate knowledge about Islam and the Orient to help Westerners justify their colonial and imperial aims; Thus, translators become the architects of colonial “knowledge,” as their translations enrich the target language with new terms and concepts, but at the same time plant in it alien systems of thought that serve to consolidate hegemony and distort the image of the “other.” In the Arab world, translations of terms like "colonialism" (استعمار) were framed in ways that masked their exploitative nature, presenting colonial rule as a civilizing mission. The exploitative and aggressive connotation of the term "colonialism" was concealed under terms such as "trusteeship," "mandate," or "civilizing mission," thus transforming the process of plunder and domination into a moral and progressive duty in the popular perception. According to Priyadarshini (2023, p. 745), “English served as a tool for colonialism, and an analysis of its influence and linguistic hierarchy was conducted”. British colonial authority highlighted the importance of English as the main language, while marginalizing the Arabic language and its dialects to stress colonial ideologies and reinforce the dominance of western knowledge and culture. The imposition of English was not merely an administrative matter, but a project to create an English-educated middle class steeped in colonial values, while Arabic was relegated to the role of religion and lower domestic affairs, leading to cultural fragmentation and weakening the role of Arabic as a language of modern knowledge and critical political discourse.

In relation to post-colonial reappropriation, translation was employed to show how colonized peoples reclaim and reinterpret colonial narratives. This reappropriation represents a radical shift in the function of translation, from a tool for imposing external

narratives to a means of restoring cultural agency, where imported concepts are reinterpreted and infused with local values and experiences to create a hybrid discourse that resists hegemony from within. In this context, translation was criticized as a secondary activity that aimed to approximate the original. No wonder, it “always remains a zone of loss because approximation can never reach equivalence” (Kumari, 2017, p. 161). This critique highlights the continued centrality of the Western "original" text even in resistance movements, which may confine reclaiming efforts to interacting with the dominant paradigm rather than starting from a purely local frame of reference a challenge facing intellectual liberation movements. According to Salazar (2008, p. 173), Said’s key book *Orientalism* established how the “West” (especially Britain, France, and the United States), through an academic, literary, and philosophical endeavor executed by Western intellectuals, was able to manage-and even produce-the Arab and Islamic world “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” during the post-colonial period. In addition, Spivak (1993) associated post-colonial reappropriation with the case of unequal power relationships that show how Arabs and Muslims are weak, developing, uncivilized and backward. Such power relations are manifested in political translation. However, Europeans and Americans are more modernized, developed, civilized and knowledgeable. Such power relations are manifested in political and colonial translation. Spivak points out that unequal power relations do not disappear but are renewed in the translation process itself, as the hierarchical classification of peoples and cultures remains present in the background, making any attempt at repossession fraught with the risk of reproducing the logic of Western centrism, even when resisting. Spivak (1993, p. 181) went on to argue that the main “task of the translator is to facilitate this love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay”. she proposes here an ethical and nuanced model of translation, where the goal is neither faithful reproduction nor aggressive appropriation, but a complex dialogical relationship that respects the strangeness of the original text while acknowledging the impossibility of a complete transfer; a relationship that allows for fragmentation and marginalia and maintains a critical distance from the demands of the audience. This is why intellectuals and political leaders have reappropriated translated political terms to align them with local cultural and political realities in the Arab context. Based on this understanding, Arab intellectuals worked to "localize" political concepts

such as "democracy," "freedom," and "the state," shaping them into frameworks that suited the Islamic and Arab social heritage, transforming them from tools of Western hegemony into tools of liberation and local renaissance, in an attempt to break the West's monopoly on defining these universal concepts.

1.8.5 Contemporary Political Movements

In recent years, some contemporary political movements have shown how translators have been influenced by the pressures of the culture they belong to, the company or government they work for and their own ideological positions (Said, 2003). This recognition of the multiple sources of pressure on the translator breaks the myth of neutrality and opens the door to studying how translations are formed at the intersection of institutional interests, cultural affiliations, and personal attitudes, making every translation a political and social document as much as it is a linguistic one. Because of globalization, translation has become crucial for mobilizing support and articulating political goals. Translation functions as a linguistic mediation essential for transnational trajectories. It enables the intercultural transfer of resistance strategies and the re-encoding of local demands into a globally accessible lexicon, thereby amplifying the illocutionary force of protest discourse. However, this process entails the risk of semantic reduction or the decontextualization of the original sociopolitical narrative. In her seminal work, *Translating Dissent: Voices from and with the Egyptian Revolution*, Baker (2016) showed how translating concepts like "democracy" and "human rights" into Arabic has facilitated the spread of revolutionary ideas and fostered solidarity across linguistic and cultural boundaries. work reveals how activists and citizen translators have repurposed digital platforms into collaborative translation spaces, where these constructs undergo re-signification in the immediacy of events, transforming them into dynamic narrative instruments for mobilization rather than abstract decontextualized terms; Nevertheless, she shed some light on the complexities and difficulties of translation in Arabs' daily lives due to the mediating role of translation in the political sphere, concentrating on the Egyptian experience. Democracy is not just an ideal of political theory. In practice, it should meet Egyptians' expectations and values. The process of naturalizing concepts such as democracy encounters a fundamental challenge: the reconciliation of universalist principles with localized ontologies. In this context, translation transcends mere lexical transfer; it functions as a continuous process of negotiation aimed at re-contextualizing

the concept within a complex socio-political reality. This is particularly critical where Western democratic models are perceived as contested or ideologically fraught frameworks. This critical issue is somehow consistent with Priyadarshini's (2023, p. 744) claim that "The geopolitics of translation is a complex and varied subject that investigates how power dynamics, cultural conventions, and ideological perspectives influence the translation process". The nexus between geopolitics and translation underscores that the translator's positionality within the global power asymmetry is not peripheral, but a determinative variable in their translational agency. Consequently, translations function as sites where transnational power contestations are articulated, reflecting the hegemonic interventions of global actors in localized sociopolitical spheres.

According to Kapur (2011, p. 52), "translation can be seen as a cross-cultural transmission skill, a creative endeavour to build another linguistic structure to accommodate and contain what is otherwise quite foreign to it". However, the process of translating such political words as "democracy" and "human rights" can be manipulated to serve particular political agendas. A good example is given by Hsieh (2020, p. 2) that showed how translation became distorted when President Clinton touched on human rights throughout his live television address while visiting Vietnam in 2000: "In our experience, guaranteeing the right to religious worship and the right to political dissent does not threaten the stability of the society; instead it builds people's confidence in the fairness of the institution," became "According to our experience, the issue of allowing worshipping, allowing [pause] that does not affect the regime but to improve our regime". This clandestine distortion elucidates the ideological mobility inherent in translation: while the source text (ST) posits that freedom of expression 'builds public trust' as a systemic virtue, the target text (TT) undergoes a re-signification to suggest it 'does not affect' but rather 'bolsters' the regime. This process of tendentious translation transforms constructive dissent into ritualized commendation, effectively re-framing rights not as a civic entitlement but as a functional instrument for the maintenance of hegemonic power. This example reveals how translation is not only a product of cross-cultural interactions but also an entity that is capable of changing the language, ideology, and knowledge of both the source culture and the target culture. This example illustrates that a misleading translation does more than just warp the original message; it actually implants entirely new, distorted concepts into the target language and culture. This manipulation filters into local political life, building a false narrative about where the

other culture stands. Instead of translation serving as a bridge, it fuels a downward spiral of mutual confusion and deliberate deception, where both sides eventually lose sight of the truth. Translators are sometimes forced to manipulate texts and mediate them for their target audiences. This point matches well with von Flotow's (2001, p. 13) argument that translation is a "cultural phenomenon produced by individuals with a certain personality as well as an agenda, and it is closely linked to the political and often economic or personal situation of the translator". Put differently, translation has currently become an agent of change because translators are active and influential players in the political realm. Good recent examples from the Arab world include Nahdah intellectuals/translators, such as al-Aqaad, al-Mazni, Mohamed Hussein Haykal and Zaki Mubarak (Zeina, 2020).

1.8.6 Media and Translation

The impact of media on translation practices is another important area of study. In this respect, O'Connor (2022, p. 23) claimed that "television, cinema and internet are all media forms which have changed interactions and experiences, and their mediality has also impacted on translation practices". It is argued by Al-Ogaili (2021, p. 3) that media translation can be viewed as "unlimited, so the media translators must be fully aware of the media terms and expressions in both the source language and the target language". Digital platforms and social media have transformed how political concepts are disseminated and interpreted. Bush (1998) explores the challenges and opportunities presented by new media for translation. He argues that in the Arab world, the rapid spread of translated political terms via social media has significantly influenced public discourse and political activism.

However, Western media channels establish an exotic narrative of Arabs and Muslims to be represented as inferior in comparison to Western cultures. In other words, the narrative made by the Western translation reflects an acknowledgment of the superiority of the West and inferiority of the Orient. According to (Jaber, 2016, p. 69),

Using particular linguistic and translational choices during the global media's representation of the Other can impose ethical dilemmas since they represent different humans, races, religions, and civilizations. In this sense, Western media represents and sometimes stereotype Eastern cultures and societies as inferior in

comparison to Western cultures and societies. They emphasize “the West’s” political, economic, and cultural domination over “the East”.

Jaber’s commentary suggests that media can have a direct effect on the process of translation by showing how hegemonic cultures make colonized cultures adhere to their will because they are superior. Therefore, translation manipulates the reader by fabricating a narrative different from the one produced in the source text to reveal an exotic image of the colonized. Klinger (2014, p. 150) relates this issue to Western stereotyping:

“the more the non-Western work complies with Western stereotypes about the non-Western culture, and at the same time confirms Western values, the more easily it will be accepted by a Western audience”.

Another fundamental study that uncovered the impact of the media of communication on translation was carried out by (Littau, 2016). She argued that media can “actively shape our perceptions and consequently also our mindsets, not through the content they carry, but through their material and technical properties” (p. 87). To explore this impact, she raised the following question: What role has media technology played in the history of translation? In response to this question, she pinpointed: “Media are not merely instruments with which writers or translators produce meanings; rather, they *set the framework within which something like meaning becomes possible at all*”(2016, p. 83, italics in the original). Littau’s point that translation can be shaped by media technology is backed up by Armstrong’s argument (Littau, 2016, p. 104) that “the history of technology has shaped (i.e. acted upon) translation practices quite so explicitly as [Littau] suggests. It seems more likely to me that the technologies reflect textual practices”.

1.8.7 Importance of Producing Accurate and Culturally Sensitive Translations

Because translators are influential agents of change and shaping social, cultural, ideological, and political patterns among readerships, they are supposed to produce more acculturated and accurate translations trying to set a good model of adaptation for the Arabic language and style. This is a good way to elevate Islam and the Arab culture by maintaining the target or national norms and values. It seems clear that accurate and culturally sensitive translations are essential for fostering a constructive political dialogue. In his useful work, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Venuti (2017) argues for the importance of recognizing the translator's role and the need for translations that respect cultural contexts and conventions. With no doubt, whereas inaccurate translations can lead to misunderstandings and perpetuate stereotypes, sensitive translations can promote mutual understanding and cooperation. According to Priyadarshini (2023, p. 745), translation is a workable tool of political resistance because postcolonial translators seek to “promote a decolonised approach in which translations strive to maintain the genuineness of the originating cultural context and question Western models of understanding”. In her interesting study, “Translator as Cross-Cultural Mediator”, Bassnett, (2011) argues that translations can be a form of resistance and activism.

On the other hand, translations of colonial cultures into the language of the colonizer does not have that much cultural uniqueness because of lack of accuracy and transparency. Hsieh (2020, p. 1) went on to argue that a main advantage of cultural consciousness and accuracy is that it clearly shows how translations “do not simply transfer information from one language to another but are political acts that can define, shape, and resist norms and values of both the source and target cultures [to deal with] the tensions inherent in the (re)production of power and cultural hierarchies”.

The study conducted by Zeina (2020) showed how the easternization trend became a clear phenomenon in postcolonial translations. This trend gained more fame after the political independence of Egypt (1952- 1967). This era witnessed more openness, intercultural awareness and cultural independence from the West. Therefore, translation became a practical means of resistance with the purpose to “reaffirm the national language and national identity” (p. 345). Arab translators became more conscious of Western authority and hegemonic practices in all aspects and forms (linguistic, cultural, and

national). As Easternizers, their main task was that they “filtered and selectively appropriated what gets translated and imported from the West” to be in line with the culture’s particular norms and values (ibid.). Zeina’s (2020) insight matches well with Ashcroft, Gareth, & Tiffin, (2003, p. 16) finding that “appropriating the imperial language, its discursive forms and its modes of representation, post-colonial societies are able, as things stand, to intervene more readily in the dominant discourse, to interpolate their own cultural realities”. Thus, translation can be viewed as an intellectual “process of intercultural communication, whose end product is a text which is capable of functioning appropriately in specific situations and context of use” (Schäffner, 1996, p. 3).

To achieve more accuracy and transparency in translation, Venuti (2004) suggested two important strategies: foreignization and domestication. On the one hand, foreignization seeks to retain information from the source text, and deliberately encompasses breaking the conventions of the target language to preserve its meaning. Put differently, the distinctive "foreign" attributes of the source text are maintained. On the other hand, domestication aims at making text closely conform to the culture of the language being translated to, which may involve the loss of information from the source text. In other words, this strategy shows how the intended meaning of the source text is transferred in an idiomatic and natural style appropriate to the target language. A main merit of those two strategies is that they reflect the importance of effective cultural adaptation that includes “a delicate balance between preserving the cultural nuances of the source text and ensuring the target text resonates effectively with the target audience” (Chahbane, Chahbane, & Zrizi, 2024, p. 30).

Chapter Two

Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the integrated methodological and procedural structure of the study, aiming to provide a sound philosophical and practical justification for the research choices that ensure the study's ability to approach its complex problem in a systematic and credible manner. The chapter begins by establishing the study's philosophical position within the realm of qualitative research, grounded in the philosophy of social constructionism. The nature of the phenomenon under investigation—the role of translation in shaping political thought—is primarily contextual and interpretive, aiming to understand how meanings and concepts are constructed and reproduced within specific historical and cultural frameworks, rather than measuring them quantitatively. Based on this position, the qualitative case study methodology is adopted as a comprehensive framework, given its ability to provide analytical depth to a complex phenomenon whose boundaries are not clearly defined within its broader social and political context. This makes it the most suitable approach for answering research questions that explore the mechanisms of "how" and "why" influence and formation over time. To gather rich and diverse data, the study employs two main collection tools within a triangulation strategy to enhance validity and reliability: semi-structured interviews with a select group of Arab academics, translators, and intellectuals to elicit their personal perspectives and experiences regarding political translation practices and their impact; and textual analysis of historical documents and contemporary texts (such as speeches and media) to trace the semantic shift of political concepts across different eras and deconstruct the underlying discursive mechanisms. Finally, to process this large volume of qualitative data, qualitative content analysis is employed, which allows for the reduction of data into significant recurring categories and themes. This is combined with critical discourse analysis as an additional analytical lens to decipher the power relations and ideologies embodied in linguistic and translational choices within the texts, thus ensuring a multi-layered reading that connects precise textual structures with broader social and political frameworks.

2.2 Research Approach and Paradigm

Three main reasons have motivated the researcher to locate the current study within the qualitative research approach. The first reason is that unlike quantitative research that uses large scale surveys to collect objective data (quantifications and numbers), qualitative research depends on small-scale studies that gather subjective data represented by themes and concepts (Bryman, 2012). The current study can be seen as a small-scale study that aimed to explore a small number of participants' subjective views and opinions of the complex nature of how Western translations have influenced the Arab political thought and discourse from colonialism to modernity. A main advantage of exploring such personal views is that it offers the qualitative researcher some opportunities to establish a fine-grained picture of a specific social problem: the complexity of Western translation and its impact on Arab political thought (Robson, 2002).

The second reason is that the “naturalistic” feature of qualitative research can help in examining a certain phenomenon in its natural context (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). More specifically, it facilitates the process of understanding the reality of the social world by uncovering the complex dynamics of Western translation. According to Robson (2002, p. 24), participants are real humans or “actors who have ideas about their world”. A key merit of the naturalistic aspect of qualitative research is that it guides the researcher how to explore tutors' and tutees' views about their own world (with particular reference to their experience of Western translation) more realistically.

The final reason is that the interpretive aspect of qualitative research enables the researcher to establish a better understanding of key relevant issues (effects of translating key Western political concepts into Arabic on Arab political thought, how colonial powers manipulate translations and reappropriation and reinterpretation) by interpreting the findings obtained at different stages in a developmental way. This is why the current study is positioned within social constructionism as the research paradigm. In this regard, Richards, (2003, p. 133) stresses that the interpretive value could help the qualitative researcher construct different accounts of the social reality while the exploration is “in progress”. One value of the dynamic process of interpreting findings developmentally is that the researcher could be in a more powerful position to interpret the participants' “social experience” of the effects and ways of Western translation associated with shaping the Arab thought more meaningfully (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

However, qualitative research may be associated with some shortcomings. A notable demerit of the qualitative research paradigm is related to its subjective nature that may make it challenging to transfer or generalize the findings obtained to other translation contexts (Gray, 2004). Unlike quantitative researchers who focus on generalizing their statistical results to other research situations and contexts (population), qualitative researchers are interested in identifying analytical themes or perspectives of the phenomenon under exploration (the complex nature of Western translation). With no doubt, such analytical themes are sometimes criticized as being subjective rather than objective (Robson, 2002).

2.3 Research Approach (Case Study)

2.3.1 Definition

In qualitative research, case study can be used as a principal approach or strategy. A workable definition of case study was provided by Yin (2000, p. 13) who viewed it as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context”. In the present study, the contemporary phenomenon is Western translation and the real-life context is the Arab World. In a similar vein, Zainal (2007) claims that the case study approach explores particular contemporary issues in their real-life settings by helping the qualitative researcher “closely examine the data within a specific context”.

2.3.2 Building a Rationale

Three causes stimulated the researcher to make use of the case study approach. First of all, a number of recent research studies that have explored Western translation issues in shaping the Arab thought have also adopted the case study approach, e.g., (Kotze, 2025; Zeina, 2020). Second, a variety of types are associated with the case study approach: exploratory, collective, comparative, explanatory, illustrative and cumulative. In the current research, two key types are of specific interest:

- Exploratory, for it explores a particular phenomenon in real-life contexts (see, for example, (Yin, 2000).
- Comparative, because it enables the researcher to compare and contrast a host of themes within individual cases, see, for instance (Jensen & Rodgers, 2001).

Finally, the case study approach provides the qualitative researcher with a number of data gathering instruments that play a key role in making sure that the data gained can be credible (valid and reliable). Such instruments include semi-structured interviews and documents, as will be discussed in 3.4. However, the case study approach may be associated with some problems. A possible shortcoming is that this approach does not allow for generalizations, as it is confined with a small number of participants (Stake, 1995).

2.4 Data Collection Tools

2.4.1 Triangulation

In the current study, two data collection tools are used: semi-structured interviews and documents to establish data triangulation that mainly aims at ensuring that the data gathered are valid and reliable. For instance, Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, (2000, p. 112) regard data triangulation as “the use of two or more methods in the study of some aspect of human behavior”. One vital advantage of triangulation is that data collection tools can be complementary to boost the reliability of the data obtained, see (Gray, 2004). Finally, to offer a better clarification of the concept of triangulation, the researcher argues that two key types of triangulation discussed by Robson (2002, p. 27) are of particular interest in the present study:

- Person triangulation, because data are gathered from different individuals.
- Data triangulation, for data are collected from multiple sources (translation texts and interview transcripts). One value of Robson’s kinds of triangulation is to foster the consistency of different accounts of reality.

2.4.2 Ethical Issues

In this study, the qualitative researcher is fully aware of the value of achieving particular ethical issues when employing such data collection tools as interviews and documents. Anonymity is of particular interest in the present study. It could be achieved by giving participants fictional names see (Robson, 2002; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, Research Methods in Education, 2000). In this regard, such names as Sally and Mulham are pseudonyms. Participants were also clearly informed at the beginning of the study that their names would be anonymous when writing up the study. Another key ethical issue was confidentiality that could be achieved by stressing that all the data gained would be

only used for research purposes (Gray, 2004). Because respondent confidentiality could be a potential challenge while presenting rich, detailed accounts of information, participants were interviewed individually. In addition, at the beginning of the interviews, participants were clearly informed that all the data gained would be confidential, private and used only for research purposes. A further ethical concern is associated with informed consent where the researcher will obtain it by revealing the following details: the purpose of the study, research approach, who will access the raw data and for what purpose, risks to the subjects, anticipated benefits for the subjects, the importance of voluntariness and statement offering to answer the subject's questions (Badampudi, Fotrousi, Cartaxo, & Usman, 2022, p. 3). It is very important to make sure that participants understand the actual implications of their participation in the study because it is one of the cornerstones of ethics in business research. Finally, one benefit of guaranteeing both anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent in the current study is that participants' responses would be honest and frank, especially when it comes to sensitive questions (Bryman, 2004). Put differently, they were sincere when voicing their personal opinions of the complex nature of Western translation and its impact on shaping the Arab thought.

2.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

According to Marks (2020, p. 27), interviewing may be construed as “the most widely used method employed in qualitative research and it has formed the basis for many prominent studies in the social and behavioural sciences”. A helpful definition of an interview is provided by Denzin & Lincoln (1994, p. 353) as “a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening”. Three types of interviewing were identified by Bryman (2004): structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The degree of structuring in interviewing usually depends on the investigator's approach and purpose of the study. While structured interviewing is quantitatively oriented, because it seeks to collect objective data for survey purposes, semi-structured and unstructured types of interviewing are qualitatively based, for they aim at “exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 29). The researcher seeks to employ semi-structured interviews that lie between the completely structured and the completely unstructured interviewing forms due to the following three reasons.

Firstly, semi-structured interviewing can be considered an important tool whose open-ended questions can help the researcher explore both employees and their managers' personal "opinions" and reveal "subjective meanings" that are related to "concepts or events" (Gray, 2004, p. 2017). Moreover, it was claimed by Berg (2007) that semi-structured interviewing is enlightening, because it offers participants more opportunities to "speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings". Marks (2020, p. 36) gave an important caveat that this kind of interviewing should be "carefully designed to elicit the interviewee's ideas and opinions on the topic of interest".

Secondly, semi-structured interviewing could give the researcher sufficient flexibility to allow their interviewees to enjoy more "power and control over the course of the interview..." (Nunan, 1992, p. 150). One benefit of this leeway is that it encourages them to interview his participants face to face in an interactive way. In other words, unlike the structured interview, which is usually inflexible because of the standardization element, the semi-structured one is more informal and conversational (Bryman, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In a similar context, Marks (2020, p. 35) critiqued structured interview as being standardized and rigid because it "does not use prompts and provides very little scope for follow-up questions to investigate responses which warrant more depth and detail". Semi structured interviews help the researcher ask follow up questions to check for understanding and to probe interesting areas.

Finally, semi-structured interviewing is very convenient, as it provides the researcher with an interview guide (checklist) that could be seen as a written agenda, including a number of topics and questions set up according to a specific order. As Bryman (2004, p. 471) mentioned: "the researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply". To identify the actual constituents of the interview guide, the researcher decided to make use of Robson's (2002, p. 278) sections:

- Introductory comments.
- List of topic headings and possibly key questions to ask under these headings.
- Set of associated prompts.
- Closing comment

The elements of this guide can play an important role in making the interview more communicative, i.e. respondents will be more encouraged to answer in their own terms than the structured interview could allow (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2023) (Alshenqeeti, 2014); (Cooper & Schindler, 2014); (Ruslin, Abdul Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022). In this context, the researcher is inspired by Berg's (2007, p. 39) assumption that the interview guide "allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study".

On the contrary, some researchers claimed semi-structured interviewing could be problematic because it might be associated with a number of challenges (Marks, 2020; Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2004). A main challenge of this approach is mentioned by O'Leary (2004, p. 162) who regarded the process of conducting interviews as a challenging communicative activity because it is "much more complex than simply asking a question and taking notes of an answer". The researcher of this study confronted the following three difficulties.

The first challenge is that employing semi-structured interviews is construed as a very time and energy demanding task due in that the researcher spent a lot of time and exerted a lot of effort to prepare, design questions, pilot the questions, establish rapport, explain ethics, probe, and record (Creswell, 2014). This shortcoming matches well with Grinnell's (1988, p. 270) claim that a clear downside of qualitative interviewing is concerned with its "high cost and the considerable amount of time involved". Marks (2020, p. 40) added that the process of transcribing "interviews (turning the interview into a written form) is highly labour-intensive". Her advice is of crucial importance in this study: "You may have to spend a lot of time accessing and recruiting participants. Do not underestimate the amount of time that this process may take... As researchers, we always underestimate the amount of time that it takes to find interview participants!" (p. 32).

The second difficulty is that while piloting the semi-structured interviews, the influence of the researcher as an interviewer could have a direct effect on the respondents and even sometimes make them unable to voice their personal opinions very well. This was noticeable in the case of body language (eye contact), and in cases where the question was asked quickly without giving the respondent the opportunity to express her/himself

adequately (Grinnel, 1988, p. 273). It is important to stress that such factors as the interviewer's gender, age, status, language, ethnic group, class, race and physical appearance can influence the quality of the interviewee's responses (Bryman, 2012; Gray, 2004). According to Ruslin, Abdul Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam (2022, p. 28), "it is the issue of the interviewees' judgments hidden from the researcher (subjectivity: interviewer bias)". For instance, when it comes to the language factor, since English is not their first language, some participants had some difficulty in expressing themselves well during the interview to the extent they found themselves under a lot of pressure. They had to use Arabic to facilitate the process of interviewing.

The final difficulty is that affectively worded questions could have a direct influence on answering such questions effectively. These questions could be sensitive because they contain emotional words which provoke "an emotional response that is usually negative" (Berg, 2004, p. 89). A good example of an affective word is "why". Nguyen (2015) went on to argue that some participants may be ashamed or hesitant to talk about "obvious" topics or subjects because of the issue of sensitivity. Adams (2015, p. 500) gave the following caveat when conducting semi-structured interviews that "if the topics covered are at all sensitive, respondents may be inhibited by a recording device, even if complete confidentiality is promised and consent is given; some people forget the recorder is running, but others stay wary".

Before considering the stage of preparing the semi-structured interviews, it is important to discuss the sample. The researcher of this study decided to employ the convenience sampling strategy to conduct the interviews with the participants in the Arab world. The main reason for choosing this non-probability sampling strategy is that it can be an accidental or availability sample that concentrates on easily reachable participants. It is "simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility" (Bryman, 2012, p. 201). As Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, (2000, p. 102) declared earlier, convenience sampling is based on selecting those interviewees who are close and willing to participate in the research process until sufficient data have been collected. Therefore, some researchers recommend this kind of sampling perhaps because they "simply take cases that are easily accessed" (Canduela & Raeside, 2020, p. 95).

The semi-structured guide see Appendix (A) was employed to answer the three research questions. The respondents were informed that all the data obtained will be private, confidential and mainly used for research purposes. Interviews took between 30-45 minutes. The interviews were documented via mobile phone.

2.4.4 Documents (Textual Analysis)

A textual analysis of at least 30 written (historical texts, colonial documents, modern political texts, and writings of Arab intellectuals) and virtual (media articles, social media posts) of Western translations will be used to determine the impact of such translations on shaping the Arab thought and trace the translation of key political terms. These documents can be seen as useful documents in qualitative research. Many qualitative researchers claim that documents are beneficial for exploring a specific social problem (Western translations) in real-life contexts (the Arab world). In the present study, the researcher has been inspired by Atkinson's & Coffey's (1997, p. 47) argument that it would be challenging to investigate a research phenomenon effectively and sufficiently without considering documents, which can be seen as "social facts" that are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways. In his famous handbook on qualitative research documents, Scott (1990, p. 5) defined a document as "an artifact which has as its central feature an inscribed text." Bowen (2009, p. 27) argued that documents are "texts (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention". Koshy (2009, p. 96) regarded documents as "illuminating", because they "can often provide relevant evidence and are very useful for constructing the whole picture".

Two main reasons can be discussed behind using documents. The first reason that motivated the researcher to use documents is related to complementarities. According to Flick (1998, p. 246), qualitative researchers use documents as "a complementary strategy to other methods" in their research. In this respect, the researcher seeks to employ documents to complement the other data collection tool: semi-structured interviews. Translated texts can be seen as textual documents that may substantiate the data gained from other data collection tools and consequently achieve triangulation. Koshy (2009, p. 96) added that using documents as a complementary tool in qualitative research "can provide insights into a situation where research takes place".

Another key reason is associated with their exactness and coverage. For instance, Merriam (1998, p. 118) stressed that documents are powerful, because they “can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem”. Merriam's point matches well with Bowen's (2009) claim that documents can provide background information and broad coverage of data, and are therefore helpful in contextualizing one’s research within its field. Importantly, Bryman (2012, p. 562) suggested four criteria to evaluate the exactness and coverage of documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. In the current study, the translated texts can be seen as authentic documents because they are not initially written for research purposes. They are credible because they are not fabricated. They are also meaningful and representative, for they can uncover the social reality of Western translations.

However, documents are criticized by some qualitative researchers as being disadvantageous. A main limitation of using documents is connected with "biased selectivity" (Yin, 1994, p. 80). In this regard, Koshy (2009, p. 96) gave a useful caveat that subjective “choices may affect the type of documents collected”.

2.5 Data Analysis

2.5.1 The Content Analysis Technique

To offer a workable and comprehensive definition of the content analysis technique, it is helpful to discuss whether it is used quantitatively or qualitatively. Some investigators argue that this technique is mainly suitable for analyzing quantitative data because it is an objective and systematic tool. One key advantage of this tool is that it makes it viable to count the number of categories and subcategories inherent in a specific context (Silverman, 2001). On the other hand, some qualitative researchers believe that the content analysis technique can be widely employed in qualitative data. For instance, Hsieh & Shannon (2005, p.1278) contend that this technique can be approached qualitatively because it focuses on “the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of identifying themes or patterns”.

2.5.2 Building a Rationale

The content analysis technique is used to analyze the qualitative data gathered from interviews and documents. Three reasons have motivated the researcher to use this

technique. First, content analysis is largely based on textual data. All the data will be analyzed in the form of a text: interview transcripts, Western translations (Robson, 2002). Second, this technique is “highly flexible” because the qualitative researcher can apply it to “a wide variety of different kinds of unstructured textual information” (Bryman, 2012, p. 304). In the current study, this variety can be manifested in such texts as interview transcripts and translated texts. However, one disadvantage of this technique is that it highly depends on subjectivity of analyzing and interpreting the data gained.

2.5.3 Procedures

The Steps of Analyzing the Interview Data

In an attempt to analyze the data gained from the qualitative interviews, the researcher concentrated on the following seven steps:

1. The interviews were transcribed as a whole.
2. The interview transcripts were viewed as individual cases.
3. It was more convenient to analyze the tutors’ transcripts first because they were more involved in the research and their expertise was very enlightening.
4. After reading the transcripts a number of times, the data were directly categorized in accordance with the predetermined or predefined categories.
5. To identify relevant emerging themes, each predetermined category was coded.
6. To look for relevant links. A number of similarities and differences among participants were identified.
7. Such ethical issues as anonymity and confidentiality were met by giving the participants pseudonyms.

The Steps of Analyzing Documents

To analyze documents, four main steps were followed:

The translated texts were read several times.

- To differentiate the translated texts, the source from which they were gathered.
- The participants who translated the texts were given fictional names to achieve anonymity.
- The different translations of key political terms are compared to identify shifts in meaning and interpretation over time.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, the main methodological concerns are taken into account. After discussing the reasons behind choosing qualitative research as a research field, the researcher focused on how exploratory and comparative case study could function as a useful research tradition. After that, some emphasis was placed on how semi-structured interviews and documents could help the qualitative researcher to gather some valid and reliable data about the complexity of Western translation. Finally, a useful rationale was built behind selecting the content analysis technique as a workable way or strategy to analyze the qualitative data obtained from interview and transcripts and translated texts.

Chapter Three

Findings

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to report the key findings and insights gained from analyzing the qualitative data gathered in the current study. It also seeks to analytically interpret such findings by giving quotations from participants' interview transcripts (see 3.4.3) and examples from documents that answered the three research questions (see 1.4.):

1. What are the effects of translating key Western political concepts into Arabic on Arab political thought?
2. How could colonial powers manipulate translations to serve their interests during the colonial period?
3. What are the main ways used by Arab intellectuals and political leaders to reappropriate and reinterpret these concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts?

This chapter consists of three main parts. The first part focuses on the participants' views of the effects of translating key Western political concepts into Arabic on Arab political thought. The second part considers the tools used by the colonial powers to manipulate translations to serve their interests during the colonial period. The final part handles the practical strategies used by Arab intellectuals and political leaders to reappropriate and reinterpret these concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts. To ensure transparency, it is important to develop a system of referencing the data extracts. This system shows how all quotations can in principle be traced back to a specific data source. The ten participants are given numbers.

3.2 Effects of Translating Key Western Political Concepts into Arabic on Arab Political Thought

An interesting theme in semi-structured interviews is that some participants view translating Western political concepts as a vivid process that can have some direct effects on shaping the Arab thought. Most participants agreed that this process is confusing and negative because it is somehow biased and fabricated. According to participant [10], "there is a bias and it does not reflect real issues and thoughts of other countries, but the translation reflects the Western perceptions and thoughts that they want to spread". Some

evidence can be gained from analysing previous Western translations that “translate the Arabic Islamic term Jihad into English as Holy War which bears terrifying, extremist and violent implications for a Western audience” (Omar, 2020, p. 25). The negative effects of this process can be grouped into two categories: ideological and socio-cultural. A main benefit of identifying such effects may play an important role in establishing a better understanding of this critical issue in Arab and Islamic contexts.

Ideological Effects

According to Van Dijk (1998, p. 48), ideology is “the set of factual and evaluative beliefs—that is the knowledge and the opinions of a group”. Upon analysing the data in the interview, this study has discovered that Western political translation can have some negative ideological influences because its political connotations can affect the manner of thinking, ideas by establishing the foundation of a biased political system. For example, Participant [5] declares “Western political translation often reflects an ideological bias, shaping narratives to align with specific agendas. As a student, I see it as more than language transfer—it's a tool of influence”. In a similar vein, Participant [3] points out that this kind of translation “distorts Arab thought by imposing foreign meanings, frameworks, and values that undermine local concepts and self-understanding”. Some evidence can be gained from textual analysis. For instance, the role ideology is clear in the translation of the term “democracy” as “rule by the people” as evident in the American President George W. Bush’s speech to invade Iraq: “We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world” (Saleh, 2016, p. 433). However, this term can have different connotations in some Arab and Islamic contexts. This can subtly alter the meaning and create a different impression of the original text. This is why Said (1979) stresses that the West has spoken for the rest of the world creating an untrue image about it. It can be gathered that ideology as a fundamental factor in translation controls political translation because it is a set of beliefs and values which inform an individual’s or institution’s view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts and other aspects of experience. Phillipson (2003) identifies three ideological ways used by Western political translators to reveal the sense of superiority adopted by the West. First of all, it is important to show the oppressor, as democratic, liberal and civilized. Secondly, there is a need to undermine the primitive oppressed, namely the Orient or East that needs to be guided by the West. Finally, there

is a relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed as a big brother intimate relationship where the oppressor is entitled to guide and give advice to their younger brother, the oppressed.

Socio-cultural Effects

It is argued by Bassnett (2007, p. 23) that there is a clear connection between translation and culture simply because translation is not only “about language, but translation is also about culture, for the two are inseparable”. A translator’s choices are often governed by their previous knowledge, which is naturally derived from their cultural heritage and social conventions and norms. Therefore, it is a dishonest act of a translator or even a crime to translate the original text out of its original context or culture. In the current study, the findings of the interviews show that Western political translation is characterized by lack of integrity because their translations can have different meanings and implications in different cultural contexts. In this regard, Participant [6] indicates that “Western political translation is sometimes misleading and challenging because it reflects political agendas. It doesn't always show the original meaning honestly”. A useful example can be obtained from the translation of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* in light of Narrative theory. In the source text, the narrator of the novel describes the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed as ابن الإنجليز المدلل / which is translated as “He was the spoilt child of the English” (Salih, 2005, p. 52). It seems that choosing the word “child” instead of “son” reveals how the protagonist, who is supposed to be powerful to face the West is seen as immature, naïve and feeble because he is not capable of confronting the colonizing West. Similarly, Participant [9] mentions that “I think Western political translation is often misleading and sometimes hypocritic. It changes the real meaning and makes things confusing or not honest”. Although the Arab and Western cultures may overlap, they may conflict because larger gaps result in misunderstandings and misinterpretations owing to lack of contextualization.

According to Baker (1998, p.21), culture-specific concepts are often difficult to define because they are viewed as "source-language words [which] express concepts totally unknown in the target culture". Such concepts are the essence of any language and the most challenging to deal with. Because of political globalization headed by America, as a superior hegemony, translating the concept “human rights” could be confusing because

it is culture-specific. Unfortunately, it is seen as a slogan used by the West to control the Third World that should be globalized, modernized and civilized by offering salvation from all the political and social problems in this developing arena. Based on the participants' previous experience of analysing existing colonial translations, some evidence can be gathered. This insight matches well with what Participant [10] points out: Western political translation "gives wrong ideas about our culture. People may believe lies or not understand the real truth. It makes Arab readers get wrong ideas about their own politics. It can confuse people and make them not trust the real news. It also can harm how we see our culture and history". No wonder, translating the concept "human rights" by the West may lead to imprecision or misinterpretation in the Arab and Islamic world because it is culture-specific.

3.3 Tools of Manipulating Translations to Serve Colonials' Interests During the Colonial Period

Hermans (1985, p. 11) claims that "All translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose". This manipulation can be either conscious or unconscious. In particular, Western translation is mainly conscious because this kind of manipulation is "intentionally carried out by the translator because of various social, political and other factors" (Farahzad, 1999, p. 153). Before discussing the actual tools used by Western translators to achieve some manipulation, an interesting emerging theme is associated with the actual reasons behind this phenomenon. A main reason is that manipulation can distort understanding about the Arab and Islamic culture that can result in a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the original text's message. For example, Participant [3] declares that "Colonial powers manipulated political translation to serve their political interests. They wanted to make Arabs and Muslims look bad and less important. This helped them feel and act like they were better and more powerful". The second reason is that manipulation has a particular political agenda to promote specific political agendas or ideologies, potentially influencing public opinion and political discourse. In this context, Participant [5] pinpoints that Western political translation aims "to control narratives, justify domination, and reshape native political thought in ways that serve their interests". As already mentioned above, the Western translation of such political words as "democracy" and "human rights" can be manipulated to serve particular political agendas. Another good example can be taken from the translation of *Season of*

Migration to the North in light of Narrative theory. In the source text, one of the Sudanese characters named Mansour rhetorically asks Richard, an English man: ماذا / أعطيتمونا غير / حفة من الشركات الاستعمارية نذفت دماءنا وما تزال In the target text, the translator chooses “capitalist companies” to reframe and manipulate the concept شركات/استعمارية colonial companies (Salih, 2005, pp. 56-60). Of course, this translation manipulates the narrative to support the West or North and make the South or Orient weaker, and this clearly shows how the translator becomes a colonial agent.

When it comes to the tools of manipulation, it is discovered that Western translators marginalize the Arabic language and enhance the position of English. A good example is Participant [2] that asserts that “Colonizers elevated their own languages as the language of power, governance and modernity while reducing Arabic to a folkloric or religious role, undermining its intellectual and political authority”. Likewise, Participant [4] indicates that “Colonial powers use political translation to impose Western culture and make Arabic less important. They create confusion and cause wrong meanings to change how people think”. Analyzing translated texts from existing research, it is found out that such tools as omission, addition and reformulation are usually employed by Westerners to manipulate political translation. A useful example can be taken from Omar’s study (2020).

Source Text:

[Haniyeh’s الشعب الفلسطيني... أصبح... أكثر قوةً وأشدَّ عزيمةً وأقوى إرادةً وتمسكاً بحقوقه وثوابته

Statement]

Target Text: “We are stronger, and more determined, and have more will, and we will hold onto our rights even more than before,” Haniyeh said. [Translated by Fox News]

It can be argued here that due to a particular ideological agenda, the reporter of Fox News manipulates the translation of Haniyeh’s Statement by omitting the term “the Palestinian people” and replacing it by the subject pronoun “we” in the directly quoted statement. The reporter also adds the phrase “his movement” to refer to Hamas. This instance clearly shows how Fox News, reframes the translation to support Israel and criticize the Islamist ideology represented by Hamas that is seen by the West as a terrorist and extremist

Islamic movement. It can be gathered that Palestinians are not one unity; they are divided with various ideologies and organizations. This finding matches well with Baker's (2006) claim that ideologically motivated manipulations enforced by the agency can push the translator to reframe (renarrate) a different image of the story.

3.4 Practical Strategies for Reappropriating and Reinterpreting Political Concepts in Post-colonial and Modern Contexts

A useful pre-determined point that emerged from answering the third research question is associated with exploring a variety of viable strategies or ways that could be used to reappropriate and reinterpret political concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts. According to Participant [4], "Reappropriation helps groups take back words or symbols that were used against them and give them positive meaning. It empowers people and strengthens their identity and culture". Analysing the interviews, it is found out that these strategies can be classified into the following: adaptation, domestication and foreignization. In this regard, Participant [8] declares that "Practical strategies like adaptation, domestication, and foreignization help balance Western political translations to suit Arab post-colonial contexts". One merit of figuring out such strategies is that they play a crucial role in showing how the process of reinterpreting political concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts could be approached in a strategic manner because it can "empower groups by turning negative words into positive ones, changing meanings to reduce harm, and strengthening cultural identity" (Participant 10). Salih (2005), as a postcolonial, writes his novel as a form of resistance because he aims at establishing a counter-discourse against the colonial North. In the source text, the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed addresses English people (colonizers) bravely: (إني جئتكم غازيا) The translator, however, chooses the word 'conqueror' instead of 'invader' to render the translation as "I have come to you as a conqueror".

3.4.1 Adaptation

Vinay & Darbelnet (1977, pp.52-53) claim that adaptation can be construed as an important strategy “when the situation in which the original text speaks is completely absent from the target language, or contrary to the etiquette and traditions of the speakers of this language”. This requires the translator to create a situation in the target culture that is equivalent to the first, meaning that the equivalence in this case is an equivalence in the positions and not in the meanings or structures. According to Participant [6], “It depends on the aim, audience, and policy. Therefore, adaptation can be a mediating strategy in this case”. A beneficial example of adaptation can be gained from Al-Qinai’s study (2005) that translates the term transliterates the English word “Congress” into "كونغرس". This is called orthographic adaptation because it involves “the transcription or transliteration of SL references by using TL characters. In such instances, the translator intervenes in order to introduce a new name for which the TL has no established equivalent” (p. 506).

3.4.2 Domestication

It is argued by Venuti (2004) that domestication is an essential strategy that aims at handling the foreign ideology of the source text and its cultural values via rewriting the text in terms of what is familiar and unchallenging to target norms. Put differently, this strategy can make the translated foreign text more familiar and accessible to the target audience by minimizing cultural differences. In this regard, Participant [1] mentions that “Critical and creative strategies are required in order to challenge Eurocentric frameworks and make political language more reflective of local histories, cultures, and epistemologies. Domestication is a strategy that may be used”. This finding can be substantiated by analysing the concept of Jihad that is viewed as a complex phenomenon because it is a profound religious and cultural value in Islam. Some post-colonial translators domesticated the concept of Jihad by translating it as a synonym: “holy war” or “fight in Allah’s name”. It seems clear that this translation does not involve a full range of connotations.

3.4.3 Foreignization

According to Zeina (2020), foreignization is a useful strategy that retains information from the source text and involves deliberately breaking the conventions of the target language to preserve its meaning. It is the opposite of domestication because it maintains the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of the source text. This is why Participant [8] stresses that “political translation should be handled with great care, ensuring honesty and faithfulness to the original message without distortion. It is important for translators to avoid altering meanings for political gain, as conveying truth with integrity is a moral and ethical responsibility”. When foreignizing the concept “Jihad”, post-colonial translators should be aware that there is a strong need to retain it in its original Arabic form by offering explanations to achieve some contextualization to refer to striving for a noble cause with determination. A main advantage of this strategy is that it avoids any stereotyping that “Jihad has come to be equated with terrorism, barbarism, and violence [and its meaning] has been distorted, misrepresented, and misappropriated for political and economic aims” (Alsawy, 2020, p. 48).

3.5 Summary

This chapter has aimed to report the key findings that come out from analysing the qualitative data in an interpretive way. It started by highlighting the main effects of translating Western politics on determining Arab thought. Then, it moved to present the major tools employed by the colonial powers to manipulate translations and empower the West: omission, addition and reformulation. Finally, it took into consideration the practical strategies used by Arab intellectuals and political leaders to reappropriate and reinterpret these concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts: adaptation, domestication and foreignization

Chapter Four

Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the final analytical and synthetic discussion that connects the threads of the research, moving beyond a mere summary of the findings to their interpretation and contextualization within a broader framework. The central task here is to provide an in-depth critical reading of the presented results by extracting key insights, deconstructing their implications, and then comparing and integrating these insights to elicit deeper and more complex patterns. This chapter also engages these insights in dialogue with previous contributions to this field of knowledge, discussed in the literature review, to determine the extent to which this study confirms, updates, or even challenges those contributions. This is followed by the presentation of final conclusions that reframe the essence of the study and highlight its original contribution. The chapter's role extends beyond academic reflection to proposing clear and specific practical recommendations aimed at harnessing the study's insights to improve professional translation practices and enhance the general understanding of interdiscursive interaction. Finally, the chapter concludes with an objective critical assessment of the research's limitations, while also opening avenues for future studies that can further explore avenues not covered here.

4.2 Discussion

To discuss the findings of the current study in some depth, it would be important to reiterate the main purpose of it: exploring the complex nature of how Western translations of political concepts have influenced Arab political thought and discourse from colonialism to modernity. To uncover the complexity of this process, three notable matters can be discussed. The first important matter is that the practice of translating Western political concepts can have negative effects on shaping the Arab thought, including ideological and socio-cultural translating. So, ideology and culture are two essential components of Western political translations (Baker, 2016). This insight matches well with Said's early argument that Western political translation shapes the Arab and Islamic identity by establishing the asymmetrical relations of power that are part and parcel of colonialism: while the Western people are superior, Arabs and Muslims

are inferior. It can be gathered that Western voices shape Arabs' and Muslims' voices. In Said's words:

Western representations of these 'other' indigenous peoples who had their stories to tell were simply drowned out. The stories the West developed about the character of these peoples, their politics and cultures, arguably tell us more about the Western beliefs and prejudices than they reflect the reality of those other worlds (Said, 1978), quoted in (Daddow, 2013, p. 233)

The second vital issue is that Western political translation of some concepts is often based on manipulations that are justified by the West to achieve some particular political agendas (domination, power and control) in the Arab and Islamic World. This result is in line with Munday's (2006, p. 134) assertion that shows how "translation [has] always played an active role in the colonization process and dissemination of an ideologically motivated image of colonized people". The study conducted by Allawzi, Ammari, & Awwad (2024) argued that Western translation aims at manipulating the reader by fabricating a narrative different from the one produced in the source text to empower the colonial North and look down at the backward and feeble South. To manipulate political translation, Westerns and orientalist employ mainly deletion and addition as discovered in the current study. This finding is somehow consistent with Abuzeid's (2014, p.70) claim that the Western "translator deploys both the deletion and addition tools. He/she tries to change negatively their ideologies towards the Arabs and Muslims and ... distort and manipulate reality, because he may be under the pressure of a series of constraints imposed upon him/her by the culture to which he belongs".

The final significant point is associated with the necessity of accurate and culturally sensitive translations in fostering constructive political dialogue through reappropriation that helps empower groups by turning negative words into positive ones to empower Arab and Islamic cultural identities. Accordingly, post-colonial translators help Arab and Islamic communities to define political and cultural terms on their own terms, breaking away from colonial or foreign interpretations. An important discovery is that there is an urgent need to identify a variety of practical strategies or ways to reinterpret political concepts in post-colonial and modern contexts (Omar, 2020). Three main strategies are identified: adaptation, domestication and foreignization (Zaina, 2020). In particular, Jacquemond (1992, p. 3) argued that domestication as a workable translation strategy "is

a clear sign of cultural independence from the west, which remained preserved among the educated Arab elite until the beginning of 20th century despite political and economic domination”. Therefore, post-colonial translation can be seen as “a resource for and a product of resistance and activism, challenging the dominant culture from within by creating new points of reference. The authors, target audiences, and translators (and publishers) engage in dynamic processes in negotiating and constructing meanings” (Hsieh, 2020, p. 9).

4.3 Concluding Remarks

To close, this study makes a genuine contribution to the field of translation because it is viewed as one of the pioneering studies that have been interested in investigating the complexity of Western translation of political concepts and its impact on shaping Arab and Islamic thought and identity both ideologically and culturally by using such manipulation tools as addition and omission. To avoid fabrication and confusion, the study highlights the value of using such strategies as domestication and foreignization that can downplay the negative effects of Western translation on shaping Arabs’ and Muslims’ perceptions and views of their own world. At the personal level, the findings of the current study could teach the researcher a number of useful lessons when working on Western translation of political terms. As a trainer of translation, he could originate some theory gained from the insights. He is more aware of the negative ideological and cultural effects of Western translation, tools of manipulations and strategies to handle such translation dilemmas in Arab and Islamic contexts. This awareness will help him analyze his trainees’ target needs, choose relevant materials, design interesting and practical tasks and identify workable strategies to meet their expectations.

Three beneficial recommendations can be made, relying on discussing the findings gained from analyzing interviews and documents. The main objective of such recommendations is to establish a better understanding of how Western political translation can shape Arab and Islamic identity negatively at the ideological and cultural levels. First of all, it is recommended to raise translators’ awareness of the potential role of ideology and culture in dictating not only Arab and Islamic identities but also other inferior and dominated cultures. Secondly, there is a strong need to train translators on how to detect manipulation by uncovering its reasons and tools. The last recommendation is that it is necessary to make use of Baker’s (2016, p. 159) “narrative strategy” that can enhance

both domestication and foreignization because this narrative is “being elaborated within and across texts allows us to engage with the potential motives for both repeated and individual (one-off) choices, and encourages us to look beyond the text into the political and social context of interaction”.

With no doubt, no research is beyond limitation, i.e., no research is perfect. In the current study, four main limitations can be considered. First of all, lack of adequate research literature in this critical area could be seen as a major shortcoming. Little empirical research has been published on the complexity of Western translation of political concepts and its impact on shaping Arab and Islamic thought. Secondly, lack of sufficient time could have a direct influence on the process of conducting some vivid and in-depth investigation on the complexities of this translation process. In this respect, it took the translator plenty of time to find participants and analyze the qualitative data gathered by means of such tools as semi-structured interviews and documents. The last limitation is that the number of participants is limited because the researcher has faced a number of contextual difficulties to convince participants to actively participate in the study. The main reason behind their reluctance to participate could be closely associated with the sensitive nature of the research topic itself. Finally, because the current research is a qualitative small-scale study, it is somehow challenging to replicate or generalize the findings obtained to other research contexts. It is important to note that the role of a qualitative researcher could be biased, mainly because he is subjectively engaged at every stage of the investigation process. In this respect, Bryman’s, (2012, p. 405) argument is of particular importance:

Precisely because it is unstructured and often reliant upon the qualitative researcher’s ingenuity, it is almost impossible to conduct a true replication, since there are hardly any standard procedures to be followed. In qualitative research, the investigator him- or herself is the main instrument of data collection, so that what is observed and heard and also what the researcher decides to concentrate upon are very much products of his or her predilections.

The main aim of the suggestions for future research is to develop a more vivid and insightful understanding of how Western translation of political concepts as a complex task in shaping Arab and Islamic identity.

In the current study, three inspiring future research points can be tackled:

1. Since the researcher has been interested in exploring the complex dynamics of this translation process, more detailed research is needed on such critical and relevant issues as ideology, manipulation and narrative theory.
2. To deal with the problem of the low number of participants, more research should be conducted in other Arab and Islamic contexts.
3. To collect more valid and reliable data, there is a strong need to employ more tools, such as questionnaires. One advantage of using questionnaires is that the quantitative findings obtained may be replicated or generalized to other Arab and Islamic contexts.

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Appendices
Appendix (A)
Semi-structured Interview Guide

The Interview Guide

- Introductory Comments

Dear Participant,

My name is ??, and I am a Masters student doing applied linguistics and translation at the University of??. Now, I am conducting a research study on investigating the role of translation in shaping Arab political thought from colonialism to modernity. Thank you very much for accepting to participate in the interview. The interview will be recorded and all the information you will provide will be only used for research purposes and treated confidentially and anonymously when writing up the current study.

- Topic Headings

1- Effects of Translating Key Western Political Concepts on Arab Political Thought

-What do you think of Western political translation?

- What are the features of Western political translation?

challenging

hypocritic

misleading

honest

- What are the influences of Western political translation on shaping the Arab thought?

ideological

social

cultural

psycho-affective

- What are the disadvantages of Western political translation on Arab thinking?

2- Ways Used by Colonial Powers to Manipulate Political Translations

- Why did colonial powers manipulate political translation?

political interests

dehumanizing Arabs and Muslims

Achieving superiority

- How could colonial powers manipulate political translation?

imposing the Western culture

marginalizing Arabic

confusions and misinterpretation

3- Strategies Used by Arab Intellectuals and Political Leaders to Reinterpret Western Political Translation in Post-colonial and Modern Contexts?

- What are the advantages of reappropriation?
- What are the practical strategies for reinterpreting Western political translation in post-colonial and modern contexts?

adaptation

domestication

foreignization

Concluding comments

- **Would you like to add anything?**



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الفكر السياسي العربي في فترة ما بعد الاستعمار

اعداد

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قدمت هذه الأطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات درجة الماجستير في اللغويات التطبيقية والترجمة بكلية
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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الدور المحوري للترجمة في تشكيل الفكر السياسي العربي من الحقبة الاستعمارية إلى الحداثة من خلال استكشاف الآليات التي استخدمت فيها الترجمة كأداة لتشكيل الوعي السياسي وإعادة صياغة المفاهيم في السياق العربي، وقد اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية البحث النوعي مع استخدام دراسة الحالة وجمع البيانات عبر المقابلات شبه المنظمة والتحليل النصي للوثائق التاريخية والنصوص المعاصرة حيث تم تحليل البيانات بتقنيات تحليل المحتوى والتحليل النقدي، وكشفت النتائج عن التأثيرات الأيديولوجية والاجتماعية والثقافية للترجمة السياسية الغربية على الفكر السياسي العربي وآليات التلاعب بالترجمة خلال الفترة الاستعمارية عبر الحذف والإضافة وإعادة الصياغة واستراتيجيات إعادة التملك وإعادة التفسير في السياقات ما بعد الاستعمارية من خلال التكيف والتوطين والأجندة، وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الترجمة لم تكن مجرد نقل لغوي محايد بل كانت أداة فعالة في تشكيل الخطاب السياسي والهوية الثقافية وأكدت على أهمية تطوير ممارسات ترجمة دقيقة وحساسة ثقافياً لتعزيز الحوار السياسي البناء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تشكيل السياسة، الترجمة، الفكر السياسي العربي، الاستعمار إلى الحداثة.