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Translation as a Soft Power to Westernise Local Identities: An Arab Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Translation theory and practice have become so westernised that there is almost one, and one only, way for the flow of information regarding the discipline. In a globalised world, translation can be used as a form of soft power to serve the dominant power's interests. This study aims to investigate translation theory and practice as a soft power from an Arab point of view. In so doing, it raises questions about the extent to which translation as such is westernized, and about the implications for local identities. The study's theoretical framework is based on Venuti's concepts of 'the scandals of translation', 'domestication' and 'foreignisation'. It is a qualitative study with different tools of analysis. First, it utilises a descriptive approach to the history of translation theories. Second, it analyses and compares the content of source texts written in the hegemonic language of the Empire, English, and their corresponding target texts in the less hegemonic language, Arabic, and vice versa. The implications are 'scandalous' on the Arab identity and image.

Keywords: Translation, Westernisation, Soft Power, Domestication, Foreignisation

الترجمة كقوة ناعمة لتغريب الهويات المحلية: منظور عربي
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ملخص

تتسم الترجمة اليوم نظرية وممارسة بقدر هائل من التغريب، بحيث أصبح هنالك طريقة تكاد تكون وحيدة لتدفق المعلومات المتعلقة بهذا العلم. وفي ظل العولمة خاصة، أمكن استخدام الترجمة كقوة ناعمة لخدمة مصالح القوة المهيمنة على العالم. من ثم يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الترجمة نظرية وممارسة كقوة ناعمة وأثرها على الهوية المحلية من منظور عربي، ويطرح ثلاثة أسئلة رئيسة: إلى أى مدى تم تغريب نظريات الترجمة ؟ وكذلك إلى أي مدى تم تغريبها كممارسة؟ وما أثر هذا على الهوية المحلية؟ أما إطاره النظري فيرتكز على مفهوم "فضائح الترجمة" the Scandals of Translation و"المحلية" Domestication و"التغريب" Foreignisation كما يطرحه فينوتي Venuti. والبحث دراسة نوعية يتم فيه استخدام أدوات تحليل مختلفة، أولاً المنهج الوصفي لتحليل تاريخ نظريات الترجمة، ثم تحليل محتوى النصوص الأصلية المكتوبة باللغة المهيمنة (الانكليزية) ومقارنتها بترجماتها باللغة الأقل هيمنة (العربية) والعكس، لتحليل الممارسة. ويتوصل البحث في النهاية إلى أن الترجمة استُعملت كقوة ناعمة بشكل شائن له آثاره الوخيمة على الهوية العربية وصورة العرب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة، التغريب، القوة الناعمة، المحلية، التغريب

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the huge bulk of translation research, or the 'flood of scholarly publishing' borrowing Venuti's (2000:333) expression, and despite the spate of definitions and the endless controversies between countless dichotomies such as 'literal/free', 'faithful/unfaithful', 'visibility/invisibility', etc., one may still wonder whether the discipline as a 'science' has been taking shape, or it is just a plethora of information about a globalised form of knowledge flowing in one direction from the West to the non-West. Why should the translator 'transfer' a text 'literally' or 'faithfully' for example and for whose interest would this be? Why should translation be approached as such? The problem is that translation theory and practice are westernised albeit the relatively recent calls for de-Westernisation. Tymoczko demonstrates that the westernised discipline is propagated worldwide as the acceptable authentic form of knowledge: "a local form of knowledge about translation rooted in European languages and dominant European translation history has been promoted broadly and propagated internationally as a universal framework for conceptualizing translation theory and practice" (2010:4). The Eurocentric domination over translation is "an instrument of domination, oppression, and exploitation", she adds (7).

One of the field paradoxes is that many of the Arabs, themselves, have recently become dependent on westernised disciplines and information, overlooking their long history of translation inter alia. Though the excessive activity of translating, translation teaching and translation training in the Arab world today is quite overwhelming, a dysfunctional role of translation is quite disappointing.

Only since the mid-1980s, scholars have started to pay attention to the soft power or role of translated texts in shaping identities and building nations' conceptualisations about the world. The term 'soft power' was first used by Joseph Nye, US international security expert, to explore the changing nature of the US power. The traditional view of power revolves around a hard concept of power that states utilise 'material resources' (tangible assets) to influence others (Schmidt; in Gallarotti 2011:6). So, if hard power uses more direct and coercive methods symbolically or actually, then soft power lies in a state's indirect and non-coercive policies, qualities, and actions in relation to other states (12). Yavuzaslan and Cetin define it as "a handbook in forming a structure by legitimising the use of force for all countries desiring to keep power in their hands"(2016:1). On the other hand, 'identity' is a vague term due to the complexity of factors involved in its formation; but for simplicity, it can be defined as the whole characteristics that distinguish a certain nation or culture from another (Ahmed 2016).

Translation Westernisation seems to be so deeply rooted that any counter-movement may look like the attempts of *Don Quixote*'s Alonso Quixote who decided to be a knight-errant de La Mancha, only to discover he was fighting windmills in the end. Therefore, this study aims to investigate translation theory and practice as a soft power from an Arab point of view. In so doing, it raises three main questions. To what extent are translation theories westernised? To what extent are translation practices westernised? And what are the implications for local identity? The theoretical framework embarks on Venuti's concepts of 'the scandals of translation', 'domestication' and 'foreignisation'. It is a qualitative study with different tools of analysis. First, it utilises a descriptive approach to the history of translation theories. Second, it analyses and compares the content of source texts written in the hegemonic language of Empire, English, and their corresponding target texts in the less hegemonic language, Arabic, and vice versa.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the importance of drawing the attention, not only of scholars and professionals in the field but also of policy-makers, to the dangerous role translation can play in reshaping nations' identities. Moreover, the theoretical and methodological frameworks would hopefully contribute to the discipline theoretically and practically. Finally, the Arab perspective would fill in a gap in the literature on the Arab perspective to translation, an under-researched area.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

II.1 Three Roles of Translation

Translation was traditionally thought of as a simple transfer of messages from one language into another. But, there exists a strong relationship between translation and colonisation as postcolonialists argue. Translation is an imperial tool for conquest and occupation (Robinson 2002:10-13). Translation is not just about understanding the original meaning of a text only, it implies translating across power differentials and concepts of 'third world' and 'first world' (3). In postcolonial studies, translation plays three overlapping roles: as a *colonisation channel* for political dominance, cultural hegemony, economic exploitation, etc.; as a *lightning-rod* which reveals cultural inequalities and the coloniser/colonised power relations after independence; and as a *decolonisation channel* to correct the deformed image about the colonised through reconsidering the already translated literature or translating texts from a postcolonial perspective (31). In fact, Robinson encourages to break the discipline rules set by colonisers (1997:157b). Other perspectives can bring a new array of insights.

II.2 Translation as a Manipulative Activity

Translation is not an innocent process of transferring a text from one language and culture into another. It may involve translation strategies to achieve the hegemonic power's interests and agendas. Bassnett and Trivedi regard translation a 'manipulative activity', performed not innocently nor transparently, and "it rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of *equality* between texts, authors or systems" (1999:2). Translation into European languages is a one-way communication rather than an exchange, resulting in the prevalence of Western norms for centuries and the selection of certain texts for translation (5). This 'shameful history of translation' ignited some extreme reactions like restricting or preventing translation into dominant languages since it perpetuates colonisation (5).

Translation can be a politically-driven process i.e. politics can direct the selection of certain works to be translated into English, for instance, and how the Arabs are represented in these texts, to serve imperial interests. Van Leeuwen explicates that translation is a political activity of cultural identification and representation which may deform an authentic discourse about local identities (2004:16).

II.3 Responding rather than Transferring

Translators often look at themselves as faithful, honest facilitators of communication between parties from different languages and cultures. They may or may not realize the positive or otherwise negative role their translations play in the recipient culture. Hermans and Stecconi wonder how translators think of themselves as 'meek' creatures and of their job "as voluntary servitude, casting themselves in supportive and deferential roles as humble servants or handmaidens obeying their masters, as discreet, unobtrusive and self-denying facilitators, mediators, enablers, go-betweens, bridge-builders and the like" (2002:1). This image has been advocated and harshly imposed on the discipline by the West. Actually, the Western perspective is not necessarily 'the only possible way' to look at translation; researchers need to 're-describe and thus to re-think translation' (2). Hence, Hermans and Stecconi suggest to replace the image of '*transferring*' with that of '*responding*' as this could have resulted in a different path for translation (52). The translator, his translation strategies and his target text respond to specific needs and interests.

II.4 The Origins of Westernisation

Modern Westernisation of the discipline dates back to the mid-twentieth century. Maria Tymoczko (2010) explores the origins of Westernisation and attributes them to two major developments during WWII. First, the intelligence operations needed translation for code cracking (hence linguistic approaches to translation emerged) and the Allies needed it for

propaganda, which helped them in their victory. Second, the EU decision to maintain all the major languages of its members instead of adopting few dominant languages led to the biggest translational activity in the world history with an increasing demand for translation and related trainings. Although the field as such has served local, Eurocentric needs, translation studies have flourished a lot (14).

Indeed the roots of Westernisation can be traced back to the Roman translation of the Bible. The exaltation of literature and literary translation, and the definition of translation as a 'transfer' image, which itself reflects colonialism, are apparently Western concepts, Tymoczko elaborates (2010). She adopts terms like 'postcolonialism', 'power', and 'imperialism' to explain how translation fits into the representation of the other or self to the self or the other, in a colonial context (1999). She attends to translation as possibly a part of a colonial agenda (1999:294). Henceforth, she proposes de-Westernisation through 'enlarging' the role of translation, and 'empowering' translators (2010).

Reviewing the literature on translation as a soft power, it becomes clear that this area is under-researched particularly from an Arab perspective and that there is a dire need for more studies for a better and full understanding of the gigantic role translation can play in different societies.

II.5 Theoretical Framework: Venuti's 'Scandals of Translation'

This section presents the theoretical framework on which the present paper is based. Unfortunately, the 'shameful history of translation' has been the product of translation theorisation and practices that enhance colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Using a shocking title 'The Scandals of Translation', Venuti examines the hegemonic powers' marginalisation of translation, referring to USA and UK particularly (1998). He exposes their practices or 'scandals' of translation and calls for applying the 'ethics of difference' rather than those of sameness to advance current thoughts and think afresh about translation and translating (3).

Traditionally, translation norms, like those offered in Toury's model, are value-laden, which makes it hard for any scientific descriptions. Venuti says that translation laws (primarily linguistic and literary) should be value-free because they are produced to serve cultural and political agendas. Current concepts and rules "include a diverse range of domestic values, beliefs, and social representations which carry ideological force in serving the interests of specific groups" (1998:29) and are followed by many academic and professional translation institutions.

In the decision-making process, translators adopt certain strategies and methods for a purpose. Based on Schleiermacher's essay on translation

methods (1813), Venuti adapted his two translation strategies, 'naturalising' and 'alienating' into 'domesticating' and 'foreignising' (2008). Domestication implies all possible techniques to make the translated text suitable for the target audience culture and taste; the translator becomes invisible in this case. Meanwhile, foreignisation allows the target text to transfer the differences inherent in the source culture and values to the receiving language; the translation does not sound like a work written originally in the target language and the translator is visible. He explains how domestication dominates the strategies of translation into English in USA and UK as a clear reflection of the imbalance of power relations between the colonisers and the colonised; he criticizes domestication because it tailor-makes the source text, ignoring its richness and identity to suit the target audience, i.e. it reduces the original foreign text ethnocentrically for the sake of the receiving language and culture (15). Venuti, who prefers foreignisation, attributes the translator's strategy to the ethics of what to do with a foreign text (19).

It is noteworthy here that the politicisation of translation starts from the selection of a certain text to translate and the rejection of another, then the strategy adopted in the translation. Unfortunately some American and British translations, according to post-colonialists including Venuti (2008:15), have created scandals of translation.

Though Venuti defends foreignisation, he is well-aware of the contradictions of the term (Munday 2013:221). It is a subjective strategy for it entails some domestication too; that's to say, it depends on what the translator decides to translate and how. Also both strategies are highly associated with socio-cultural and historical factors in a certain society at a given time.

III. METHODS

The Aim of the Study:

Translation can be used as soft power to serve the interests of the hegemonic power. From this problem statement, the researcher was able to formulate the aim of the study, which is the investigation of translation theory and practice as a soft power from an Arab point of view.

Research Questions:

In so doing, three main research questions were raised:
1. To what extent are translation theories westernised?
2. To what extent are translation practices westernised?
3. What are the implications for local identity?
The research questions provided a good rationale for dividing the Analysis and Discussion into two subsections: the Westernisation of Translation Theory and the Westernisation of Translation Practice. The implications are tackled simultaneously in the two parts.

To answer the questions, the study followed the following objectives:

1-To review the literature in order to identify the gap in the knowledge and understanding of how the westernisation of translation represents a soft power in the imperial hands;

2-To evaluate how translation theories since Cicero have been westernised;

3-To explore how the practice of English/Arabic translation is westernised through giving some examples from films;

4-To explore how the practice of Arabic/English translation is westernized through giving examples from the translations of some renown Arab male and female writers;

5-To analyse the content of target texts used in the examples and compare it to that of the source texts to decide which translation strategies and methods were used; and

6-To uncover the implications of using translation as a soft power for the Arab identity.

As afore-mentioned, the study derived its theoretical tenets from Venuti (1998)'s perception of the 'scandals of translation'. The analysis was carried out in the light of his two translation strategies, 'domestication' and 'foreignisation'. For simplicity, as Venuti (2008) argues, domestication is a translation strategy that adapts the target text to the target culture and language whereas foreignisation is a strategy that transfers the source values and culture directly into the target audience culture and it feels like a translation.

Since this is a qualitative research, it approached the first part of the study, the Westernisation of theories, through a descriptive methodology, which suits the nature of stating the characteristics of translation theories principally through anthologies and without going into details of why, how and when those characteristics occurred nor tackling laboriously the details of all theories. The descriptive method uses analysis and interpretation. But its sample example(s) may be criticised for not being representative of the whole population. Yet, if the example is carefully picked and its relevance is made clear to the reader, then he can relate easily. In the second part, about the practice itself, tools like content analysis and comparison between source texts and target texts become necessary to analyse and compare the examples.

The researcher was aware of the limitations of this study. For instance, the number of examples could have been increased, but the space and time restrictions on the study limited the examples used for illustration. In fact, the aim was to illustrate the ideas for evidence rather than listing examples. Other methodologies, also, could result in other interesting explorations and conclusions. But this method was adopted because it is

suitable for describing and interpreting some anthologies and theories of translation along a period extending from Cicero to the present time. It is noteworthy to mention that the study did not tackle every single theory of translation over two thousand years. On the contrary, translation anthologies about theories of translation were discussed for the purposes of the research.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

IV.1 Westernisation of Translation Theory

This section reviews and evaluates anthologies on translation in the West, which generally start with Cicero, with a view to highlighting some points reflecting the Westernisation of the discipline. In so doing, it will be divided into Westernisation from Cicero to the 1950s and Contemporary Westernisation.

IV.1.1 Westernisation from Cicero to the 1950s

An immediate sense of Westernisation emerges from the traditional definition of 'translation', a term derived from the Latin words *translatio* and *transferre* which mean to 'carry' or 'ferry across', to 'relocate' something (message) from one place (source language) to another (target language) (Hermans and Stecconi 2002:3). The idea of 'transfer' refers to a 'carrying across', a 'leading across', or a 'setting across', the original meanings of the words in the major Western European languages for 'translation'; as if translation carries ideological, secular, religious, political, economic, social messages in the language of power (English) like "captives or slaves in one direction or soldiers and missionaries in the other" into the target culture (Tymoczko 2010:6). The Romans, who highly valued imitation, deemed literal translation as the optimum strategy, while those who looked at translation as a transfer of meaning preferred a strategy that guaranteed people's understanding of the message. But both strategies carry this 'something' to the other. If this 'something' is ideologically motivated, for instance, then one can imagine the probable twist of the original message to fit a specific purpose.

Western anthologies of translation started only in modern times. Robinson, for instance, tracks the first anthologies written on the subject (1997a: xvii-xviii). Steiner explores *English Translation Theory from 1650 to 1800* (1975), Lefevere *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Franz Rosenzweig* (1977), Chesterman *Readings in Translation Theory* (1989) from Dryden and to the twentieth century, and Schulte and Biguenet *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (1992) from Dryden to just before the twentieth century. Lefevere was the first to investigate the history of translation from Cicero to the early twentieth century in 1992. In 2002, Robinson added the new concepts of empire and gender studies missing

in the previous anthologies in his book *Western Translation History from Herodotus to Nietzsche*. For Robinson, "Cicero is often considered the founder of Western translation theory; certainly he is the first to comment on the processes of translation and offer advice on how best to undertake them" (1997a:7).

Since then, researchers have become more interested in anthologies, yet their contributions have not exceeded editing some articles selected to be samples of theories in different eras. For instance, Bassnett and Lefevere edited *Translation, History and Culture* (1990), Baker *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998), Venuti *A History of Translation* (2008), Baker and Saldanha *London and New York: Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2009), Millán and Bartrina *The London and New York: Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies* (2013), etc. It is not the researcher's intention, however, to underestimate these efforts or argue that scholars selected certain articles deliberately in a biased way neglecting Arab contributions. They might have had no access to other nations' contributions. Or it might be the other nations' lack of studies in English or lack of interest at all. Whatever the reason is, the end result is that these anthologies are mostly written from a Western perspective overlooking the Arabs' or referring to a couple of instances in a nutshell at best.

For instance, across eighteen pages in *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications,* Munday (2013:30-48) introduces the history of translation theory before the twentieth century from Cicero and St. Jerome, to the Arab and Chinese debates, to Schleiermacher and the 19th and early 20th centuries in Britain. It is mainly a Western anthology of translation. His reference to the Arab theory of translation does not exceed one page (34-35) limited mainly to the literal vs. free debate, which originated primarily in the West by Cicero from his opinion. This does not do any justice to the rich Arab history of translation.

The following observations can be made. First, the origin of translation history is clearly Westernised, talking basically about Cicero's and western scholars' debates extending over two thousand years. Second, the need for translation emerged due to the Christian Romans' desire to translate the Bible from Greek into Latin. Third, this history overlooks the genuine contributions of other civilisations, like the Arabs', Chinese's or Indians', except for few fleeting references of no substantial value for understanding the issue properly. Moustafa (2015) elaborates that those studies do not mention that the East formed clear theories of translation; some give few hints to other schools, which could not formulate a clearly stated theory about translation. Fourth, translation was rooted in a literary trend or the 'universal literary greatness' which dominated the Western

scene for centuries, unlike the Arab traditions which preferred religion and science over literature (this does not negate the great literary works written in and translated into Arabic). Fifth, Western translation theories facilitated the missionary 'transferring' of ideas to the Other. The West had one debate about translation, 'literal vs. free' translation, while the Arabs far exceeded that. Sixth, the definition of translation itself as a 'transfer' is Westernised as mentioned previously.

IV.1.2 Contemporary Westernisation

Two factors, WWII and the EU, enhanced contemporary Westernisation of translation, Tymoczko explains (2010:5). WWII founded a new interest in intelligence and code switching. Linguistic approaches to translation began to explore how to decode in intelligence operations. Then, those approaches were used for propaganda as USA, Europe and USSR realized the prodigious power of translation in influencing text reception and reshaping target cultures. Later Germany and Japan became interested. The EU, on the other hand, insisted on using local languages rather than one formal language, namely English. Therefore, the demand for translation practice and theorisation which meet its Eurocentric interests has proliferated (ibid.). For the first time, linguistics was introduced to translation. Nida started to talk about a 'science' of translation in 1964 and James Holmes set up a map for the new science in *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* in 1972, after centuries of literary dominance.

Globalisation with all its manifestations has boasted these two factors and created a one-way flow of technology and information from the 'developed' North to the 'underdeveloped' South. This means more Weternisation. After the 'underdeveloped' and 'developing' countries had started to get independence, their hatred against 'Westernisation' increased. So colonialists thought of other ways for re- or neo-colonisation. Globalisation emerged as a new form of colonialism and translation has been used as a tool to this end (Ahmed 2014; 2016; 2019). It was conceived of as a crucial soft power for the West's propaganda. So, the West has presented theories of translation from its own perspective, and which serve its interests and agenda, to the whole world and marketed them as the only authentic form of knowledge.

The Westernisation of translation is best summarised in Bassnett and Trivedi's comment that we are still living in a colonising world more evidently than ever, with clear asymmetrical power relations between the coloniser and its dominant language and the local colonised and its marginal or less dominant language. Only the form and shape of colonisation have changed, but in essence, no real substantial attempt at de-colonisation or de-Westernisation' has been made:

the old business of translation as traffic between languages still goes on in the once-and-still colonized world, reflecting more acutely than ever before the asymmetrical power relationship between the various local 'vernaculars' (i.e. the languages of the *slaves*, etymologically speaking) and the one *master*-language of our post-colonial world, English. (1999:13; emphasis added)

The metaphors 'master' and 'slave', though very harsh, are quite striking and frightening too as they raise some doubts about the fruits of Globalisation and Westernisation that most nations have already started to harvest especially lately. Based on various analyses, Bassnett (1991) insists that some translations from Arabic into English reflect the superiority stance of the Western culture.

Eurocentrism in translation studies have attracted scholars like Doorslaer and Flynn (2013) who delve into various perspectives from Belgium, Canada, South Africa and the USA. Though they stimulate thoughts on the topic, their book lacks a real contribution to the diversity of local perspectives. Belgium, Canada and USA seem to lie in close, if not in the same, pigeonholes. Also the representationality of South Africa as part of the continent, where countries on the North coast, for instance, may have another say, is questioned. Flynn (2013:43) attempts to trace trajectories of thought to check why approaches are deemed as Eurocentric and hence reflecting power and relation imbalances. Using data derived from an ethnographic study of literary translations in the Netherlands and Belgium, he assures that "translational practices should be explored on the ground" so that differences between these practices and their theoretical tenets can be revealed.

Though it seems logical to start de-westernising the discipline, some argue against the idea and insist that Eurocentrism should not be replaced by another "confrontational geographical model characterized precisely by a continentalization of discourse, thereby merely reinstituting under another guise" (Doorslaer and Flynn 2013:1). Delabastita who claims to be in favour of an 'inclusive, truly global and culturally balanced approach', maintains in the same time that the rejection of Eurocentrism might be tempting for non-European scholars to find an alternative way of thinking according to discourses in their 'continent' which may appear at odds with what is perceived as the European model of translation (2013:24-29). Few remarks arise here. Who said that presenting local perspectives means necessarily the 'rejection' of the Western model? In fact, all can co-exist peacefully. Also, for approaches to 'appear at odds' with the Eurocentric model is useful for a rich environment of research where various perspectives co-exist to form a final complete image. Furthermore, Delabastita's fears that one local paradigm might 'replace'

the Western paradigm and this 'is not the best way forward' (ibid.) as he claims, have no substance.

To sum up, the following remarks become mandatory here. First, the traditional Western view of translation as 'transfer' still dominates translation theory and practice. The idea of equivalence itself, the innovative topic of the 1960s and 1970s, is based on the assumption that you transfer the original message to get an equivalent end product 'formally' or 'functionally', as acclaimed by functionalists like Reiss, Mänttäri, House, Nord and Baker. A significant advancement in translation studies is the introduction of cultural studies, where postcolonialists question translation role in colonising, transferring ideology and shaping identities; yet this has still a long way to go. Second, the origin of the contemporary interest in translation is relegated to Western developments in intelligence and linguistics in the 1940s as explained. Third, translation theories have responded to the Western desire to use translation for propaganda. Fourth, translation anthologies are dominated by Western perspectives reflecting Eurocentrism. Finally, the early interest in Bible translation and missionaries cannot be overlooked, e.g. Nida, the founder of the 'science' of translation, translated the Bible and henceupon derived his famous theory of 'formal' and 'dynamic equivalence'.

IV.2 Westernisation of Translation Practice
IV.2.1 English/Arabic Translation

Translation from the dominant power language, English, into Arabic has been the back door through which much of the Western ideas and values have crept into the Arab societies. The interest increased after WWII, when many of the Arab states aspired to 'modernisation' as depicted and circulated by the West (Ahmed 2014). Passing through the grievances of two World Wars, the West discovered that traditional military force is extremely expensive, money-wise and victims-wise. Therefore, it began to turn to soft powers, like translation. Without translation, it would be impossible to present new ideas and ideologies to the Arabs. With the invention of the radio and television, the task became easier.

The West can disseminate ideas and values easily through mass media. Films in particular represent a popular source of information and knowledge for individuals. The availability of this medium makes it the fastest and safest way for the West to intrude people's personal space and lives at the tip of their fingers. For instance the film 'Mrs. Doubtfire', a classical comedy, is rife with values foreign to the Arab culture and identity. A subtitling foreignisation strategy was used in the translation (cf. Ahmed 2019). The translator depended largely on direct translation methods such as 'calque' and 'literal translation' (borrowing Vinay and

Darbelnet's terms) to transfer the message without amendments that could have suited the Arab customs and traditions. This translation 'transfers' Western conceptions about family, family bonding, gender roles, divorce, among others and presented them as "the modernised, civilised, globalised and acceptable versions of values". Presentation of the West as always superior can make the target audience question their perceptions. Repeated exposure to such messages may change the target audience's conceptualisations about the world. Hence comes reshaping the target audience's identity (Ahmed 2019). This reveals the scandals of translation starting from the selection of certain works to translate, to the application of translation strategy for a certain purpose. The situation is further worsened and complicated if the horrific number of unfiltered translations flowing into the Arab world is put into consideration.

IV.2.2 Arabic/English Translation

When it comes to translation from Arabic, the less hegemonic language, into English, the language of power, the picture is similarly dim, in Venuti (1998)'s opinion 'scandalous'. The problem is mainly of selection of works and representation of the Arabs generally and of women and Islam particularly.

Naguib Mahfouz, the Egyptian Nobel Prize winner, is one of the most famous Arab men of letters in the West. The novels selected for translation uncover the Western audience's desire and quest for a specific kind of knowledge about the Arabs. Mahfouz wrote *Cairo Trilogy* (*'Palace Walk'*, *'Palace of Desire'* and *'Sugar Street'*) in 1956-7. William Maynard translated from Arabic into English the three novels, which revolve around 'Si El-Sayed', a corrupt, despotic, violent and selfish husband and father and 'Amina', an oppressed wife and a mother of five, who exists (not lives) only to obey this husband and keep the family going. Trevor Le Gassick and John Rodenbeck translated the novel *'The Thief and the Dogs'*, about a 'Said Mahran' who was sentenced to four years for a theft crime; when freed, he discovered that his wife 'Nabaweyya' got married to his dearest friend. In other words, the novel talks about a criminal hero, an adulterous wife and a disloyal friend. *'Love in the Rain'*, translated by Nancy Roberts, was written in 1973 and it tackles the Egyptian society's feelings of frustration, destruction and humiliation after Israel had defeated the Arabs in 1967. The novel *'Cairo Modern'* (1945), translated by William M. Hutchins, displays the conflict between the spiritual and the physical, religious beliefs and ethical social values, decency and vice, wealth and poverty, love, and money. It is noteworthy to notice that the translators are foreigners_ I am not skeptical here, instead I hope to draw researchers' attention to analyse and interpret this observation.

This type of image about the Arabs is what attracts the West to translate. The selection cannot be coincidence because it applies not only to Mahfouz's novels but to many other works in the translated literature as well as non-literary texts. Said (1995) maintains that the sales of books translated from Arabic into English boom when the title refers to oppression, Islam, sensuality or violence. Van Leeuwen illustrates that this kind of translation may have "prevented the emergence of an authentic discourse on Arab identity, since the problem of identity was wholly seen through the prism of European conceptions" (2004:16).

Thus, to maintain the representation of the West as superior and the Arabs as inferior, it is not only a matter of selection of works to translate, it is also the use of certain translation strategies and methods to this end. A strategy of domestication becomes inevitable to make whatever amendments and shifts deemed necessary to suit the Western audience taste and desire. The translator has at his disposal tools like adaptation and equivalence.

There is also a Western interest in translating female Arab writing, which may be attributed to their perceptions of Arab women as oppressed subjects in a traditionally man-dominated society. Al-Mahrooqi and Denman express their concerns about "the selection of contemporary Arabic works translated into European languages for Western audiences" and "the issue of the representation of female Arabic writers in the West" (2016:11). Some female works are picked for translation because they present an inferior image of Arab women. Tag-El-Din asserts that "Western fascination with Eastern exoticism, and aspects of Middle Eastern culture, such as female circumcision, or arranged marriages, lead one to focus on features of these texts which reaffirm the Western reader's superiority in contrast to Arab culture" (36; cited in ibid. 16).

Many of Nawal Al-Saadawi's translated works, for instance, are quite popular in America and Britain. In *'The Hidden Face of Eve'* (1977), translated into English by Sherif Hatata, the Arab woman is misrepresented. A domestication translation strategy is employed to make shifts from the original Arabic, making use of methods like omission and addition to adapt the text to the taste of the target market. The translation, for example, omitted from the chapter 'Positive Sources for Arab Woman' a whole extract talking about how the Arab woman resisted the patriarchal system four centuries ago, while the European and American woman realized this issue only in the late twentieth century. In the first edition of the English book, that extract was there, a matter which resulted in harsh criticism of the book and Nawal in the West; that is why a later edition removed that part. Similarly a whole chapter about the revolutionist Arab woman and her honourable role in the Egyptian Arab

Revolution of 1919 was excluded so that the traditional Western misconception of Arab women would be maintained. Interesting enough a new chapter called 'The Grandfather with the Bad Manners' was added to the target text in order to formulate a horrible image of sexual harassment to a five-year old girl by a bad grandfather. The addition serves to increase hatred against the Arabs, and deepens the Western misconceptions of the Arabs/Muslims generally and women specifically.

Translation as such is a tool to alter the meaning of a source text. Maybe because Al-Saadawi's writings offer the West what it wants, she became a famous female writer there. Unfortunately, some authors are ready to alter their work to meet the Western market demand (Faiq 2004). In line with Venuti's 'scandals of translation', Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2016) assure that translation can have a negative impact on the Arabs' conceptions and identity. The Arabs' self-representation, too, is reshaped by those misconceptions.

Finally a simple comparison of the size of English works translated into Arabic to the size of Arabic ones translated into English reveals: a) the imbalanced flow of information from the West to the Arab region, b) the strong desire of the West to flood the Arab region with Western values and ideologies, which can reshape the Arab identity, and c) the prevalence of the stereotype image of the superior West vs. the inferior Arabs. It is not my intention, however, to argue that all translations into Arabic are necessarily a step towards neocolonisation. But, despite the many good translated works, the non-filtration of the works to be translated result in a 'shameful role' of translation.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of the study was to investigate how translation theory and practice are used as a soft power in the colonial/neocolonial hands, from an Arab perspective. The research questions about the extent to which translation theories and practices are westernised and their implications for the Arab identity, were approached by a theoretical framework delving into Venuti's postcolonial view of 'the scandals of translation'. This qualitative study was based on a descriptive approach to the history of translation theories and a content analysis and comparison method to the analysis of English and Arabic translations, in terms of Venuti's translation strategies, domestication and foreignisation.

The study found out that anthologies of translation theories are written from a Western prism. They refer to Western scholars, often overlooking the contributions of other civilisations and nations. Fleeting references to Arab, Chinese or Indian theories for instance, if any, can be discerned. Also, theories are westernised and they emerged from the need to translate the Bible and a Western exaltation of literature. The same holds

good at contemporary theories. Even the definition of translation as a 'transfer' is westernised and serves a colonial image of transferring 'the spoils of war' on a ship from a place to another.

Furthermore, the practices of translation are mostly westernised. The study discovered that in translating from English, the language of the hegemonic power, into Arabic, the translator often employs a foreignisation translation strategy to convey Western values and ideologies directly into the target language and culture. The image transferred is that of a traditionally superior West and inferior Other. The translation of films is a good example. Whereas in the translation from Arabic into English, the translator depends primarily on a domestication strategy whereby he adapts the original text to the target audience (the West). Selection of works to translate and the presentation of a stereotype image of an inferior Arab are determining factors that attend to a certain agenda. This means translation can play the role of a soft power in the imperial hands. The implications are grave, 'scandalous'. Exposure to these theories and translations contribute to reshaping local identities. A misconceptualised image about the Arabs and the West is created. The Arabs' knowledge about the world is shaped by the globalised (Western) 'version of knowledge'. Their self-representation, too, is influenced by the dominant image.

However, this is neither an argument that translation is the sole factor involved in the formation of the Arab identity, nor a call for replacing westernised translation with an Arab version. Local perspectives should co-exist and engage in a genuine dialogue for a healthy environment of different opinions, where every culture can choose what is useful and discard what is not.

This brings the discussion one step further about Venuti's view about domestication and foreignisation. From his point of view, he defended foreignisation because it respects the target language and culture and criticised domestication because it reduces the richness of the source text to suit the target audience. But, as the study explored how foreignisation is used in a particular track of translation (from the language of power into the Other's less dominant language) and domestication in the opposite track (from the language of the Others'), then the evaluation of the two strategies as such should be reconsidered.

The field should be de-Westernised. This is a rich area for further research.

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