

## Narratives and Discourse: Translation in the Development and Contestation of Media Frames

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study investigates the overlooked possibility of importing and exporting narratives' impact through translation and circulation in international news agencies. An exported narrative gains currency and alternative interpretations through guided associations or disassociations with discourses circulating the host socio-political context.

**Methods:** The study adopts the descriptive-analytical approach and borrows tenets offered by critical discourse analysis. Rather than focusing on the impact of exported narrative on the host socio-political discourses, it explores the possible implications of the host socio-political narrative for the introduced interpretation. Accordingly, the study compared and analysed the narratives of Translation students' at Mutah University to address the study's primary aim of exporting AlMamlaka discourse through translation.

**Results:** This view of narrativity approaches exporting narratives as an attempt to re-narrate an event and alter its dynamics. This study explores possible applications in AlMamlaka English because international news agencies often re-narrate ontological or public narratives as disciplinary or meta-narratives to allow a broader audience to subscribe to the represented interpretation of reality. After being empowered as a metanarrative, the exported discourse will eventually return to the source language socio-political context from where it had emerged.

**Conclusions:** The study recommends launching AlMamlaka English and asserts its role in acquainting international audiences with Jordanian viewpoints on local and global events.

**Keywords:** Media translation, critical discourse analysis, narrativity.

### أثر السرديات استحضارا وبعثا في الترجمة الإعلامية وتداولها

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#### ملخص

الأهداف: تبحث هذه الدراسة في قضية لم تحظَ بكثير من الاهتمام، ألا وهي قضية أثر السرديات استحضارا وبعثا، ثم انتقالها إلى مرحلة التداول في وكالات الأنباء الدولية. وتحظى السرديات المستحضرة بالرواج وكذلك بتأويلات بديلة مصحوبة بخطابات تتناول بالتداول السياقات السياسية الاجتماعية لمتلقها. المنهجية: اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي بتبنيها منهجيات تحليل الخطاب بالنقد. عوضا عن صبّ الاهتمام على أثر السرديات المستحضرة في السياقات السياسية الاجتماعية للمتلقى، سعت الدراسة إلى البحث في الآثار المحتملة للسرديات المتناولة في السياقات السياسية الاجتماعية للمتلقى المتعلقة بالتأويلات المترتبة على نقل تلك السرديات. وعليه، قارنت الدراسة بين تحليل وتداول دراسي تخصص الترجمة في جامعة مؤتة للسرديات للوقوف على الخطابات المستحضرة في قناة المملكة.

النتائج: تمثل هذه الرؤية السردية محاولة لتناول عملية استحضار سرد لحدث ما وتحوير ديناميته أو تكرار سرده. نظرت الدراسة في إمكانية تطبيق السرد في قناة المملكة؛ حيث غالبا ما تقوم وكالات الأنباء الدولية بإعادة سرد السرديات الجمعية والوجودية على أنها سرديات تلوية أو مُخَوَّرة، وذلك لضمان تبني جمهور أوسع للأحداث وتأويلاتها وبعد أن تُطَفَى سبغة السردية التلوية على الخطابات المستحضرة، ينتهي الأمر بهذه الأخيرة إلى أن تتمثل صورتها الأولى في اللغة الأصل وفي الإطار السياسي الاجتماعي الأصيل الذي انبعثت منه . التوصيات: وعليه، تأتي مساهمة هذه الدراسة ببحث ما سبق تطبيقا على محتوى إعلامي على قناة المملكة بضرورة إطلاق نسخة ناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية من قناة المملكة..

الكلمات الدالة: الترجمة الإعلامية، السرديات، تحليل الخطاب بالنقد.

## Introduction

The research investigates the notion of the resiliency of narratives not as an inherent feature but rather through the efforts of mediators and active agents in the process of re-narrating. Existing research investigates the roles of features of narrativity and typologies of narratives (Baker, 2019; Somers and Gibson, 1994) and mediation in constructing social identities and the role of translation in providing an alternative interpretation of reality (Schäffner, 2012; Liddicoat, 2016). When news stories utilise values, narratives gain resiliency for, in media, "some attributes are more equal than other attributes. Some are more likely than others to be noticed and remembered" (McCombs, 2014, p.51). Values are, however, changeable and, in many cases, contextualised or culturally bound, which sometimes permits passing opinions disguised as facts. Baker (2019, p.165) refers to such attempts as causal employments, which enables the translator "to turn a set of propositions into an intelligible sequence about which we can form an opinion and thus charges the events depicted with moral and ethical significance". In addition, disciplinary narratives can reframe values through voicing experts. Experts may draw attention to areas previously overlooked and offer an alternative interpretation as later sections elaborate. Whether in narrative contestation or construction, utilising values enables mass communication to globalise stories by departing from localised community levels. In news channels or international news agencies, translators, at least at some point, play a role in mediating reality. For example, a localised ontological narrative in the context of COVID-19 says:

Dylan Fox, a first-generation college student and a junior at Princeton University, is not abandoning his ambitions to become a filmmaker, despite being aware that he cannot, more than ever now, rely on family income. (CNBC, 2020)

whereas a globalised metanarrative would say:

The crisis [COVID-19] is exacerbating pre-existing education disparities by reducing the opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults – those living in poor or rural areas, girls, refugees, persons with disabilities and forcibly displaced persons – to continue their learning. Learning losses also threaten to extend beyond this generation and erase decades of progress (UN, 2020).

Translating the CNBC report as a discourse rather than a text allows the TT to cohere a value and enact possible ideological meanings. To clarify, while CNBC TT implicates students and imports public narrative, the UN report targets humanity and exports metanarrative by highlighting values that readers subscribe to regardless of gender, race, age, religion, nationality, or other attributes, at least more so than CNBC report. Thus, translation as re-narration takes place and prioritises the overall semiotic, discourse, and narrative structure.

Departing from translation as re-narration to translation as mediation.

Much of the resiliency depends on whether readers subscribe to an intended interpretation that the TT or ST elaborates. An initial required step to either implicate or avoid implicating the reader in an existing dominant public/shared narrative is needed in a text that enacts an ideology. This study does not view narrativity as an optional mode of communication, for, in media, the ST can be thought of as a TT of representing the unfolding events and the effort of the broadcaster to portray them; "consciously or otherwise, they [translators and interpreters] translate texts and utterances that participate in creating, negotiating, and contesting social reality" (Baker, 2019, p.105). From this sense, discourse can be viewed as a representation of "a particular aspect of reality from a particular ideological perspective" (Ivanic, 1998, p.17), whereas ideology as "representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintain, and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation" (Fairclough, 2003, p.9). Unlike foreignization and domestication, semantic and communicative, and much more so than approaches with heavy reliance on linguistics, the notion of translation as mediation, re-narration or reframing is not restricted to representing but rather constructing reality. This view is in line with

recent research in mass media and communication where Hansen and Machin (2018, pp.106-107) explain, evaluative dichotomies such as negative-positive or favourable-unfavourable oversimplify the act of communication due to their restrictions; this view can also be adopted in translation studies, for it calls for more flexible concepts and approaches that can provide a theoretical explanation for the complexity of communication such as framing. Due to the relevance between communication and translation studies, the approach of framing proposed by Hansen and Machin (ibid) can also be fruitfully adopted in TS as translation as reframing.

In translation as re-narration, this might take the form of shifting from ontological or public narratives to disciplinary or metanarratives or vice versa. In translation as mediation, this might take place on discourse level, whereas the translator may associate or disassociate with discourses in the process of elaborating an intended narrative. Mediation may enable the TT to implicate a different group or broader scope of readers. However, to do so, a mediator shifts, for example, from an economic to religious discourse. The mediator might be a political discourse that functions as a mapping tool to transition between relatively unrelated or usually disassociated discourses. This is crucial in TS, for "it is impossible for the human mind to make sense of events or of a patchwork of events that are not constituted as a narrative" (Baker, 2019, p.61). To clarify, in the CNBC report, the ST implicates students by associating with discourses that students, at least more so than others, subscribe to at least as a valid interpretation of reality, for it directly touches their lives; however, different discourses can be associated or disassociated. The TT may deem targeting the masses, parents, educators, or policymakers more appropriate. Discourse, in this sense, is approached as an effort of "meaning making as an element of the social process" (Fairclough, 2016, p.87). Social process, in turn, is approached as "the interplay between three levels of social reality: social *structure*, *practices* and *events*" (Fairclough, 2016, p.88, emphasis in original). However, for this study, this is altered to how do these elements participate in translating localised or globalised media events since they mediate "the relationship between general and abstract social structures and particular and concrete social events" (Fairclough, 2016, p.88).

Therefore, rather than the localised emphasis on education and students' future, emphasising the link between education and progress in various fields such as medicine, technology, science, or others globalises the event. Moreover, the newly spawned narrative implicates a broader scope of audience. Thus, Baker (2019, p.44) explains, an empowered, sustained, and promoted meta-narrative rapidly acquires "the status of super-narrative that cuts across geographical and national boundaries and directly impacts the lives of every one of us, in every sector of society". For Fairclough (2016, p.88), discourses from this sense "are semiotic ways of constructing aspects of the world (physical, social, mental)" which identify "with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors".

Building on context-for-context approaches where issues of intertextuality depend heavily on the context that the translator and recipient are exposed to, narrativity pays attention to how texts associate or disassociate with discourses.

#### Translation as reframing

Earlier translation studies research suggests that without context, a text is "just an isolated item; in context, it is part of a whole interlocking network of meaningful things" (Robinson, 1997, p.54). However, earlier research neglects the possibility that translators as active agents participate in mediating reality; they "accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded the source text or utterance" (Baker, 2019, p.105). Therefore, context from this perspective is changeable for translators can associate or disassociate with any number of discourses, for meaning making is not elaborated in separated texts. Furthermore, in news broadcasting, both intralingual and interlingual translations take place. This follows that media events are repositioned in a different context when adapted to a new purpose in media reporting through the intralingual process; therefore, like media communication studies that mainly pays attention to intralingual processes, translation studies, particularly in interlingual media translation, requires an approach that accounts for narrativity.

Building on context-for-context approaches where issues of intertextuality depend heavily on the context that the translator and recipient are exposed to, narrativity pays attention to the role of discourse. The features of narrativity from the TS perspective, including temporality, relationality, causal employment, and particularity, are not discrete; they overlap and are highly interconnected (Baker, 2019). Therefore, this paper does not approach narrativity as an optional mode of communication because temporal and spatial framing sequencing plays a role in relationality, and relationality, in turn, is at least partly elaborated through particularity and so on. A possible application of temporal and spatial framing is "selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context that accentuates the narrative it depicts" (Baker, 2019, p.112); doing so establishes connections between the unfolding events and narratives that are directly touching readers' lives even though the ST narrative may be set in a different context or framework (ibid). For example, the following RT and CNN's definitions of Syria's civil war exemplify translation as reframing.

RT:

Having started with anti-government demonstrations in 2011, the Syrian civil war has become the bloodiest conflict in recent human history. The war is mainly a struggle between the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party led by the legitimate President of Syria Bashar Assad, its allies (Russia, China, Iran, Hezbollah) and various opposition groups. The multi-sided confrontation involving Moscow and Washington has been a theatre for political arguments, while millions of civilians were forced to flee their country seeking refuge elsewhere.

CNN:

Syria's civil war began during the Arab Spring in 2011 as a peaceful uprising against the country's president, Bashar al-Assad. It has since escalated — shattering the lives of Syrians, destroying cities, straining global politics, and spurring diplomatic efforts that are constantly questioned as the world witnesses the horrors of ongoing warfare.

In RT's report, the highly politicised interpretation implicates several communities not as hearers or addressees but rather as primary participants in the ongoing conflict; thus, RT exports a political metanarrative; it draws attention to an interpretation that implicates humanity. Hence, the established associations with political discourses that can reinterpret reality; the existing ST, which is also the TT of depicting the unfolding event in an Arabic-speaking nation, directly implicates readers from Syria, Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, the USA, and indirectly surrounding countries that will host refugees. From this sense, exporting metanarrative turns the Syrian conflict into a global media event worthy of international concern. On the other hand, CNN's report translates the event primarily as a humanitarian metanarrative and humanises participants. Whether in CNN or RT's depiction, the reports had relied on values, albeit differently. As explained earlier, this paper proposes value-for-value translation, for values are changeable. Different cultures, the initial role of participants, and how they interact or associate with the event are among the factors that influence how values are (re)interpreted or prioritised. Fisher (1997, p.314) argues that any form of discourse can be construed because "all forms of human communication function to influence the hearts and minds of others – their beliefs, values, attitudes, and/or actions." Global media events are no exception; they attempt to frame a narrative that enables them to (re)interpret reality which means a local event is often globalised before reframing takes place. RT official website explains that "RT covers stories overlooked by the mainstream media, provides alternative perspectives on current affairs, and acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events" (RT, 2021). For the broadcaster to elaborate guided interpretation or frame, a report often needs to rely on 'reasons' for a particular interpretation; however, "the fact is that values may serve as reasons, and what we usually call reasons are value-laden" (Fisher, 1997).

Globalising local AlMamlaka media reports

Sixteen students of translation studies at Mutah University who have successfully passed Translation and Mass

Communication and expected to graduate during 2021-2022 academic year participated in interpreting, re-narrating, mediating, and reframing AlMamlaka news report into English<sup>1</sup>. The sampling included male and female students and relied on their overall grade and interest in media translation. The following section contrasts their translation with that submitted by ProTranslate.net.

First, the following is the translation of ProTranslate. The translation exhibits heavy reliance on linguistics and literal transmission. For example, the title abides by linguistic norms of Arabic rather than English. The ST is written in Arabic and targets Jordanians primarily; however, the TT needs to acquaint the international audience with local viewpoints. Their translation reads.

Continuing support for Jordan is a "necessary requirement" to help the Kingdom with reform efforts and hosting Syrian refugees.

The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, confirmed on Friday, that the continued support of Jordan from donors is a "necessary requirement" to assist the Kingdom in its efforts towards reform, and to host Syrian refugees. "I greatly appreciate the opportunity I had to meet His Majesty King Abdullah II," Georgieva said in a statement, following her meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II in Washington. "We discussed global and regional developments and the efforts of the Kingdom to achieve job-rich inclusive growth, preserve macroeconomic stability, and protect the poor, especially during the Covid-19 crisis."

In this regard, Georgieva commended Jordan for "its strong performance under the IMF-supported reform program, despite difficult circumstances." She said that she "also congratulated Jordan on its successful and comprehensive national vaccination program that also covers refugees." Jordan has given 4.668898 doses against Covid-19 since the start of the vaccination program at the beginning of this year. These doses are divided into 2.731367 as the first doses and 1,937531 as the second dose, according to the Ministry of Health.

The spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Jordan, Muhammad Al-Hawari, said on June 20 that "Jordan has given 18,000 refugees in the vaccinations camps against Covid-19, and 40% of the refugees are eligible for the vaccine." Jordan is one of the first countries to give refugees the right to receive the vaccine. "Continued donor support remains a necessary requirement to assist Jordan in its reform efforts and also help it bear the heavy burden of hosting 1.3 million Syrian refugees," Georgieva said. It is worth mentioning that Jordan is the second highest country in the world in terms of the number of refugees compared to the population.

On the other hand, the participating students departed from the linguistic transfer that oversimplifies the act of communication. Reflecting on Baker's (2019, pp.141-155) narrative assessment paradigm, the translations were investigated from the perspective of material and characterological coherence and fidelity. The first group opted to re-narrate the report as a metanarrative, for they decided to adopt a strategy that would enable them to magnify the values in the ST and the ideology it enacts. To do so, they have adopted several strategies; foremost amongst them is reframing. The ST narrates the event as economic-political; their TT, however, is humanitarian. Approaching the TT from fidelity and material coherence perspectives shows that they have adopted the features of normativeness and relationality in their effort to magnify values and mediate the text. Their translation reads refugees sentenced to the death penalty under COVID-19.

The number of refugees has risen dramatically in recent years due to fleeing Syrians escaping persecution and human rights violations, reaching about 5.6 million since 2011, all because of the terrible slaughter that occurs daily in Syria.

In terms of population growth, host nations are the most affected by refugees, putting a lot of pressure on state-owned institutions such as economic, social, health, and education services, particularly the health sector, resulting from the worldwide damage inflicted by covid19. In this regard, it is crucial to establish the international community's attention to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.almamlakatv.com/news/68013-استمرار-دعم-الأردن-مطلب-ضروري-لمساعدته-في-جهود-الإصلاح-واستضافة-اللاجئين-السوريين>

the need to enhance support to host countries and aid refugees who need extensive assistance.

These nations serve as lifeboats for millions of refugees who require assistance in addressing their unique requirements.

The epidemiological crisis has put a lot of pressure on host countries, in addition to pressures from refugee programs to engage them in the community; these countries are doing their best with limited resources to care for the refugees and obtain all their rights, including giving them a chance to be vaccinated.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jordan was one of the first countries to give refugees the right to receive vaccines and support them in overcoming covid19. However, as the refugees were not immune to this crisis, the virus worsened their suffering and burdened them. Still, Jordan included Refugees in every aspect of the publication.

Specifically, it accounts for the Kingdom's advances and efforts to maintain economic stability in the face of significant demands on the infrastructure of the services and health care sectors.

In her meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II in Washington, the International Monetary Fund's general manager, Kristalina Georgieva, stated that "continuous support from donors remains a necessity to help Jordan shoulder the tremendous burden of hosting 1.3 million Syrian refugees." Jordan is one of the most significant refugee-hosting countries in terms of the number of refugees compared to the population; thus, the international community must continue to aid the Kingdom to ensure that refugees get all humanitarian requirements.

The second group decided to globalise the event, building on their understanding of communicative approaches and borrowing theoretical assumptions narrative account of translation offers. For example, the TT makes no mention of Jordan, for it globalises the event and elaborates a metanarrative; their translation reads.

Continuing support for refugee-hosting countries during COVID-19 is a global responsibility.

Continuing support for refugee-hosting countries is a requirement during the COVID-19 outbreak. It is a significant responsibility to extend support for refugees, as it plays a role in reform efforts. Furthermore, due to the outbreak, the growth of countries has been affected economically and socially, particularly the growth of some refugee-hosting countries. Therefore, the need to provide donor support for these countries has grown to strive towards macroeconomic stability and protection of the poor, especially those in refugee camps.

So far, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a less-lethal impact on the refugee population than expected. This might be because refugee camps usually have limited contact with the local community. However, the pandemic has had a significant impact on job opportunities, food security, and mental health. In addition, living conditions and life in camps are not suitable to counter the outbreak of this new virus that has overrun the world.

Many refugee-hosting countries strive to provide refugees with medical care throughout this crisis by offering the vaccine, as 54 countries at least have started vaccinating refugees. But the main thing that is stopping equitable access to vaccines for refugees is that some governments don't have the capacity or financial means to do so.

In their commentary, the students indicated that the ST elaborates a disciplinary narrative that they did not favour in the TT. They have decided to mould the event into a humanitarian metanarrative, for they attempted to reinforce the humanitarian value in the ST. Their analysis follows that transferring the value as it appears in the ST would be counterproductive because it would be contested and reinterpreted. They have indicated that globalising the humanitarian value in the TT enables them to implicate an international audience.

The second and third translations reveal that, with training, students manage to distance themselves from traditional heavy reliance on linguistics or restricted form of binarism in translating texts that enact ideologies. Their translations show attempts to adopt translation as renarration, mediation or reframing and therefore globalise, localise, or narrate a media

event as meta or ontological narrative as necessary. The results are reassuring that translation departments in Jordan can provide translators and interpreters to launch AlMamlaka English that can acquaint the global audience with local viewpoints like Aljazeera English and Russia Today. Approaching narratives from this perspective pays attention to the targeted readership, for AlMamlaka English would not target Jordanians; therefore, the projected frames or elaborated descriptions rely on global rather than local values. One implication of these results for translators and interpreters' training and professional growth is that beginning ideally in their first year at the university, a translator in media should be interested in CDA, journalism, and psycholinguistics.

Conflict as a fertile ground for surfacing political narratives.

For theory and practice, there are implications for narrativity. Adopting the take explored in this paper on global media events and how media represents them contribute to examining both "hegemony and antagonism", where hegemony refers to "situations where particular discourses obtain social dominance" (Carpentier, 2017, p.345) and efforts taken to maintain their dominance such as the narratives of the status quo. In contrast, antagonism refers to challenging existing narratives dynamics that had sustained the status quo preceding the inception of an uprising, for example. Antagonisms "attempt to destabilise the 'other' identity but desperately need that very 'other' as a constitutive outside to stabilise the proper identity" (Ibid., p.346).

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