
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reframing in News Translation: A Study of Translation Strategies in Reporting the Lifting of the Women Driving Ban in Saudi Arabia

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| ABSTRACT

News agencies are becoming a primary source of information for viewers worldwide. Translation in these news agencies plays a pivotal role in making the information around the globe accessible to those viewers. However, the process of translation witnessed an act of framing in where translators try to make some information in the text more salient than others. To do so, they use textual devices such as addition, omission and/or substitution. These choices are difficult to detect unless one compares the source text with the target text. Translators in news agencies frame the texts to make them accessible to the target readers and to make them match their stereotypical image of the depicted society. This paper aims at analyzing the translated news about allowing women to drive in Saudi Arabia to see how translators framed this news and in what way they portrayed women of Saudi Arabia. The findings show that translators framed the news in a way that does not depict the reality as it is in the source society. In some of the news that have been analyzed in this study, translators tend to add, omit or change some parts of the meaning to serve certain agenda for them or the agency they work for.

| KEYWORDS

Globalization, Gender inequality, Framing, News Translation, Transediting

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

Translation is one of the essential powers that facilitate communication between nations. It is through translation that people from the east of the globe can communicate and interact with those of the west. Translation also affects the way of reception of one nation to the other. Christina Schäffner (2007) claims that “political communication relies on translation, it is through translation (and also through interpreting) that information is made available to addressees beyond national borders” (p. 135). However, translation is not always neutral as it should be. In many situations, translators tend to practice some kind of unfaithfulness toward the source text especially in those situations where it requires them to take a side with the target audience to make the text more accessible to the target readers. So, in these situations, translators frame some aspects of the source text in order to meet the expectations of the target readers. News translation context is one of these contexts in where translators intervene in the source text and frame it in an unfaithfulness way to the source text.

Framing in news translation is relatively a new area of research in translation studies. It is not widely discussed from both theorists of translation studies and those of journalism field. In his discussion of the translation’s impact on framing domestic and international news, Darwish (2006) claims that “the role translation plays in framing domestic and international news is severely underrated and the impact of this phenomenon is seriously under-researched” (p. 54). This act of framing can take many forms including the translator’s choice of words, addition, omission and substitution. It has been argued that all the translational decisions that translators take are stemmed from their ideological beliefs and these beliefs impact the way they frame the news they translate. Schäffner (2007) argues that “all the translator’s choices, from what to translate to how to translate, are determined by political agendas” (p. 135). She also explains that “any decision to encourage, allow, promote, hinder

or prevent to translate is a political decision" (ibid, p. 136). Moreover, framing may involve manipulating and fabricating facts in the source text to reach at a desirable impact on the target readers. It is believed that in the context of news translation, translation turned into a "deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration and fabrication- and even, in some cases of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes" (Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002, as cited in Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010, p. 12).

On September 26, 2017, the Saudi King declared that women would be allowed to drive for the first time since the establishment of the country and this event had a major resonance nationally and internationally. Many news agencies all over the world talked about it and translated the Arabic versions of the news about this event into their local languages. This paper will examine the translated news into English to see how translators and news agencies framed the translations. Specifically, seven texts, from different international news platforms such as Reuters, BBC and the New Yorker will be analyzed by comparing the source text and the target text at the textual levels to see how translators employed textual devices such as addition, omission and substitutions to achieve certain ideological goals in part of the target text readers. These choices are inherited in the target text and they are hard to be extracted, so readers may think that the target text mirrors the source text, while in reality it is not and readers need to be aware of that. Entman (1991) admits that "unless narratives are compared, frames are difficult to detect fully and reliably, because many of the framing devices can appear as "natural", unremarkable choices of words or images" (p. 6). This goes line in line with Valdeón (2014) as he claims that "news consumers are rarely aware of any translation processes, let alone of any ideological shifts aimed at infusing the target versions with new meaning" (p. 53). Thus, by analyzing the target texts and comparing them with the source texts, the researcher tries to answer the following two questions;

[1] how did translators frame news about allowing women to drive in Saudi Arabia? And,

[2] in what way were women portrayed in the news about letting them to drive in Saudi Arabia?

What is Framing?

In news translation, translators do not only translate news as they are, but frame them in a way to make them accessible to the target readers. According to Entman (1993), "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). Translators prefer to produce a target-oriented text rather than being faithful to the source text to translate it completely and accurately. Reese (2007) looks at framing as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (p. 150). On the other hand, there are some scholars who look at framing from a psychological perspective such as Rhoads (1997) who defines it as "a psychological device that offers a perspective and manipulates salience in order to influence subsequent judgement" (as cited in Darwish, 2006, p. 67). In a nutshell, we can define framing as employing textual devices such as addition, omission and substitution to make some aspects of the texts more salient than others to communicate that text in a given target culture.

Literature Review:

For a long time, there is a stereotypical image for women in the Middle east and especially Muslim women that the western media tries to instill in the mind of the western audience. These stereotypical judgements were, sometimes not based on real observations but rather on hypothetical assumptions that they made to influence the target readers. Many writers in the West talk about the issue of inequality between males and females and the oppression that women encounter in Islamic countries. This anti-Muslim discourse in the Western Media began with certain events starting with the Iranian Revolution in 1979, followed by wars in Iraq in the 1990s and the consequent events of 9/11 in 2001 (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016). For instance, Doumato (2005) claims that "women have fewer rights than men in family matters, that their freedom of movement is restricted, and their economic opportunities and rights are very limited" (as cited in Alsaleh, 2012, p. 125). Some scholars correlate the situation of women in the Middle East with the principles of the Islamic religion. Navarro (2010) claims that "there is a dominant belief that Muslim women are victims of their own culture to the modernization of women's identities in developed countries" (as cited in Ahmed & Matthes, 2016, p. 233). In the same vein, Whyte (1978) insists that "women belonging to religious minority groups in the Middle Eastern countries enjoy more freedom and occupy better jobs than do Muslim women in conservative countries" (as cited in Alsaleh, 2012, p. 125).

As a result of this representation of Muslim women in the Middle East, Western writers as well as media try to reinforce this stereotypical image in the Western audience. To do that, "the media provide frames of reference, or highly stereotypical representation of specific situations to make the event accessible to the public" (Gambier, 2006, p.11). They do so by what they call framing the news about a certain society and through this process "journalists and their editors create a certain context for the readers and viewers. News frames make certain facts meaningful, provide a context in which to understand issues, shape the

inferences made, reinforce stereotypes, determine judgments and decisions, draw attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements" (ibid). This readers' impact on the source text does not only affect journalistic discourse but we can trace it in other genres as well. For instance, talking about literary texts, the translation of the memoirs of Huda Sha'rawi happens in an environment which has certain expectations about women in the Arab and Muslim world and "the process of this reception restricts the range of meaning made possible in the Arabic text" (Kahf, 2000, p. 30). Kahf (2000) continues to explain that "the United States reading public, despite promising resistance here and there, takes in data about history of Western stereotypes about the Arab peoples and the Islamic religion" (ibid). The impact of target audience may legitimize for translators to deviate from the source text in favor of producing a translation that suits the target readers. Lefevere (1992) argues that "translators function in a given culture of a given time. The way they understand themselves and their culture is one of the factors that may influence the way in which they translate" (p. 14). So, many translators and especially translators of news reports shape their translation of such news, consciously or not, to achieve a desirable reaction on their readers. Entman (1991) states that "news organizations shape their reports to elicit favorable reactions from readers and viewers, and the anticipated reactions of the public also affects the rhetoric and action of political elites, who are the primary 'sponsor' of news frames" (p. 7).

To achieve this goal of adhering to the expectations of the target culture readers, translators in news discourse frame their translation by using different strategies such as addition, omission and substitution to make some information in the text more salient than others. Darwish (2006) claims that "translation-mediated news reporting is largely a reframing process of already framed text, which entails a reconstruction of an already constructed reality" (p. 54-55). Comaneci (2013) adds that "from a journalistic perspective, news translation relates primarily to the process of rewriting, reshaping, reformulating and reorganizing the source texts for the target readers" (p. 77). This process of reshaping the source text is called 'transediting' and this term was firstly provided by Stetting (1989) who considered it "a new term for coping with the grey area between editing and translating" (as cited in Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009, p. 63). In the process of transediting, translators make selection of certain textual aspects in the source text to change them in the target text and "this selection in turn creates reactions in the audience, related to diagnosis of causes, attribution of responsibility, and so on" (Baker, 2006, as cited in Gambier, 2006, p. 11). In order to trace such selections, we need to compare the source text and the target text, because without doing that these selections will appear in the target text as natural choices. Entman (1991) claims that "comparison reveals that such choices are not inevitable or unproblematic but rather are central to the way the news frame helps establish the literally 'common sense' (i.e., widespread) interpretation of events" (p. 6). He also talks about how these choices are embodied in some of the textual aspects saying that "news frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative... by providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so- and others entirely invisible" (ibid, p. 7). Finally, framing can occur in any stage of the news production process and "these stages, as we know, involve translation and editing (or rather transediting), transforming the language and the structure of the original message by using strategies such as re-organization, deletion, addition, and substitution" (Hursti, 2001, as cited in Gambier, 2006, p. 13).

The textual selections that translators of news translation make may result in a deviation from the source text. However, faithfulness to the source text is not essential in news discourse. Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) claim that "the news translator, unlike the literary translator, does not owe respect and faithfulness to the source text but is able to engage in a significantly different relationship with an often unsigned piece of news, the main purpose of which is to provide information of an event in a concise and clear way" (p. 65). These deviations are sometimes required from the commissioner himself to achieve certain agendas in his organization. In this respect, Hajmohammadi (2005) argues that "news translation commissioners may well call for some deviations from the source text content according to current ethics and policies" (p. 216). The news translation environment is a target-oriented, so being faithful to the source text does not matter because the focus is only on the end product and not on the process of translation that many academic instructors try to train students to take care of while translating. Thus, what matters in the news translation market is that translators are to produce news by means of translation for the 'subscribers who pay' (ibid). This state of unfaithfulness to the source text is asserted once again in Bielsa (2007) as she states that "news translation entails a considerable amount of transformation of the source text which results in the significantly different content of the target text" (p. 142).

In recent years, scholarly work has continued to highlight how the representation of women in the Arab world are constructed in global media with an emphasis on the role of translation and translators to reinforce and reshape such representations. For instance, Nassar (2019) highlights that Western media discourse still frequently relies on reductive frames that portray Muslim women within narratives of victimhood and oppression. Other studies also suggest that these representations are not merely reproduced but are actively mediated through processes of translation and adaptation. Studies such as Sharkas (2002), demonstrate that English-Arabic news translation is not merely a linguistic transfer of meaning from one language into another, but involves systematic transformations, in which omission, addition and substitution are frequently used to align the final translated product with institutional and audience expectations. Similarly, Almutaire et al. (2020) argue that structural and semantic shifts in news translation are not random but function as mechanisms for negotiating cultural and

ideological differences between source and target contexts. Some empirical studies have been conducted recently to examine the shifts in news translations. For instance, Alwazna and Al Hamed (2024) examine transediting practices in Arabic and English news platforms and conclude that translation is better understood as a process of rewriting, where linguistic and discursive interventions reshape their narratives structure of the news. Likewise, Hamdi et al. (2025) demonstrate that translated news texts frequently undergo reframing through strategies such as addition, omission, and substitution, leading to shifts in emphasis and, in some cases, alterations in the perceived meaning of events.

Methodology

Frames appear in the target text as natural choices made by the translator and unless the target text is compared to the source text, it is extremely hard to detect such framing. In this study, seven target texts are compared to their source texts to see how the translators framed these texts and in what way they portrayed Saudi women in their translation. The texts are from different news platforms such as Reuters, the New Yorker and BBC, and they are published in the first month after the royal decree was announced to limit the size of the corpus. This study will focus on the textual level of the text analysis. Different textual structures will be analyzed and compared such as the translators' lexical choices, additions, omissions and substitutions. Dickins et al. (2017) define addition as "something is added to the [Target Text] that is not present in the [Source Text]" (p. 21). On the other hand, omission is one form of translation loss where parts of the ST are simply omitted in the TT (ibid). Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) call it 'implication' and define it as "making what is explicit in the source language implicit in the target language, relying on the context or the situation for conveying the meaning" (p. 344). Finally, substitution is referred to by Baker (2018) as the act of replacing one word with another word.

This study is a product-oriented, as the body of the corpus will be compared across the ST and TT and this allows the researcher to check the translation for any addition, omission or substitution. To achieve that, another element of the analysis will be the key terms and concepts of the source texts and target texts. As it has been discussed earlier, translators in the news discourse do not owe much faithfulness to the source text, however there are some choices that may distort the meaning of the source text and may convey a message to the target readers which is different from that intended to the source text readers. Thus, a close reading and analysis will be conducted on the STs and TTs to look at these additions, omissions and substitutions and to explain why the translators might translated that way.

Results and Discussion

In the seven texts than have been analyzed in this study, there is no significant issues of framing to talk about in three of them. The translation of the Arabic versions is almost a faithful one without major changes, additions or omissions. However, framing has occurred in all of the other four articles in a way that reflects the translators' intervention in the target text. First, in more than one examples, there is a deliberate attempt to correlate the repression of women in Saudi Arabia to the principles of the Islamic religion. Excerpts from the news articles are categorized under the three strategies (i.e., addition, omission and substitution) to investigate the shifts in the translations:

1- Translation by addition:

There is a certain belief among Western readers that Eastern women are victims of their society. In the following examples, translators used addition of some words or phrases to reinforce this idea. For instance, as we see in example 1, there is no mention of the word 'Islamic' in the description of the kingdom in Saudi Arabia in the ST, however the English translation tries to connect this event to Islam:

Example 1:

Source Text (Arabic): رمزاً لقهر المرأة في السعودية

Close English Translation: ... an emblem of women's repression in Saudi Arabia.

Published English Translation: ... an emblem of Islamic Kingdom's repression in Saudi Arabia.

These shifts from the ST might be some decisions from the translators or they might be enforced by the news agencies to serve certain agendas or, as Entman (1991) highlights, to elicit favorable reactions from readers and reviewers. Translators try to make the information about Islam and its' relationship with the repression of women in Saudi Arabia more salient in their translation. In each mention of the kingdom, there is a consistent attempt to describe it as Islamic even though there is no such mention in the ST. In example 2, the translator inserts the word 'Muslim' to describe the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whereas in the Arabic version, it hasn't appeared:

Example 2:

Source Text (Arabic): و تعد هذه الخطوة كسراً للأعراف و العادات التي تحكم سلوك المرأة في المجتمع المحافظ في المملكة.

Close English Translation: The movement represents a big crack in the laws and social mores governing women in the conservative kingdom.

Published English Translation: The movement represents a big crack in the laws and social mores governing women in the conservative Muslim kingdom.

The third example shows how the translator intended to use the word 'Wahhabi'¹ to describe the ruling Islamic group in Saudi Arabia, even though the Arabic version does not use this word.

Example 3:

Source Text (Arabic): بعيداً عن المؤسسة الدينية

Close English Translation: ... away from the clerical establishment.

Published English Translation: ... away from the Wahhabi clerical establishment.

One final example that reinforces the translators' desire to cast full responsibility on Islam about the regulations and laws that govern women's lives in a Muslim country like Saudi Arabia can be seen in example 4 in where the translator added the phrase 'the birthplace of Islam':

Example 4:

Source Text (Arabic): و واجهت السعودية انتقادات واسعة...

Close English Translation: Saudi Arabia has been widely criticized...

Published English Translation: The kingdom, the birthplace of Islam, has been widely criticized...

2- Translation by Substitution:

Framing can also be traced in the translators' lexical choices. In various aspects of the translated texts, translators may use other equivalences to add something to the source text. They use these strategies to affect the reception of the target readers to promote certain stereotypes that target readers already have. For instance, in example 5, the meaning of the sentence is that there is progress in the women status in Saudi Arabia but that this progress is slow because of the regulations of the country upon women. However, the translator substituted the word 'impeded' with the word 'blocked' to show that there is no progression at all:

Example 5:

Source Text (Arabic): جعلت السلطة حكراً على الكبار و عرقلت تقدم النساء

Close English Translation: ... made power the province of the old and impeded women's progress.

Published English Translation: ... made power the province of the old and blocked women's progress.

As mentioned earlier, there is a stereotypical image in the West about women in the Arab countries that they are inferior to men. Women are seen as victims of gender oppression or as pawn of Arab male power (Kahf, 2000; Navarro, 2010). This can be demonstrated in example 6, where translators used inappropriate terms to substitute the phrase 'lack of wisdom' with 'brains are too small' to describe women in Saudi Arabia:

Example 6:

Source Text (Arabic): بأن النساء ناقصات عقل

Close English Translation: women's lack of wisdom.

Published English Translation: ... women's brains are too small.

¹. Wahhabi refers to an extremist Islamic group in Saudi Arabia.

3- Translation by Omission:

Another strategy that translators may use to reflect their intervention in the translation process is omitting some linguistic parts of the ST. These choices are not random but might function as mechanisms for negotiating cultural and ideological differences between the source and target culture. Nida (1964) suggests that omission, or 'subtraction' as he terms it, usually occur less frequently than translation by addition. In example 7, the translator decided to omit the adverb 'certainly even though' it gives additional meaning in the source text:

Example 7:

Source Text (Arabic): قد تكون قيادة السيارة خطوة بسيطة ولكنها ليست عظيمة.

Close English Translation: Driving may be a small step, but it is certainly not a great one.

Published English Translation: Driving may be a small step, but it is not a great one.

The last example demonstrates how the translator tries to elicit favorable reactions from the readers as Entman (1991) explained. Instead of conveying how serious the issue of 'the ban of driving cars' on women employability, he just mentioned it as a simple barrier to their employment:

Example 8:

Source Text (Arabic): كان حظر قيادة السيارات أحد أهم العوائق أمام توظيف النساء.

Close English Translation: The ban on driving was one of the most significant barriers to women's employment.

Published English Translation: The ban on driving was a barrier to women's employment.

Finally in light of the analyzed examples, it becomes evident that news translation is not a neutral or purely linguistic transfer, but rather a purposeful act shaped by institutional, ideological, and audience-oriented considerations. The observed patterns of addition, omission, and substitution demonstrate that translators actively intervene in the text to align it with the expectations and agendas of the news organizations, thereby reframing the original message. This supports Hajmohammadi's (2005) assertion that news translation commissioners may explicitly or implicitly encourage deviations from the source text to meet specific communicative goals. Similarly, the findings resonate with Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) view that, unlike literary translators, news translators are not bound by strict fidelity to the source text, but operate within a framework that prioritizes relevance, clarity, and ideological positioning. Therefore, framing in news translation should be understood as an inherent and strategic process, where linguistic choices function as tools for reconstructing reality rather than merely reflecting it.

Conclusion

The present study aimed at examining the translator's intervention in the context of news translation by looking at some news articles about the issue of lifting the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia. Close analysis was done to investigate the strategies of addition, omission and substitution that translators used to serve certain ideologies for the translation agencies they worked for.

The study provided empirical evidence that translation in the media context is not merely a linguistic act but rather is a purposeful activity in which translators play a pivotal role to reinforce or hinder some stereotypical images that readers of the target text may have about some people. In the case of the examples discussed in this study, Western readers have a stereotypical image about women in the Middle East as oppressed and victims of their society, and the choices that translators made to convey the image of those women helped to reinforce such stereotypical image.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the findings of this study underscore the importance of taking this notion of translation manipulation to the translation classrooms at colleges to make translation trainees aware of this intervention. Translation students are taught the translation code of ethics especially that of being faithful to the source text. Manipulating the source text to serve certain agenda of the news agencies may contradict with having loyalty to that source text, thus translation students need to be aware of this contradiction before they join the labor market.

One limitation of the study is its corpus size. As we just focused on the translated news of one month after the declaration of the driving ban lifting on women in Saudi Arabia, we had a limited corpus size for analysis. This could be considered in future research to include more translated articles. Translated news from some other news platforms could be also included in the investigation. Another area for future research would be a quantitative analysis of a larger corpus to look at the

frequency of occurrences across the corpus, thus having more insights toward the topics that may emerged in the translated news.

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