
**The Border Lines between Media and Cross-Cultural Communication, the Journalist as a
Global Communicator: A Background Research**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the boundaries between Media Studies on the one hand and Translation Studies on the other hand. It highlights the contact areas between these two disciplines and sheds light on the findings and insights of both fields, thus informing researchers in their quest to develop journalism teaching curricula and training courses. A foreign desk editor (FDE) needs to cross borders forward and backward between cultures depending on translation from one culture to another. However, a journalist usually faces many linguistic and cultural problems to achieve this task. Thus, the paper can be viewed as an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teaching journalists international communication and domesticating world news stories for a local audience.

1. Introduction

The current paper draws on Media Studies and Translation Studies, probing the boundaries and contact areas between these two disciplines. Media and translation are heavily dependent on language-fueled human interaction. The translation process is mainly concerned with equivalence between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), while media is primarily concerned with achieving readability and reaching more readerships. In its broad meaning, readability refers to printed and broadcast discourse. Crossing borders between translation and media forward and backward between cultures, FDEs need to be well-educated and well-versed readers.

Some scholars figured out the borderlines of the newly-born discipline - i.e., Translation Studies - at the very end of the 20th Century. In his well-known book *Introducing Translation Studies* (2001), Jeremy Munday developed a roadmap for the theories in the field, writing: "By its nature it [Translation Studies] is multilingual and also interdisciplinary, encompassing languages, linguistics, communication studies, philosophy and a range of types of cultural studies" (2). Cristina García de Toro (2007) also outlined a roadmap for the field "since its birth as an autonomous discipline, in the second half of the 20th Century, the most significant approaches on the research landscape are the following:

1. Theories of equivalence and comparisons between languages;
2. Functionalist theories;
3. Discursive approaches;
4. Polysystem theory, descriptive studies, norms;
5. Cultural studies;
6. Philosophical and hermeneutic approaches;

7. Corpus studies and the cognitive approaches; and
8. Integrating and interdisciplinary approaches". (9)

The inter-disciplines mentioned above, both applied and pure, are tagged under the term “Translation Studies”. Susan Bassnett (1980) reveals that ‘Translation Studies’ was first coined in 1978 by Andre Lefevere, who proposed that it should be adopted for the discipline that focuses on “the problems raised by the production and description of translations”.

One decade earlier, in the late 1960s, the term “Media Studies” appeared to refer to the interdisciplinary fields that intersect with most of the topics under the umbrella term “Translation Studies”. Given the significant increase in intercultural communication, both “Translation Studies” and “Media Studies” have expanded enormously and developed along parallel tracks, integrating insights and findings from linguistics.

2. Areas of Contact:

The media research framework focuses on three main areas: content, exposure, and effects (Valkenburg et al., 2016). Focusing on language and image, the core media ‘content’ has different categories with language as the communication medium. Media Studies tackle the language of this content in terms of usage and style. Chris Weedon et al. (1980) identifies Media Studies as “the principal area in which questions relating to the organization of language, authorship and subjectivity are encountered, and where theoretical attempts have been made to move away from transparent readings of texts, using aspects of the semiological theory” (207).

Most Media Studies have explored the nature of media discourse and the ever-changing media language and how it changes people's views. Examples include Jean Aitchison and Diana M. Lewis (2003), Fred Fedler et al. (2005), Jeff Lewis (2005), Donald Matheson (2005), Anna Mackane (2013), and Ekaterina Balabanova (2007).

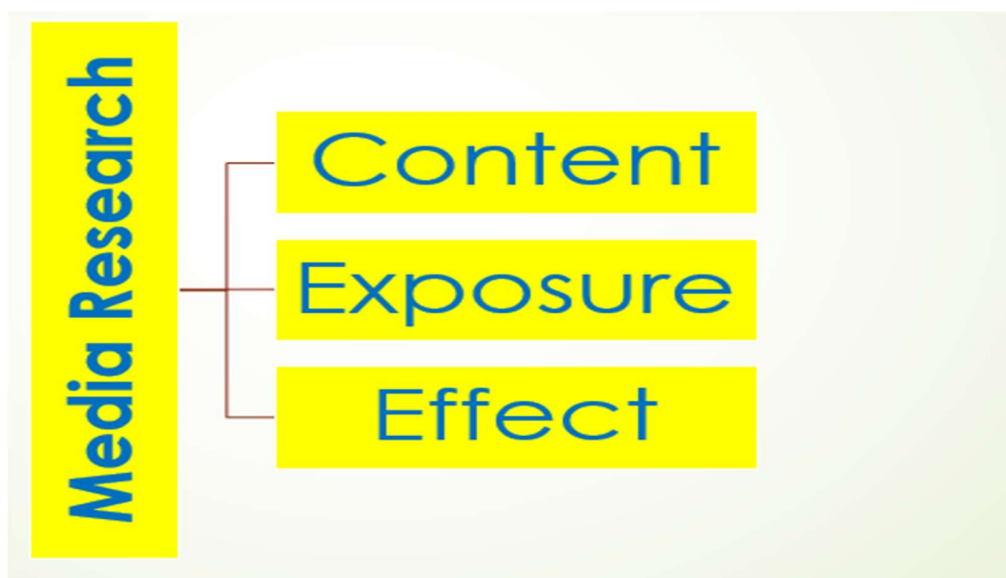


Figure 1. Main areas of research in Media Studies

The contact area between Media Studies and Translation Studies is their work on language usage and style. Translation Studies explore the linguistic shifts that occur during the translation from one language to another, in addition to translation addition and

translation omission. There has been a significant interest in the insights exchanged between the two realms by the end of the 20th Century.

Besides, each realm has very productive areas that help editors in their quest to domesticate foreign content for a local audience in a globalized world. In Holme’s map of Translation Studies (see figure 1), two important disciplines serve the editor in their work: text-type restricted translation studies and translator training translation studies. Both fields can represent a rich source for training journalists and scholars in communication studies. (text-type restricted) elaborate

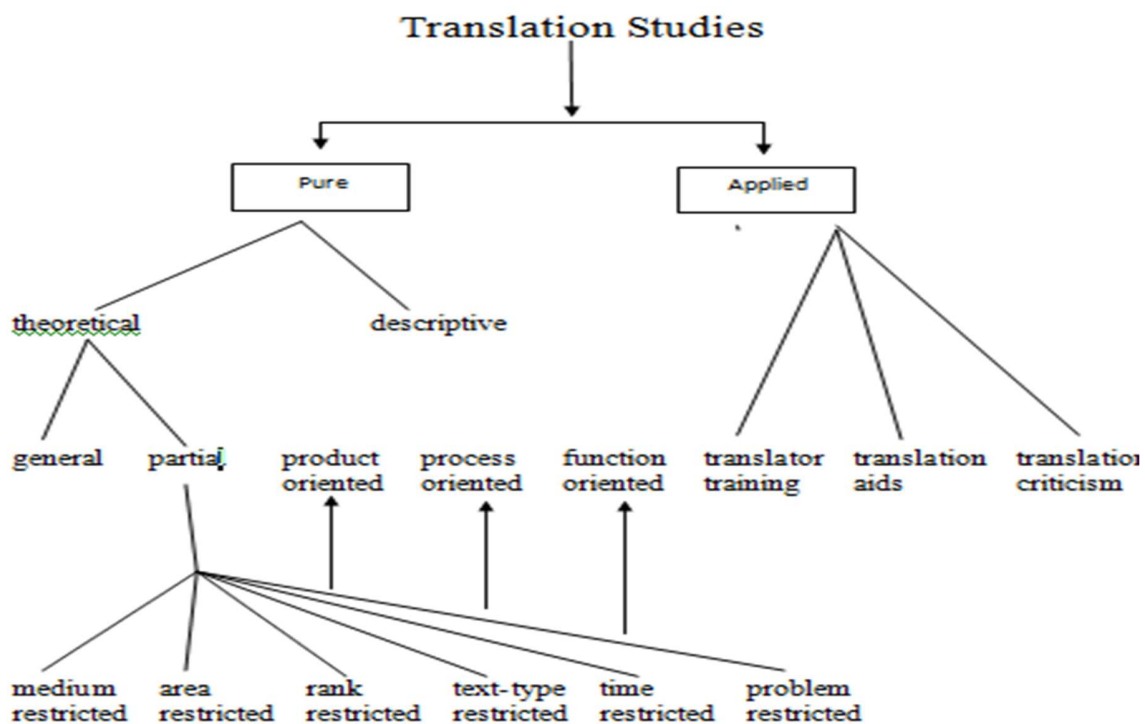


Figure 2. Holme’s map of Translation Studies

Mona Baker (1998) reveals that “in the 1970s, and particularly during the 1980s, translation scholars began to draw more heavily on theoretical frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines” (279). Communication Studies were one of them. Although Translation Studies and Media Studies intersect in methodology (through adopting content analysis, discourse analysis, and contrastive analysis as analysis tools), a problem arises regarding a significant shortage of studies that attempt to explore the common ground between the two fields. Despite the existence of a large and rapidly-expanding body of research on Media and Translation Studies, each discipline proceeds separately, even though each domain admits the centrality of language usage.

Bielsa & Bassnett (2009) admit both the connectedness between Translation Studies and Media Studies on the one hand and the lack of studies in that concern on the other hand. Interestingly enough, they consider the new language and the new writing process as a concept of composing, which is a real challenge for the foreign desk editors who endeavor to simplify and domesticate the ‘foreign’.

Not starting the writing from scratch is a challenge for FDEs. Instead, they start from an original text, usually composed in English, using translated texts to produce their final report. Translation has been introducing novel linguistic patterns on the syntactic and lexical levels to the main course of Arabic. In his canonical book, M. M. Enani (2003) asserts that translation has been the main factor in introducing significant changes to the lexicon and structure of Arabic.

As mentioned above, the so-called "translationese" is a variety of language affected by the Western line of thought not only in terms of transliteration of technical terms or borrowed words and expressions, but the methods of thinking embodied in the linguistic structures as well. The translation has brought ways of thinking and expression that were not known before in classical Arabic. The most striking feature is the tendency to use abstract nouns, as well as complex and dual structures, in addition to the use of cautious, less decisive and nonjudgmental expressions. (207-208, translation is mine.)

The requirement to localize or domesticate the 'foreign' for a local target group is a significant link between Media Studies and Translation Studies. Moreover, the increasing growth of globalization enhances the interconnectedness between both fields. Bassnett and Bielsa (2009) highlight:

Information that passes between cultures through news agencies is not only 'translated' in the interlingual sense, it is reshaped, edited, synthesized and transformed for the consumption of a new set of readers. It would seem that in the global media world, the notion of translation is challenged and the boundaries of what we might term translation have been recast. (2)

3. Media Text and Textology

Text production is 'one crew show' in media. It can be described in foreign desk departments in Arabic media corporations as a complicated, multi-step process that ranges from news item selection to translation and from reviewing to editing. It also includes sub-processes.

Editors may receive different translations for reports on the same story at a foreign desk. For example, the journalistic tackling of a story, such as Panama Leaks¹, is taken from different foreign news agencies and websites. The fact that some news items may be translated by the Arabic section of a given news agency and others by the Arabic news outlet that publishes the story means that the translation process followed different styles.

A translator deals with different writing styles in the media context in line with the news source and the report author. News texts can be classified under a specific text type. Before elaborating on this point, a question remains: What is text? With the rise of text linguistics, renowned scholars, including Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1989), defined the term differently. They said a text is a semantic unit of communication in use, including grammatical relations critical to the textuality of the text irrespective of the sentence as the linguistic unit of analysis.

In reaction to the pitfalls of the sentence-based grammar, the formula used to decipher some linguistic phenomena such as word order, some linguists (Dressler 1972, Schmidt 1973, Halliday & Hasan 1976, Katharina Reiss 1981) shifted their focus to the text, rather than the word or sentence, as the unit of the linguistic analysis. This paved the way for the advent of text linguistics as a branch of applied linguistics in the 1960s. A decade later, James Holmes (1975) remarks that 'Translation Studies' refer to "a collective and inclusive designation for all research activities taking the phenomena of translating and translation as their basis or focus" (176). Several translation scholars (Baker 1992, Vinay & Darbelent 1995, Basil & Mason 1997, Julian House 1997,

¹ Panama Leaks refers to a famous leak of more than 10 million legal and financial exposing offshore corruption and international crime.

2015) utilized the insights and findings of text linguistics by tackling the text as the translation equivalence base and developing translation quality assessments.

Having introduced a technical definition for 'text', text types could also be explored. Reiss (1971) denotes that text type is an essential factor for determining an assessment approach for translation quality. Knowing the purpose and objectives of the text, a FDE usually opts for a corresponding approach in translation. Text has four types: narrative, expository, descriptive and argumentative. Riess (1977/89: 108-9) introduced the four types with their essential characteristics as follows:

1. Informative text is mainly concerned with conveying plain facts, information and knowledge; the text author uses logical or referential language dimension.
2. Expressive text is characterized by 'creative composition', and the text compiler or sender uses aesthetic tools.
3. Operative text aims to appeal to or persuade the text reader, or 'receiver', to act in a specific way by a dialogic form of language use since the text addresses the reader directly using the pronoun 'you'.
4. Audio-medial texts, like audiovisual and spoken materials (such as films and advertisements).

Like the steps used by Bühler in his tripartite classification of the linguistic sign, Reiss introduced the above text types adopting a function-oriented approach, stressing the importance of determining the text type during the translating process. The table below tells the functional characteristics of text type corresponding to the translation method.

Text type	Informative	Expressive	Operative
Language function	Informative (representing objects and facts)	Expressive (expressing sender's attitude)	Appellative (making an appeal to text receiver)
Language dimension	Logical	Aesthetic	Dialogic
Text focus	Content-focused	Form-focused	Appellative-focused
TT should	Transmit referential content	Transmit aesthetic form	Elicit desire response
Translation method	'plain prose' explication as required	'identifying' method, adopt perspective of ST author	'Adaptive', equivalent effect

Table 1. Functional characteristics of text types and links to translation methods (adapted from Reiss 1971 (as qtd in Munday, 2001: 74))

In light of the above table, a news text falls under the informative category. The British National Corpus classifies news texts as 'written-to-be-spoken'. This is also the case in Media Arabic. As a journalist, I confirm that journalists in various media outlets are always advised and trained in writing short, clear, simple sentences to engage the audience, especially regarding the writing for radio. Julia House (2015) distinguishes between different spoken and written modes combinations. See figure 3.

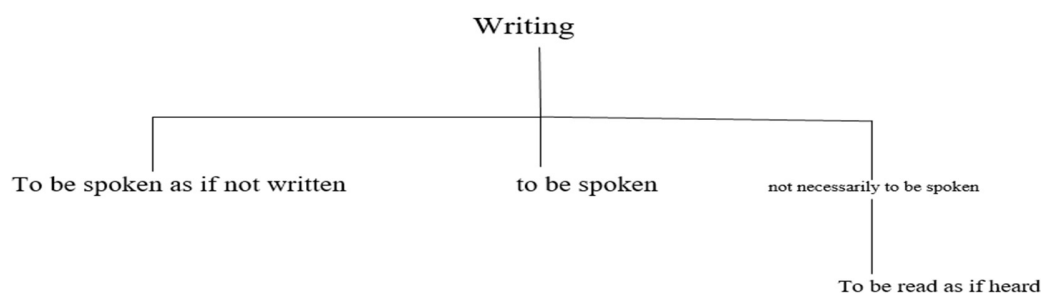


Figure 3. Different types of writing (Adapted from Gregory 1967, qtd in Julia House 2015)

Paltridge (1996) uses the two mutually corresponding terms 'genre' and 'text type' to examine texts' rhetorical levels. He considers news items as 'genre', i.e. a 'recount' text type:

Genre	Text Type
Recipe	Procedure
Personal letter	Anecdote
Advertisement	Description
Police report	Description
Student essay	Exposition
Formal letter	Exposition
Format letter	Problem-solution
News item	Recount
Health brochure	Procedure
Student assignment	Recount
Biology textbook	Report
Film review	Review

Table 2. Paltridge's Examples of Genres and "Text Types" (based on Hammond, Burns, Joyce, Brosnan, & Gerot, 1992)

Describing text types as kinds of texts characterized by typical specific attributes for certain functions, de Beaugrand and Dressler (1981) state that a text has to meet seven standards to achieve textuality, i.e. to be considered a text: acceptability, coherence, cohesion, informativity, intentionality, intertextuality and situationality. De Beaugrand and Dressler assert that breaching one of these standards can be tolerated provided that the continuity of communication is not interrupted.

The act of communication is the cornerstone and a critical feature of a text. Ibn Geni (1986) defines language as "a set of sounds (i.e. media) by which each community use for communicating their needs". Given that Mass Media is a means of communication, the main characteristics of news text are: it is written to be delivered; it is informative; and it should use neutral lexicon. Defining the text type is essential to select the translation method and the stylistic features the translator should follow.

The FDE's role must be tackled from the perspective of media and its purposes, i.e. keeping people informed of international affairs. The editor determines the news stories to be translated according to their editorial judgment governed by the editorial policy of their media organization and the global trend. In that context, BBC is known for its neutrality; however, Aneta Podkalicka (2007) quotes a BBC journalist as revealing that "BBC claims to be impartial but is funded by the foreign office so to some extent, maybe not the content, but where the content is directed is a part of political interest of the UK"(133). Thus, an institutional mind selects topics of coverage to represent the institutional voice, which is mainstreamed by the editorial policy, maintained by the editorial staff, and well received by the audience.

The current paper endeavors to suggest solutions to these problems by analyzing the translator/editor's role and the issues they face. Given that the media text's main objective is to keep the audience informed of what is happening locally and internationally, the translator's role cannot be viewed from outside the goal of the text purpose. The translator here plays the role of a facilitator who facilitates the conveyance of the foreign text to make it comprehensible to the receiver. Venuti (2000) explains a translator's role:

The pragmatic translator does not simply analyze the linguistic and cultural features of the foreign text, but reverbilizes them according to the values of a different language and culture, often applying what House calls a "filter" to aid the receptor's comprehension of the differences. (122)

A translator in a media context reverbilizes the text functions according to the TT culture to ease the reception process for the target reader. In this respect, the translation/editing process encompasses another process for rewriting the TT. Editors often add backgrounds to news items to keep the reader aware of the schemata. Bassnett & Bielssa (2009) state: "The news translator has been presented above as a re-creator, a writer. It is clear that the kind of intervention demanded by news translation on the original text modifies the traditional role in relation to both the author and the original text"(64).

Once again, drawing on my experience as a journalist and on those whom I worked with in some Cairo-based news agencies and broadcasters, no clear-cut distinction can be identified between the task of the translator and that of the editor. In news corporates, the duties of job titles like a producer or broadcast journalist in the Arab World include, among other things, the selection and translation of news items from English into Arabic. BBC Arabic Online journalists, for example, basically translate news items from English into Arabic. Moreover, journalists working for the BBC Monitoring, part of the BBC World Service, select, produce and translate news items from Arabic into English as well as write up stories based on the material available in Arabic media. It is worth mentioning here that a 'translator' has been described as a 'journalist' or 'producer'. In news agencies, the case is different. For example, there are independent departments for translators and other departments for editors at Xinhua and Reuters regional offices in Cairo. These agencies hire personnel under the job title of a 'translator'.

Bassnett & Bielssa (2009), however, assure that Reuters and Agence de France-Press (AFP) do not hire translators. But this is the case in Latin America. They remark that the translation work is fully integrated with the news production process. This means that news translation is the responsibility of journalists who may not be 'trained qualified' translators. Bassnett & Bielssa (2009) quote AFP's chief of the Spanish desk stating that:

I don't want to use the word translator, because none of the journalists working for us are translators: they are editors. By necessity they must rework ... choose any word you like: rework, edit, modify. The one I prefer is to edit. There are no translators working

here. We select journalists and not translators, journalist who must at least know two languages in addition to Spanish and journalists who have previous experience, if possible in various media, agencies, radio, newspapers. (81)

Piotr Kuhiwczak and Karin Littau (2007) emphasize the same view, pointing out that journalists mediate between politicians on the one hand and the public on the other while playing the role of a translator:

The mass media play an important role in disseminating politics and in mediating between politicians and the public, and translation is highly relevant in this context as well. In the media, however, political discourse in translation appears mostly in 'fragmented' form, with the translations often done by journalists themselves. (145)

In the light of this argument regarding the translator's task in the media context, the news translation process cannot be regarded as a one-man show. Instead, it is a crew show. It is a process that needs to be reclassified as an act of communication that involves many other processes of editing, rewriting and adding backgrounds and contexts. The editorial staff does all this as one team, a job that entails the fact that the translator in this respect has become a collective entity.

4. Stylistic Features of Translated Media Text

Reviewing a translated text produced by FDEs in Arabic media outlets shows that world news stories represent a dual challenge to foreign desk departments in newspapers and news agencies where editors have to move across culture and language boundaries. Bassnett and Bielsa (2009) point out that "the question of global information flows is linked to the ways in which the media constructs news stories, and the transfer of those stories often involves moving not only across space but also across language and cultural boundaries" (2).

Media language has to be reader-friendly - that is, the media message should be directed to the mainstream audience. The rise of social networking sites pushed media to use a more straightforward language, thus engaging more audiences and achieving outreach. Audience engagement is a crucial objective for any news website. Therefore, it is typical for a newspaper's style guide to be audience-oriented. Herbert J. Gans (in Stuart Alan (ed.) 2010) remarks that one way to enlarge news outlet audience is to reconsider the news language to make it more straightforward and understandable to attract more audience. Moreover, the infomedia and the revolution of web 2.0 technologies² which introduced social networks, particularly Twitter, have pushed media to benefit from the findings of linguistics to facilitate journalists best practices for tweeting concise tweets for their headlines.

Rendering newly-coined and fixed expressions from English into Arabic, and their related vague meanings, which appeared through translation in the Arabic media language, is a problem facing FDEs. These challenges, hectic work pressure, cause hasty translation and allow some false friends into the stream of Arabic. These false friends distract the reader and negatively affect the native Arabic writer.

The role of a FDE is to check and review the TT to guarantee that the text is free from false friends or meaningless structures. The language must be processed quickly as the FDE does not have enough time to search for an equivalent in the classical corpus. Bielsa and Bassnett suggest that:

² Web 2.0 Technologies is a term that refers to the interactive participation on the web created by wikis, blogs, podcasting and social networking (definition is mine.). It can be summarized in Tim Berners-Lee's words 'not just to browse, but to create'.

Initially, the quality of translation can be assessed without having recourse to the original on two different levels: on the one hand, with regard to the appropriate use of the journalistic style (conciseness and correctness of headlines and lead, inverted pyramid structure) and with reference to a coherent and clear, concise and logical narration of the events; on the other hand, at the level of language and syntax, translations must not be too literal, must use a natural language that can be understood in the whole region and are also checked for false friends and incorrect expressions. (88)

The above quotation highlights the issue of refraining from resorting to the ST. However, the TT may include plenty of enigmata lexically and semantically. This is because the translator may follow the syntactic structure of the ST without conveying the more profound meaning.

The implications of specific phrases and expressions introduced by media need to be highlighted by linguistic tools and mechanisms to locate the effects of heterogeneous socio-cultural conditions. Linguistic analysis should be supported by the methodologies used in cultural studies and discourse analysis. Hence, there is no clear-cut distinction between linguistics on the one hand and cultural studies and discourse analysis on the other hand; the current research is crossing lines between these disciplines.

Jacque Derrida (quoted in Jeff Lewis, 2005) argues that it is impossible to trace the “troubled birth” of meaning. Further, Derrida, the deconstruction philosopher, claims that meaning cannot be owned (Lewis, 2005). Since each reading of a text is a new reading, i.e. it comes up with new meanings, we have an endless supply of meanings. Lewis comments on meaning in the light of modernism as follows:

It is important to note that culture moves in multiple directions: toward and against stability. The formation of meaning and culture necessarily implies its own de-formation or *deconstruction*, as Jacques Derrida calls it. Institutions seek over time to stabilize and fix signifiers to specific signifieds, creating the conditions for durable meaning. (10)

The above quote reiterates the frequently quoted statement “the media never rest”. The new advancements in each level and every realm create new concepts and lexical items. Media men act as a bridge between the productive cultures and their cultures, thus placing a lot of challenges on editors.

5. Research Problem: Challenges of Domesticating World News Stories

Every day there is something novel, and the media has to inform and educate its audiences, using their language of communication. This poses a burden on the journalist to localize the global for the local audience. Here lies the problem to inform about the novel searching for the lexical items that may visualize these new ideas, concepts, and objects. This is a two-fold problem since there is no much research-informed curricula for training journalists on translating and editing world news stories. They do their tasks following the style guide and conventional wisdom in their press institutions. The big question raised by this research is: how can we bridge the gap between theory and practice and develop more insightful curricula for training on journalistic translation?

While it is well known for its rich vocab, the journalist does not easily find lexical equivalents at hand. The journalist often resorts to coining new lexemes, thus crowding MSA with jargon. But this jargon causes a problem; it is neither akin to classical

nor MSA. On the contrary, they refer the reader to a precise meaning peculiar to the foreign language when the translation's goal, theoretically and practically speaking, is to substitute for the original foreign text. The translator does not attempt to detach the target text (TT) from the source text (ST). Instead, the translator follows the source terminology, leading to mercurial vocabulary and new discourse. This is a twofold problem in the case of translating into Arabic due to the duality of Arabic (i.e. MSA and classical Arabic). Enani (2000) remarks that:

Many writers now mix their MSA with references, however vaguely understood, even misunderstood, to such an archaic culture. If the reader or the writer happens to be a translator, such miscomprehension may bring in boundless semantic distortions. (6)

This 'semantic distortion' creates many shades of meaning and different connotations, leading to a state of uncertainty and vagueness. Hatim and Mason (1990) highlight the problem of changeable connotations of the word:

Thus, a given sign may now be viewed not simply as the association of a word and a concept but as a self-renewing phenomenon which gradually establishes itself within the collective subconscious in a given culture. The case history of signs such as "militant", which, incidentally, may be translated into non-European languages as "valiant" or "extremist" depends on one's semiotic perspective (113).

A good case in point is the bulk of terms that emerge with every new trend in IT. For example, cryptocurrency and blockchain technologies introduced many terms and concepts that do not need Arabic equivalents. Still, they need first to be understood by the FDE. The problem worsens when it comes to social concepts and norms deeply rooted in the Arabic culture but introduced in a new linguistic form that blocks its reception in society. A typical case is the 'institution of marriage', rendered as [مؤسسة الزواج] (ElSherif, 2016). The technique adopted here is a calque method that misleads the Arabic reader. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 'institution' in such a context refers to "A custom, practice, relationship, or behavioral pattern of importance in the life of a community or society".

Accordingly, from the first glimpse, the cultural equivalent could be [سنة الزواج]. On the other hand, 'organization of marriage' is a suggested version for the lexeme [مؤسسة الزواج]. Dictionary making in the Arab World is almost absent, which means that dictionaries will not help in that concern. The Arabic reader has to seek meaning by resorting to the English version, and the translation will lose its *raison d'être*. Ashtiany (1993) highlights that "in order to align its vocabulary and phraseology with those of the world press, Media Arabic coins numerous neologisms on a day-to-day basis. Many are too recent to have their way into dictionaries, and many are ephemeral" (54).

6. Conclusion

Attention should be paid to FDE training materials which must be guided by interdisciplinary research. A further academic contribution in the interdisciplinary area between Media Studies and Translation Studies should be boosted. This area till now is untarget realm and represents a fertile promising domain for academic studies.

More complete and accurate documentation of the translation/editing process at news agencies will facilitate introducing well-informed research that has an insider's view. Moreover, working closely on the translation process taking place at news agency may bridge the gap between the theory and practice.

More research should be conducted on the connectedness between media studies and translation studies, focusing on the marked features of the media content with the purpose of eliciting principles and rules of media translation and editing. The final objective of these works and research is to remark that translation curricula should include techniques for tackling world news stories. Press releases of international organizations representing the institutional voice are also an up-and-coming field for investigation. This field represents the connectedness between media and the composition dynamics.

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