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## The Translation of Euphemism in Political Discourse

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# The Translation of Euphemism in Political Discourse

by

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## **Dedication**

To my loving parents.

To my brothers.

To my lovely wife, Laila.

To my beloved children, Obada, Bayan, Tariq and Hala.  
may Allah bless them all.

## **Abstract**

Euphemism is a word or a stretch of words by which the writer/speaker intends to generate an expression or utterance that if said bluntly would make the receiver feel unpleasant and embarrassed. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how political euphemism is dealt with in translation. It first provides an overview of political euphemism and explores how euphemism is used and how it is translated from English into Arabic. Through discussing and analyzing this noteworthy rhetorical device, this thesis examines the translation of political euphemism both in theoretical and practical terms. This is to help the translator recognize political euphemisms and convey them in a proper manner to the target language community. The thesis reviews some concepts and translation strategies and methods, such as the Gricean maxims, Nida's formal vs. dynamic translation, House's covert vs. overt translation, Newmark's communicative vs. semantic translation, skopos, Baker's pragmatics. The various approaches would help the translator appreciate the actual meaning of euphemistic expressions and render this appropriately in the target language. This thesis adopts a qualitative, descriptive and analytical model through analyzing the translation of eleven political euphemisms collected from different sources, including three speeches delivered by two US presidents and one Secretary of State, together with other online material, newspapers and magazine articles. Finally, translators tend to use literal translation to convey political euphemism, which works well as far as overall purpose is concerned. However, to provide a more explicit rendition of euphemism, translators should avail themselves of a variety of methods and strategies as outlined in this thesis.

**Keywords:** Arabic, Political Discourse, Political Euphemism, Translation Strategies.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Political euphemism has rarely been addressed in terms of how to deal with it in a proper manner, and how to convey and present it in translation. Furthermore, translators tend to lack awareness of political euphemisms or the purpose behind its use. Therefore, this study is intended to provide the translator with proper theoretical perspective and practical methods to handle political euphemism, since this particular area of language use poses particular challenges for translators when seeking to find the proper meaning of and to establish equivalence for euphemism.

In addition, there are two questions that will be raised in this thesis: What is the significant semantic function behind euphemism in political discourse? And how can the translator tackle this type of euphemism?

### **1.2 Significance of the Research**

The key reason for selecting political euphemisms for analysis is the fact that this specific rhetorical device has rarely been discussed in the English-Arabic translation context. Many aspects of the use of euphemism have not been carefully examined, such as the usage of euphemisms and their structural-semantic characteristics in political discourse. This thesis will attempt to discuss these inter-related issues and to identify obstacles standing in the way of using euphemism as a rhetorical device in political discourse. This will be carried out through defining euphemism and discussing its usage, addressing general features and likely categorizations of euphemisms, analyzing formation of structural and semantic characteristics of political euphemisms, and mainly through providing translation methods and strategies showing the translator how to interpret and render euphemisms. Moreover, this thesis will provide students, translators, researchers and others who are interested in this area of language use with a discussion regarding the translation of political euphemism and how to deal with and manage it, specifically through applying some strategies and theories on the examples discussed in chapter three of this thesis. This will help translator and others understand and recognize the meaning in the use of euphemism which tends to be concealed and not said plainly. In fact, this is part of the register of political discourse and related textual elements which can be dealt with adequately only through using proper translation strategies.

### **1.3 Outlines of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter one, this introduction, provides an overview of the thesis structure, presents a general discussion about political discourse and euphemism and also outlines the thesis contents. Chapter two, the literature review, provides an overview of political discourse, and discusses euphemism as a rhetorical device in political discourse in terms of its types and categories. It sets out semantic and structural features through descriptive analysis and relevant translation theories and strategies, which help translators overcome the challenges that arise while conducting any translation task. Chapter three provides a discussion and analysis of political euphemism in selected political speeches, statements and declarations with some recommended translation strategies that may be adopted to face the complications arising while translating such a device. Chapter four presents a summary of the findings and recommendations for dealing with political euphemism.

## Chapter Two: Political Euphemism and Translation

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses euphemism in political discourse. It outlines definitions, categories, and uses of euphemism. It also discusses some of the current theories related to political euphemism such as equivalence (communicative, semantic, etc.). This chapter also discusses some translation strategies that can be applied while translating political euphemism in order to help translators and/or interpreters cope better with this subtle rhetorical device. The chapter also gives an overview of discourse in general and political discourse specifically, to set the scene for the remaining chapters of this thesis.

### 2.2 Discourse

This section discusses discourse in general in order to introduce the specific discourse with which this thesis is mainly concerned, namely 'political discourse'. The study will focus on euphemism as a rhetorical device and the translation of this device in such a discourse. It is worth noting that this thesis does not intend to discuss discourse in detail since this is not its main concern; however, it addresses aspects of discourse relevant to the main discussion.

Discourse as a term that can be defined in different ways, while the semantic aspect may vary commensurate with the context where it is used. Therefore, definitions are introduced and defined by different scholars and sources in the literature. One definition for discourse is “The use of words to exchange thoughts and ideas, a long talk or piece of writing about a subject” (Merriam Webster, 2016).

According to Literary Devices Web Site, discourse is seen as “coming from the Latin word *discursus*, which means “running to and fro.” The definition of discourse thus comes from this physical act of transferring information “to and fro,” the way a runner might” (Literary Devices, 2016).

According to Van Dijk (1997), “Discourse usually refers to a form of language use, public speeches or more generally to spoken language or ways of speaking”, (p. 1). This definition establishes that discourse is a contextual phenomenon expanding beyond the grammatical, structural, and syntactical aspects above the level of a sentence. Furthermore, Van Dijk (1997) goes on to elaborate that discourse can be either written or spoken; it is a communicative event or a form of verbal interaction depending mainly on the context (p. 3). In other words, discourse is the presentation of language. It is generally agreed that discourse is a form of language use. However, such

a conception is rather fuzzy and insufficient. Some crucial factors should therefore be incorporated specifically regarding who uses language, how, why, and when (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 2). In addition, discourses can be interpreted as “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and worlds of which they speak” (Lessa, 2006, p. 285).

In this regard, these factors are definitely vital in terms of determining the dimensions of discourse either in language use, or the communication of beliefs, or indeed interaction in social situations. Moreover, knowing the position or planned position of the person who delivers the discourse, power, context and even surrounding situational factors, may play a vital role in the way of understanding or even giving a speech (discourse), particularly of a social nature, which of course includes political discourse, the core concern of this thesis.

Discourse has different types, however; this thesis is mainly concerned with the political type. Therefore, the next section discusses political discourse from a number of stand-points such as definition, characteristics, and elements, in addition to the rationale for its use.

### **2.3 Political Discourse**

Political discourse is one type of discourse. It has its own characteristics, functions and purposes. It involves politics, politicians, context, surrounding circumstances, audiences and of course language, which is one of the most crucial elements of this type of discourse. It tends to reflect and present a specific power, situation, actor, such as a person, an institution or party, purpose(s), and so on.

Political discourse has been defined by different linguists in diverse ways. For instance, Schäffner (1997) states that the “political text itself, however, is a vague term. It is an umbrella term covering a variety of text type, or genres. Political discourse includes both inner-state and inter-state discourse, and it may take various forms” (p. 119).

Political discourse can be practiced in different situations and in many forms. According to Schäffner (1997), political discourse is generally considered as a sub-type of discourse. It has many forms such as treaties, speeches in election campaigns, editorials or commentaries in newspapers, press conferences with politicians and so on.

Graber (1981) also contends that “political discourse includes both formal and informal political contexts and political actors operating in political environments to achieve political objectives” (p. 196).

Furthermore, political discourse has its own features which are mainly based on two criteria: functional and thematic, it is delivered by politicians, and can be determined by history and culture, It is related to political activities, ideas, relations, etc (Schäffner, 1997, pp. 119-120).

**2.3.1 Rhetoric in political discourse.** Language is a powerful tool of politicians in putting forward arguments to gain public support. Language is a fundamental medium for politicians by which they try to find the right register of language and the right choice of words to address a certain audience in order to provide a positive image of themselves and their parties. Indeed, political actors do not use language at random; their speeches and public comments are deliberately and vigilantly knitted with a specific goal in mind. In this context, attention should be drawn to the political language adopted to influence peoples' beliefs, thoughts or even their feelings in order to attain consensus, maintain support, and attract potential fans. Therefore, language can be expressed by using many techniques where rhetoric is one of them. It is widely used by politicians, and it may be viewed as a cultural tradition. “Rhetoric is used effectively and persuasively in spoken or written form. It is an art of discourse, which studies and employs various methods to convince, influence or please an audience” (Literary Devices Web Site).

Rhetoric is an art used by experienced politicians to present in an ornamented way their ideas for their planned or taken decisions and or actions. Cicero (1942) states that rhetoric is “The art of speaking well – that is to say, with knowledge, skill and elegance” (p. B5). Van Dijk (1997) states that “all of the major writers on rhetoric from antiquity – Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian – believed that the politics was the principal locus of rhetoric, and, therefore, they designed their theories of rhetoric for use by political agents” (p. 157).

In a similar way, rhetoric is a tool for orators and writers empowering them to persuade their audiences and readers to their points of view. We frequently see rhetorical paradigms in most genres, but particularly in political speeches or discourses.

Therefore, in political discourse rhetorical devices are widely and deliberately used in order to accomplish the purpose of a speech. There are many rhetorical devices such as logos, ethos, pathos, metaphor, and others. However, this thesis is mainly concerned with euphemism as a rhetorical device in political discourse and with how a translator or interpreter can manage it in a professional way through employing and applying the proper theories and strategies. In this respect, the next section highlights

how euphemisms function from several points of view including, but not limited to etymology, definition, categories, classifications, or types.

**2.3.2 Political discourse and translation.** Translation is an act of communication between two languages and/or cultures. It addresses many fields to mediate and facilitate all aspects in linguistic and cultural interaction. Schäffner (2004) defines translation as “text production, as retextualising a SL-text according to the TL conventions” (p. 133). According to Nida and Taber (1969), translation is the closest natural equivalence of the source language message in terms of meaning and style while reproducing and representing it in the receiver language (p. 12). Bell (1991) further states that translation is the expression in another language or target language of what has been expressed in another source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences (pp. 5-6). According to (Catford 1965), translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language) (p. 20).

Translation is an important and intrinsic tool to transfer knowledge, information, culture, beliefs, thoughts, etc. Through translation, human behaviors, actions, beliefs, thoughts and even ideologies may be utterly changed in a certain way depending on the language or medium used or adopted in a specific context in a particular time, place or event. Therefore, translation addresses all fields, and involves a variety of forms including political discourse which is one of the more crucial genres. The study of politics and/or political discourse is as old as history.

Research in translation studies has shown intense interest in analyzing the translation of political texts as well as the ideology expressed and the power relations involved in the translation of such texts (Mátyás, 2015, 141). Translation studies has long been intrigued and fascinated by political discourse and as politics is increasingly done in supranational contexts, translation is inevitably part of international negotiations, struggles and political power games (Mátyás). Moreover, Newmark (1991) says that “Politics is the most general and universal aspect and sphere of human activity and in its reflection in language it often appears in powerful emotive terms” (p. 146).

A political text is a very sensitive one; its sensitivity is partly determined by linguistic aspects. It includes a diversity of text types or genres, and fulfills different functions due to different political activities (Schäffner, 1997, pp. 131-132). Schäffner (1997) convincingly discusses the sensitivity of the political text and/or discourse and

its translation, and how translators should therefore pay extra attention to this type of text, since a single mistake may have dire and critical consequences, between countries, states, parties, or even at the level of individuals, cultures, and so on. At this point, I would like to give an interesting example of what could cause an immense and critical dilemma. The example is a phrase originally written in English: "The troops must withdraw from the occupied areas." In translating this sentence the translator should pay extra attention to each linguistic aspect in the sentence; otherwise, an incorrect translation or the omission of any of the elements would inevitably cause a critical political dilemma. Therefore, this sentence should be translated as follows: "على القوات الانسحاب من الاراضي المحتلة" however, it should not be translated as: "على القوات الانسحاب من" "أراضٍ محتلة". The former translation includes the definite article "the, ال" which refers to particular areas that are "occupied" whereas the latter does not include the article and therefore refers to undefined occupied areas. This will not oblige the enemy to withdraw from all the occupied areas but rather only from certain areas. Thus, ignoring or deleting a linguistic element like "the" in the sentence would change the whole meaning from specific to general which will definitely cause a political problem. Gagnon (2010) also discusses the same concept, when she states that "when studying political translation, two different objects of study are to be considered: translation of political texts and translation as a political statement" (pp. 252-256).

## **2.4 Euphemism**

This section discusses euphemism strategy in terms of its etymology, definitions, categories, and classifications.

**2.4.1 Definitions of euphemisms.** There are many definitions for the term euphemism. The following are some of the most commonly used descriptions. According to Rawson (1981) euphemisms are: "powerful linguistic tools that are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, never get through a day without using them" (p. 1). The Merriam Webster on line Dictionary (2015) also defines euphemism as "the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant". While the Oxford Dictionary (2015) states that a euphemism "is a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing". Other definitions include, "A euphemism is the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt" (Word Reference, 2015).

Sanderson (1999) states that euphemism “can be used as a way of being vague and unclear, or to cover up the truth or reality of a situation” (p. 259), while, Blackwell (1981) defines euphemism as “the practice of referring to something offensive or delicate in terms that make it sound more pleasant”. (p. 45). In the same vein, Larson (1984) says that “euphemism is used to avoid an offensive expression or one that is socially unacceptable” (p. 116).

Allan and Burridge (1991) offer this definition: “Euphemisms are alternatives to dispreferred expressions, and are used to avoid possible loss of face. The dispreferred expression may be taboo, fearsome, distasteful, or for some other reason has too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speaker’s communicative intention on a given occasion” (p. 14). From a similar perspective, Larson (1984) postulates that “Euphemisms will often need to be translated by a comparable euphemism in the receptor language. The important thing is for the translator to recognize the euphemistic nature of the source language expression and then translate with an appropriate and acceptable expression of the receptor language whether euphemistic or not” (p. 116).

Based on the above definitions, we may conclude that euphemism is deliberately used either to hide a truth or to euphemize taboo expressions. This is supported by Holder (2007) who argues that “in speech or writing, we use euphemism for dealing with taboo or sensitive subjects. It is therefore the language of evasion, hypocrisy, prudery, and deceit” (p. vii). Therefore, before discussing euphemism, we need to review what Halliday proposed in (1978) in order to connect these categories to the political speech that has a political euphemism. This will help text receivers, and translators, to understand the purpose of the speech and that of the euphemism itself. He classified the context of a situation with respect to discourse into three categories: field, tenor, and mode. According to Halliday, field indicates the nature of the social action taking place, tenor of discourse indicates the nature of the participants, along with their status and role, while mode indicates how language provides and achieves the participants’ goals and interests in a specific situation.

**2.4.2 Etymology of euphemisms.** The word ‘euphemism’ comes from the Greek word (*euphemia*), meaning "the use of words of good omen", which in turn is derived from the Greek root-words eu, "good, well" and *pheme* "prophetic speech; rumor, talk". The term *euphemism* itself was used by the ancient Greeks, meaning "to



keep a holy silence" (speaking well by not speaking at all) (online Etymology Dictionary, 2017)

**2.4.3 Categories and classifications of euphemism.** Euphemisms, a stretch of words or phrases that substitute for provocative or emotionally charged terms, are employed for various reasons:

- **Abstraction:** Some euphemisms serve to distance people from unpleasant or embarrassing truths, such as when we say that a dead person “passed away”.
- **Indirection:** A euphemism may replace an explicit description of an action, such as when people speak of going to the bathroom as “I need to wash my face” or “I need to check my makeup”.
- **Litotes:** Sometimes, euphemism occurs in the form of this rhetorical device in which the gravity or force of an idea is softened or minimized by a double negative, as in the reference to someone as being “not unattractive”.
- **Modification:** A bluntly offensive noun can be transformed into a euphemism by converting it to an adjective, as in saying someone has “socialist leanings” rather than labeling them socialists outright.
- **Slang:** Much of slang, derived to produce a vocabulary exclusive to a social group, is euphemism, as in the use of “joint” for marijuana (itself a slang term, derived from the Spanish names Mary and Juana — closely related to “Mary Jane,” yet another euphemism. (Nicole, 2011).
- **Phonetic modification:** This is the modification of strong swear words or words that are not meant to be spoken lightly (i.e., God or Jesus) so that the new phonetic euphemism sounds very similar to the original, but just different enough so that it is inoffensive. Modifications may take the case of shortening the word or expression (“Jeez”, “What the...”); intentional mispronunciations (shoot, shut the front door, dang, fudge); or using an acronym or one letter to represent the curse word (WTF, B-word, A-hole). (Literary Devices web site).
- **Figures of speech:** Many euphemisms come in the form of different figures of speech. These may be ambiguous statements (“let us do it, she is a piece of work”); metaphors (“make the beast with two backs, a visit from the stork, kick the bucket”); or other understatements or comparisons (Literary Devices).

According to Samoškaitė (2011), euphemisms can be used in various fields or spheres. Although there are no unified norms for classifying them, there are some potential and proposed classifications of euphemism (pp. 13-15).

Likewise Rawson (1981), in his dictionary, categorizes the use of euphemism into two types, they are positive and negative. The positive euphemisms commonly, make the euphemized items look grander and more important than they really are, while the negative ones “deflate” and “diminish” (p. 1). They are both defensive in nature, offsetting the power of taboo terms, and otherwise eradicating from the language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly.

In addition, Samoškaitė (2011) offers another six categories of euphemisms which follow:

- **Profession euphemisms:** These are terms that people use in order to make a practical profession sound more important. Some examples include: “cleaning operative” for road sweeper or dustman, “sanitation engineer” for garbage man, “meat technologist” for butcher, and hairdresser has turned into a “beautician.”
- **Disease euphemisms:** In this case, people use terms that sound less medical or deadly, such as a “long illness” replacing cancer, “social disease” replacing syphilis and AIDS, while “lung trouble” substituting for tuberculosis. Moreover, if someone has a mental illness, psychosis cannot be said directly; instead patients are described as a “little confused”, while “hard of hearing” replaces deaf.
- **Death euphemisms:** In many societies, because death is feared, people tend to avoid mentioning death directly and talk about it in a euphemistic way. They try to employ pleasant terms to express the ideas. Therefore, death has hundreds of soft, decent, and better-sounding names, such as “breathe one’s last, fall asleep, go west, join the majority, lay down one's life, pass away, pay the debt of nature, reach a better world, to be at peace, to return to the dust, or he worked until he breathed his last.”
- **Sex euphemisms:** Euphemisms concerning sex include: “the great divide, gay boy, or lost girl,” all of which can be used to replace divorce, male homosexual, and prostitute.

- **Crime euphemisms:** In the field of crime, euphemism include: “five-fingers, gentleman of the road, hero of the underground, and the candy man” are often used to substitute for pickpocket, robber, heroin, and drug pusher.
- **Political euphemisms:** Since the function of euphemism can reduce the unpleasantness of a term or notion, it is natural that announcements from governments will often resort to using them to understate the facts. For example, “student unrest” can be used to replace student strike; police action, search and clear, war games” are used to substitute for aggression, massacre and war exercise (Samoškaitė, 2011, pp. 13-15). This particular type of euphemism will be discussed further in the next section.

## 2.5 Political Euphemism

Euphemism plays a vital role during times when unpleasant words, expressions, or utterances are expressed, which may leave the receiver or reader feeling dissatisfied. The use of euphemism is a valuable tool or strategy that reduces and alleviates euphemized political expressions which can be embarrassing when expressed directly in a political context. Political euphemism mostly obscures the correct information or the truth, which is the main function of such euphemisms. Politicians skillfully employ this strategy in their speeches in order to achieve the desired outcome, either of their interests, which are based on an ideology, or of their constituents’ interest. In other words, political euphemism is simply generated in political life to serve some political purpose.

**2.5.1 Definition.** Political euphemisms have been defined by many scholars with a focus on genre or field. For instance, Zhao and Dong (2010) define political euphemism as “a tool for political leaders to control information transmission” (p. 118), asserting that political euphemism is developed in the political arena to serve some political purposes. It is a device used by political participants and/or and actors to hide unpleasant or disturbing ideas or conceal some aspects in order to disguise the truth or to steer people's thoughts in a different direction.

**2.5.2 Features of political euphemism.** Euphemism is a tool for politicians or political actors and/or participants to conceal scandals, mask the truth, or direct and control public thoughts regarding social issues or events. In this respect, political euphemism has three typical features:

**First, *Greater Degree of Deviation from its Signified:*** language is a combined sings of the signifier which is the phonetic forms of language and the signified which is the objects in existence represented by linguistic forms. Because of a lack of relationship between the signifier and signified either directly or logically, they have a relative relationship which may create euphemism by replacing the signifier. Euphemism meanings stay to their former zero-degree i.e. the literal meaning, since euphemism is just created through transforming the signifier to increase the connection distance between the signifier and the signified. (Zhao & Dong, 2010, p. 118).

Thus, euphemized units could not be as literal as thinking; however, they should have the embedded meaning which is not the zero-degree. According to Zhao and Dong (2010), “it is quite obvious that these expressions are not a simple replacement of the former zero-degree signifier, but are quite opposite meanings to their literal meanings, just like replacing “black” with “white”. For instance, a 10-warhead intermediate-range missile was euphemized as a “peacekeeper” (p. 7).

**Second, *More Vague Meanings.*** According to George Orwell (1990), there are two features of political discourse; they are ‘obsolescence’ and ‘vagueness’ of figure of speech. Euphemism uses direct expressions instead of implicative in order to demystify the connotation of political discourse as providing political purposes . This can be shown through using the expression a “rescue mission” instead of “invasion” and “air operations” instead of “air attacks”.

**Third, *Strong Characteristic of Times.*** Euphemism reflects the language of the social culture, thus alterations in social development will push those in language (Zhao & Dong, 2010). Therefore, characteristic of time may be proposed or offered upon the variety of the signifier of the same subject. For example, “In 1950s, Truman described Korean War as “police action”; in 1960s and 1970s, Vietnam War was called “Vietnam Conflict” by US; in 1983, US invasion into Grenada was said to be “a rescue mission” instead of “incursion”; its invasion into Panama was also called “Operation Just Cause” and Bush Government said Iraqi War beginning in March, 2003 as “Operation Iraqi Freedom” (Zhao & Dong, 2010, p. 119).

**2.5.3 Using euphemism in political discourse.** In the sphere of political discourse, euphemisms can be used for benevolent or malicious purposes. Politically, euphemism is a vague expression that is used to conceal a harsh reality and reduces precision of thought in the mind of the audience. Thus, political language has to consist

largely of euphemism and, therefore, politicians are considered masters of euphemism (Lutz, 1989, p. 152).

According to Al-Hamad and Al-Shunnaq (2011), different contexts demand widely different vocabularies when addressing sensitive issues that may cause a feeling of pain or discomfort for others. In such cases, it is important to choose words and expressions that avoid naming things directly or, in other words the need to sugar-coat ideas. This is the purpose of euphemism.

## **2.6 Visibility or Invisibility**

The term “translator’s visibility” is used by Venuti to describe the situation and activity of the translator: “The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text” (Venuti, 2008, p. 1). The translator is presumed to provide a faithful translation of the source text, so much so that s/he is expected to be as invisible as possible. Therefore, the translator’s invisibility while translating political euphemisms may provide literal translations of the euphemistic expressions which will mislead the receiver or reader and may conceal the factual intention and embedded meaning of the euphemisms. Contrary to what is commonly thought, therefore, the visibility of the translator will provide a faithful rendition of the political euphemisms.

## **2.7 Ethics**

According to VanWyke (2010) “The word “ethics” refers to systems of values that guide and help determine the “rightness and wrongness” of our actions. Ethics of translation, then, necessarily address what is considered the morally correct manner in which one should practice the task of rewriting a text in another language” (p. 111). Ethics are at the core of a translator’s job and duties. In this regard, political euphemisms are to be ethically translated in order to provide the receiver and/or reader with the correctness of the concept or utterance. This will help those concerned to understand the correct semantic and pragmatic aspects of the euphemized expression or sentence.

## **2.8 Translation Theories and Euphemism**

Theories of translation pay special attention to meta-linguistic approaches that exceed formal meaning, while considering ideological and cross-cultural elements. This section reviews translation theories related to the translation of euphemism in political discourse and how these theories play a vital role in facilitating and accomplishing translation tasks as appropriately. According to Gutt (2000), translation

theories have provided us with a very significant move closer to a realization of the essence of translation (p. 236). Some theorists recognize that translation approaches which focus on lexical and semantic aspects of language are not sufficient, and that they should consider further features of language as action.

In this regard, the work of John Austin's (1975) *How to Do Things with Words* underpins the functional aspects of language. Austin proves that words and sentences very often do more than just depict veracity in a way that could be viewed as right or wrong. Austin introduces the notion of illocutionary force, which is the speaker's intention in producing an utterance that serves a particular purpose. In other words, saying what should be said, but not what is meant. As defined by Austin (1975), most euphemisms, in fact, are illocutionary acts. Therefore, functional aspect plays a vital role in developing translation studies.

Thus, it could be debated that the history of translation studies is evidence of the diverse ways by and in which the matter of equivalency and non-equivalency have been addressed. Although the formal structure of language, such as syntactic, linguistics, and semantics, is important, a concern with the shift towards the functional aspects of language should be increasingly and interestingly promoted.

Equivalence may not function smoothly or is always attainable while translating; therefore, extra attention should be paid to that since the message should be delivered efficiently and effectively to the target audience. "While messages may serve as adequate interpretations of code units or messages, there is ordinarily no full equivalence through translation" (Bassnett, 2002, p. 22). This can be evidenced due to the differences in language systems, cultures, expressions, structures, and more. Therefore, theorists have struggled with the notion of non-equivalence. Similarly, Eugene Nida (1964) stated:

since no two languages are identical either in meanings given to corresponding symbols, or in ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages ... no fully exact translation ... the impact may be reasonably close to the original but no identity in detail (p. 156).

Nida (1946) suggests two types of equivalence formal and dynamic. The formal equivalence is text-oriented and "focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content ... One is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language" (p. 159). On the

other hand, dynamic equivalence is a receptor-oriented approach. According to this theory, Nida has concerns about “naturalness” which is the key requirement for this kind of equivalence. He states that “The relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (p. 159). The meaning and the function of units are derived from the context and their connections and/or relations provided in the source text, where the target text should have the same effect on a receptor. Nida describes this as an “equivalent effect” that allows the translator to employ some means such as redundancy, explicitation, and substitution while keeping the effect on the receptor the same as in the source language. Studying euphemism from Nida's perspective requires considering the connotative meaning of such expressions.

This perspective may apply to political discourse where the content of the message is usually more crucial than the form in which it is delivered. Through Nida's (1946) perspective regarding the cultural shift in translation studies, the nature of the message, the purpose of translation, and the receptor decoding potentials are closely related to euphemisms. In nature, their use is too distinctive; whereas, the aim of the translation may rely on the individual ideology and/or agenda of text initiator or translator, the cultural and social factors of the receptor have the potential to decode the text, a factor to be taken into consideration.

Along similar lines, Newmark (1981) proposes two types of theories: semantic and communicative. Newmark states “Semantic translation attempts to render as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original,” while communicative translation “attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original” (p. 39). Through these two definitions, it is shown that the former resembles Nida's (1981) formal equivalence while the latter has similarities to Nida's dynamic equivalence.

Communicative translation theory also appreciates the form of the source language. That is, it overrides the loyalty to the target language (Munday, 2001, p. 45). This theory can be applied to translating euphemism since the content of the delivered message is normally more important than the form in which it is delivered. Communicative theory, therefore, is more appropriate than the formal approach to the translation of euphemism since it is subjective as it focuses on the target language reader through using and considering a specific language and culture.

Additionally, pragmatics can be applied to reflect the meanings of euphemisms since both domains focus on the intentionality of the translation. Hatim (2013) defines pragmatics as, “the study of the purposes for which utterances are used. With speech acts as the minimal unit of analysis, pragmatics hinges on the notion of intentionality, which concerns the purpose for which utterances are used” (p. 292).

Baker (1992) further describes pragmatics as “the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation” (p. 217). This can be illustrated in the following example. When a speaker utters the following statement while sitting in a room with an open window, "I feel cold" the intended meaning of such an utterance is not the fact of being cold but rather that he cannot stay in this room, or that someone should close the window. Based on Baker (1992), the meaning of the utterance or statement does not exist in the text; however, it is in the situation where the statement is employed. This can be supported by Hatim and Mason (1990) who argue that “the meaning of an utterance has to do with what the utterance is intended to achieve, rather than merely the sense of the individual word” (p. 31).

Juliane House (1977) also argues that the source text should match the target text in terms of function, as she totally supports semantic and pragmatic equivalence, while remaining focused on the function to be characterized by defining the “situational dimension” of the source text. Therefore, any text is positioned with a particular situation that should be precisely and correctly recognized and taken into consideration by the translator. In this respect, House (1977) argues that if the source text (ST) is substantially different on situational dimensions and features from the target text (TT), then both texts are no longer functionally equivalent and the translation is absolutely not of a high standard and quality (p. 49). In light of this, a translated text should not only match its source text in terms of function, but should utilize the equivalency of situational-dimensional means to attain the purposeful function.

In addition, Vermeer (1978) introduces *skopos* as translation theory. *skopos* “is the Greek word for aim or purpose”. *Skopos* refers to the end state and the purpose of the translation and to the function of it, besides the intention. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the translation text is conveyed for a definite purpose, intention, or function in mind through certain communicative actions.

Supporting this discussion, Schäffner (2004) says that the text has moved to the center of attention, and notions such as textuality, context, culture, communicative



intention, function, text type, genre, and genre conventions have had an impact on reflecting about translation (p. 133). Moreover, the beginning of any translation task is not based on the linguistic structure of the ST. Rather, it is based on the end state and the purpose of the TT (p. 133).

Paul Grice (1975) outlines a set maxims or what he calls the Cooperative Principle (CP) which has to be born in mind while delivering a normal dialogue; the maxims include quantity, quality, relevance and manner, and can be applied to the translation of political euphemism.

1. **Quantity:** give the amount of information that is necessary; do not give too much or too little.
2. **Quality:** say only that which you know to be true or what you can support.
3. **Relevance:** what you say should be relevant to the conversation.
4. **Manner:** say what you need to say in a way that is appropriate to the message you wish to convey and which (normally) will be understood by the receiver. (Munday, 2001, p. 98).

To return to skopos theory, this can also be applied to the study of translating euphemism in political discourse, since it is concerned with the function, aim and the purpose of political discourse to achieve the speaker's goals embedded, hidden, or implicit in the content of the discourse. The functional concept of political discourse lies at the heart of its sensitivity. In this context Schäffner (1997) states: "Sensitivity of political texts is thus a functional concept. It can best be explained within the framework of a functional approach to translation such as skopos theory that focuses on the function of the TT in its target situation in the target culture" (p. 138). Therefore, Vermeer's (1978) concept of skopos is very relevant to the translation of political euphemism where political content tends to be pronounced.

Finally, the translator has to bear in mind the seven standards of textuality that have been made relevant for translation as outlined by Hatim and Mason (1990) while translating a euphemistic expression. They include cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality.

Cohesion is the network of lexicogrammatical and other relations that links various parts of a text. These relations organize a text by requiring readers to interpret expressions by reference to other expressions in the surrounding linguistic environment. Coherence is the network of conceptual relations that underlines the surface text. It expresses the logical consistency of the sentences in a text in terms of

content. Intentionality is clearly user-centered referring to the purpose of a text producer has. Acceptability is equally user-centered, but relates not to the text but to the addressees and their sociocultural background which predisposes them to accept a text as coherent and cohesive on the basis of their ability to infer missing items. Informativity refers to new information presented in a text or to information that was unknown before, and situationality concerns the relationship of a text to a particular socio-temporal and local context. Finally, intertextuality is the relation between a given text and other relevant texts encountered in previous experience (House, 2012, p. 180).

Cohesion and coherence are employed in discourse analysis to describe the properties of a written text. The former is concerned with lexico-grammatical issues, which could be considered as covert while the latter is overt and rhetorical. Therefore, the translator should connect the text with the meta-linguistic elements that have a connection with the translate text, i.e. the surrounding actions of the speech. On the other hand, the translator should also make the text coherent with the target society and culture to be absorbed by them. Therefore, the translator should consider these two standards while translating political euphemism.

Most of these standards can be considered while translating any type of text or expression, and particularly when dealing with euphemistic expressions, in the interest of a proper rendition and a more faithful realization of the real intention of the discourse producer. This will allow the receiver to accept the message, the information presented in the euphemistic language, the relationship of the text to a specific socio-temporal and local context and the relationship between the text and other relevant ones in a previous experience.

## **2.9 Translation Strategies Related to Euphemism**

Translation strategies are identified as approaches to facilitate the translation task based on scientific methods and principles. Translation strategies play a vital role in solving translation problems that the translator may encounter in any translation process. Although scholars have defined translation strategies from their own perspectives, most of the definitions have roughly the same aspects and significance. Translation strategies are methodologies of translation to conduct the basic tasks of transferring a source text into its target text. In this regard, Krings (1986) defines translation as “translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task” (p. 18). While Jaaskelainen

(1999) further defines strategies as “a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favor the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information” (p. 71).

Based on the above definitions, the translator should decide whether the source text has euphemisms, which is not easy to determine in most cases. The translator may be skillful enough to find and preserve formal aspects without even identifying that the ST comprises a euphemism; however, the effect will not be the same in the TT as such.

Besides, the translator should have professional and cultural knowledge of the source text in all its aspects which includes politics, social norms, history and more; otherwise, the translator may not recognize the cause(s) for the hidden tenor of euphemism. The translator also should be mentally prepared and have the ability and proficiency to recognize the reason for using euphemism, analyze the lexical and semantic form, decode the intentional but concealed meaning, figure out the communicative function supposedly to carry out, and should finally have the ability to appreciate the relationship between the speaker and the target audience.

Once political euphemisms are produced with a specific ‘concealed agenda’ in the mind of the initiator, the translator must come to a decision regarding what his/her role is in the translation process. Is s/he to disclose the euphemized expression or utterance? Or is s/he to be an accomplice in maintaining the ‘concealed agenda’ in the target text?

There is an important role for the translator as the communicator mediating between two languages or cultures. Larson (1984) posits that euphemisms will often need to be translated by a comparable euphemism in the receptor language. The important thing is for the translator to recognize the euphemistic nature of the source language expression and then translate with an appropriate and acceptable expression of the receptor language whether euphemistic or not (p. 116).

Political euphemism often distorts reality and obscures a community which is inevitably the main function of the euphemism. However, how a translator deals with such a situation at this level is important. Should the translator follow the path of the speaker or author and in so doing be deceptive? Or is it incumbent upon the translator to focus on the listener or reader and disclose the concealed meaning?

As a decision maker, the translator should decide the best strategy or approach to be employed while translating political euphemisms. The translator should determine the proper type of equivalency. On the other hand, the translator may coin a novel expression in the target language reflecting the meaning of the euphemism.

Juliane House (1977) suggests two methods or strategies of translation, overt and covert, in order to explain her functional equivalence as a re-contextualization process. “An overt translation is one in which the TT addressees are quite ‘overtly’ not being directly addressed; thus an overt translation is one which must overtly be a translation, not, as it were, a ‘second original’” (p. 189). An overt translation is suitable when the content and form of the source text can be perceived in the original context. Moreover, overt translation tries to generate equivalence in the TT at the level of three dimensions: text, register and genre, since the goal of the translator is to maintain the context and content of the source text to the ultimate extent in order to let the receiver consider the text beyond the ST perspectives. According to House (1977), in an overt translation, the source text is suited in a particular manner to the source language society and culture (p. 189).

On the other hand, “A covert translation is a translation which enjoys or enjoyed the status of an original ST in the target culture. The translation is covert because it is not marked pragmatically as a TT of an ST but may, conceivably, have been created in its own right” (pp. 194-195). A covert translation is a translation neither tailored to a target culture audience, nor tied to the source community and culture. “Both ST and its covert TT are pragmatically of equal concern for source and target language addressees” (House, 1977, pp 194-195). Covert is proper when the form and content of the ST can be translated in a way that encompasses similar effect in the TL and SL alike. In covert translation, the translator tries to maintain the function of the source text by creating new text.

This dichotomy between covert and overt is, in fact, favourable to the translation of political euphemism where the situational dimensions should be considered while carrying out the translation. The two concepts are generally produced to serve a function in a target culture while the translator must make the decision regarding how to employ and maintain such a function in the target culture.

Another strategy of translation is equivalence; this helps the translator transfer the message into the TT by adopting the proper equivalent. There are many equivalence types; however, there are some varieties that can only be used for translating political euphemism. Mona Baker (1992) writes: “The term equivalence is adopted in this book for the sake of convenience – because most translators are used to it rather than because it has any theoretical status. It is used here with the proviso that although equivalence

can usually be obtained to some extent, it is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors and is therefore always relative” (pp. 5-6).

Literal or formal equivalence as a translation strategy could be applied to translating political euphemism through rendering the surface meaning of the euphemized word or a stretch of words. However, the right signification or tenor will not be conveyed properly since this strategy focuses on literal meaning or on the attention of the message in terms of form and content or aesthetics. In addition, it tends to the author or discourser more than the receiver. Therefore, such a strategy would not serve the political euphemism well, while the receiver is obscured.

On the other hand, the dynamic or functional equivalence strategy intends to serve the euphemized word or stretch of words wholly, since it is concerned with the receiver more than the discourser or author. Dynamic equivalence strategy can be used in translating political euphemism where the equivalent effect is the main target of such equivalent and the translation is faithful. Applying such a strategy in translation prompts the translator to discover ways of considering the comprehensive meta-linguistic features of the euphemized expressions.

Another equivalency should be considered when translating political euphemism; this is cultural equivalence. The translator should be aware of the target culture and should try to avoid anything that may cause a rupture or a gap for the target audience, a procedure that can be achieved through offering cultural references. Baker (1992) argues for “replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader” (p. 31).

Euphemism can be connotatively translated where the hidden meaning is the target of the translator. Euphemism, by definition, is an indirect word or expression, which means that it has connotative semantic dimensions obfuscating the truth or the right information. The translator, therefore, may use connotative equivalency to decode the euphemized meaning initiated by the discourser, wherein the translator tries to sustain the function of the source text.

Finally, omission strategy is the final resort for the translator whereby the political euphemism is totally omitted. This might be done for many reasons including but not limited to a lack of knowledge about euphemism, insufficient experience, or an inability to translate euphemism, or even a hidden ideology either on the part of the translator or by his or her patronage. According to Baker (1992), omission strategy

seems rather “drastic” (p. 40). Omission will be the last resort for the translator. However, I do not agree with what Baker proposed when translating political euphemism, since presenting the actual meaning of the political euphemism is the purpose of the translator.

### **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed political euphemism as well as some specific concepts regarding translation and translation studies. It addressed euphemism from several perspectives that may help the translator achieve the task through depending on the linguistic and functional dimensions. Features of political euphemism were also discussed. This chapter reviewed some existing theories and strategies of translation relevant to political euphemism in order to resolve the challenges that the translator(s) may encounter when translating a euphemistic expressions. The next chapter will analyze specific examples of political euphemism collected from different sources such as the Internet, newspapers, magazine articles, and political speeches.

## **Chapter Three: Data Analysis**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In chapter two, I discussed the theoretical framework of political euphemism. This chapter analyzes the translation of a number of political euphemisms. It consists of two main sections: data and methodology, and discussion and analysis. Examples are taken from on-line sources, speeches, and some newspaper articles dealing with political affairs globally. The euphemistic expressions or utterances from the source text (English) were uttered by very well-known and high-level political figures, which should give us sufficient grounds to rationalize their decisions and actions. The Arab translator has to decide whether or not his/her ethical responsibility is towards the target audience. S/he may either preserve the intended but concealed meaning of the original speaker, thereby misleading the target language audience, or reveals the euphemism by providing an accurate translation of the original text.

### **3.2 Data and Methodology**

The analysis in this chapter is based on various and selected examples of political euphemisms taken from different sources such as political speeches, websites, newspapers articles, and editorial. The speeches were delivered at different times by political figures such as George. W. Bush (2002), Condoleezza Rice (2006), and Barak Obama (2013). Other examples are taken from different sources such as electronic newspapers articles, declarations, media websites and from such sources as Washington Institute Web Site, Alyaum Newspaper Web Site, and Alittihad Newspaper Web Site. Each example is discussed along with its Arabic translation. The examples are examined and analyzed to give insight into the translation decisions and outcomes of the translation method.

Several approaches are applied here to demonstrate that the translation of political euphemisms are not restricted to a specific approach, due to diverse elements such as audience, time, ideology and culture. For example, applied here are the Gricean maxims, Nida's formal vs. dynamic translation, House's covert vs. overt translation, Newmark's communicative vs. semantic translation, skopos and Baker's pragmatics. Moreover, different strategies and techniques are also used to provide a proper rendition of the euphemistic expressions. There include equivalence, covert translation, explicitation and more. The examples discussed in this chapter are examined through the source text in terms of literal meaning and euphemized ones, that is, denotatively

and connotatively. The translation of the examples used are then analyzed and compared in terms of adequacy and representation, and, where deemed appropriate, other translation suggestions are provided.

### 3.3 Date and Analysis

In this section of the chapter, many examples of political euphemism will be discussed in terms of the background of the example itself, meta-linguistic perspectives, translation theories and strategies, in addition to proposing new translation options. There are several clear examples of political euphemisms used by George. W. Bush prior to the war against Iraq in 2003. He used terms such as "war of liberation" and "Operation of Iraqi freedom". He also called American soldiers in the war "Freedom Fighters" and "liberators". The following section consists of three examples of political euphemisms used by Bush and how those into Arabic.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Source Text: War of Liberation             | translation: حرب تحرير العراق          |
| 2. Source Text: Operation of Iraqi freedom    | translation: عملية تحرير الشعب العراقي |
| 3. Source Text: Freedom Fighters / liberators | translation: مقاتلو الحرية             |

Bush used euphemistic expressions since he knew that public opinion, even American, would not agree to the war against Iraq. He used these expressions in order to obscure the intentional action against Iraq. He promised to liberate and free the Iraqi people from the regime that he described as "dictatorial". In his speech, Bush said, "We will help you to build a new Iraq ... no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms. The tyrant will soon be gone. The day of your liberation is near". Liberation never comes from torture, nor does it mean the deprivation of liberty from one group to grant it to another. Fourteen years later, Iraq has not been properly rebuilt. On the contrary, the country remains in turmoil, and Bush himself later stated that his war on Iraq was the wrong decision. This declaration reflects that liberation was not the goal, but there was another motive for the war.

Although such expressions were translated into Arabic as seen above, the media kept calling it an "invasion". Furthermore, the operation against Iraq was consistently referred to by Bush administration as an "invasion" and "occupation" including by Lawrence B. Larry Wilkerson the former chief of staff to United States Secretary of State Colin Powell. However, later on Wilkerson criticized many aspects of the Iraq War. In addition, Richard Bruce Cheney, generally known, as Dick Cheney, an American politician who was the 46<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States from 2001 to 2009, under President George W. Bush, used the same term in an interview. The



invasion and occupation of Iraq was called "liberation" and the occupation army was called "Freedom Fighters/liberators" (G. W. Bush, 2017). These expressions will be discussed and analyzed at the level of the translation of the political euphemisms used in such discourse in light of the observations made and the theoretical aspect discussed in chapter two.

The translator translated the expressions as follows: "Liberation تحرير", "freedom حرية", "liberator, مقاتلو الحرية". The skopos of translation has been properly applied to convey these expressions. According to Munday (2001), skopos theory concerns the purpose of the translation in order to identify the translation approaches or strategies that are to be adopted to provide a functionally adequate result (p. 79). In addition, literal translation or word-for-word translation, and formal equivalence have been employed to translate such expressions to keep the original message, where the receiver may get the message directly.

However, by considering the declarations of Bush and his administration regarding the operation against Iraq in 2003, in addition to the status quo in Iraq, it could be argued that euphemistic expressions were used by Bush to beatify the real action against Iraq which was the invasion and occupation. Expressions were used to justify and obfuscate the factual intentions of such a war. Translating such euphemistic expressions literally could mislead the readers or receivers.

Therefore, the translator should firstly be aware that the utterance has a euphemism in order to deal with it professionally, and furthermore should consider the proper theoretical aspect while transferring political euphemism. Otherwise, the text will remain concealed while the effect will be the same as the source text (ST). In this respect, the translator considered the form rather than the content of the word or utterance. According to Baker (1992), the implicature, which is another form of pragmatic interference, is what the speaker means rather than what s/he says (p. 223).

The translator in the above example thus failed to consider at least two maxims, which are 'quality' and 'manner' (see 2.8 above). The quality is not sufficient for the target audience and culture, and the manner of the message, in fact, was not appropriately expressed as it should be. The translator therefore tended to side with the text producer rather than the receiver.

In the same vein, communicative translation, introduced by Newmark (1981), is also crucial and can be adopted in dealing with political euphemisms since it is so loyal to the target text (TT) and even TL culture rather than the ST. In this case, the

content of the message, the factual information, is more vital than the form. In this regard, such expressions should be communicatively transferred to provide the right semantic, pragmatic and functional aspects of the intentional but concealed meaning in the TT to be perceived with clarity by the target audience.

Finally, the translator could employ the seven standards of textuality (see 2.8 above) while translating political euphemisms. The translator should ensure that the euphemistic expressions cohere with the target language and culture through providing the actual meaning and information of the euphemism to be acceptable by the target community. Also, s/he should present the intention or the purpose of the speaker embedded in the euphemistic expression, and should consider the situation when the euphemism was used.

From another perspective, the translator should employ the proper translation strategy to convey the right semantic aspect into the TT. The translator, (of Aljazeera.net), should first realize that the speaker deliberately used euphemistic expressions to beatify the concealed intention. Therefore, the translator should have adopted the appropriate translation strategies to find the proper equivalence of the euphemistic words "liberation, freedom, and liberator". In this particular translation, the translator adopted a literal translation to convey these expressions in lieu of utilizing the right equivalence and explicit translation. On the other hand, the translation should be covertly reflected in order to present the euphemism embedded in the words and achieve the functional equivalence as a re-contextualization process, since covert translation deals with the deep meaning of the euphemistic expression. Functional equivalence or dynamic equivalence is meaning-based translation. This is a translation strategy in which the translator attempts to convey the thought(s) of the speaker and/or writer in the source language (SL) rather than the words and/or forms. The translator should understand the utterance and surrounding unit(s) of thought, then reflect the thought in the target language (TL). The forms of the source language are not important, since they are not the same as the forms of the target language. Adopting a literal strategy, however, misleads the reader or receiver and conceals the main action behind using such euphemistic expressions, which was the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Utilizing literal translation may reflect an ideology adopted by the translator, which obscures the actual meaning of the euphemism. The ideology may be controlled by the patronage or institution where the translator is hired or the translation commissioned.

Therefore, a translation could be proposed that demonstrates the euphemistic expressions used by Bush in order to deliver the correct translation to the target audience and culture since literal translation provides an opaque and misleading expression in Arabic. Therefore, the proposed translation for such expressions could be demonstrated as follows:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 4. Source Text: War of Liberation:          | Translation: حرب احتلال العراق          |
| 5. Source Text: Operation of Iraqi freedom: | Translation: عملية احتلال الشعب العراقي |
| 6. Source Text Freedom Fighters/liberators: | Translation: قوات أو جيش الاحتلال       |

Another example of euphemism was introduced by Condoleezza Rice when she served as United States Secretary of State (2005 -2009). In the context of exerting efforts to force Israel into a cease-fire in the southern part of Lebanon, Rice commented on the Lebanon War in 2006 by saying “What we are seeing here, in a sense, is the growing of the birth pangs of a new Middle East and whatever we do, we have to be certain that we're pushing forward to the new Middle East, not going back to the old one” (washingtonpost).

The euphemized statement "the birth pangs of a new Middle East" at that time was translated as follows:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 7. Source Text: the birth pangs of a new Middle East | Translation: مخاض ولادة شرق اوسط جديد |
|--|---------------------------------------|

The metaphoric expression "birth pangs, *المخاض*" may well imply the difficulties and chaos that the new shape will require to materialize; hence pangs meaning pain, often long, before birth, which itself comes with blood. Therefore, questions may be raised in this context, does the new Middle East come from wars, attacking innocent civilians, destroying infrastructure, or invasion and occupying other countries without any valid or legal right and reason? Should all these actions be acceptable by the receiver or reader in order to achieve such "pangs of childbirth?" Should the suffering and pain be endured by the respective receiver or reader by the birth of a new Middle East?

This euphemized metaphoric expression was used by Condoleezza Rice in order to obfuscate the intention behind framing the new Middle East. Creating a new Middle East actually needs a new map leading to a modification or demarcation of borders. A new Middle East will result from a reshaping of some Arab countries, some could be larger and some smaller, all of which would absolutely pass through a painful phase and lead to unhappy outcomes.

This statement "the birth pangs of a new Middle East, مخاض ولادة شرق اوسط جديد" has both metaphoric and euphemistic perspectives; it was employed to manipulate the real and hidden facts. "Birth pangs, مخاض ولادة" points to the notion of generating something new. Therefore, the translator should be keenly aware when dealing with this type of language that includes euphemistic expressions; especially when it is created by political experts who have a reason for using such language. The translator must always keep in mind the purpose of such euphemisms, and how the target audience and culture will understand it.

In the example above, the translator (of Aljazeera.net) transferred the statement by retaining the metaphoric aspect in the translation in order to convey the statement; however, the expression "Birth pangs, مخاض ولادة" should be linked to "New" in order to provide the listener or reader with proper information. In such a context, the translator intended to convey this expression through mimicking the metaphorical dimensions in the target text exactly as the source text. The translator should realize the pragmatic and functional meaning embedded in such an utterance; otherwise, the receiver's comprehension will be obscured. The target language, which is Arabic, can absorb the metaphoric expression since it is rich with rhetorical devices.

In light of the above discussion, transferring the real and concealed meaning of the euphemistic expression to the target language requires adapting proper translation theories or approaches. This helps other translators to understand the way of communicating political euphemisms and provides the receivers with the reality behind them. In a translation such as "مخاض ولادة شرق اوسط جديد", skopos theory is employed to convey the direct purpose of the euphemism, which would not present the intended and concealed semantic aspect of the utterance. Literal translation is also adapted to render the euphemism; however, it might provide the reader or receiver with an opaque meaning preventing him/her from understanding the connotative meaning and the intention of the euphemism. Therefore, other translation theories could be utilized to present political euphemism through a proper method. Connotative, proper equivalence, communicative translation or pragmatic rendering can all be used to decipher the semantic and pragmatic dimensions embedded in the euphemism. Thus, the connotative aspect provides the indicative meaning of the euphemism and makes the picture clearer to the receiver or reader by presenting the real semantic aspect of the declared euphemized expression. Further, proper equivalence can also be used to provide the right equivalent expression in the target language and be acceptable by the

target receiver or reader. Communicative translation may also be employed since it concerns the content rather than the form. This would assist the translator in conveying the meaning of the political euphemism from a deeper perspective. Finally, pragmatic perception may also be utilized since it focuses on the intentionality of the translation and deals with illocutionary and/ or the implicature aspect of the meaning embedded beyond the literal sense of what is explicitly stated. Indeed, most euphemisms are illocutionary acts.

The literal translation approach that was used above has not conveyed the intended meaning embedded in the euphemism. Thus, had the translators employed one of the related approaches, this would have allowed them to provide the correct function and the purpose of such a euphemistic expression.

Finally, the seven standards of textuality (see 2.8 above) could all be used in an attempt to convey the euphemistic expression and to present the appropriate semantics.

Translation strategy may therefore be considered as another crucial issue that should be taken into consideration while rendering predominantly political euphemisms. The translator should adopt the appropriate strategies to transmit the purpose and the semantics of such euphemisms. In this example "Birth pangs, مخاض وولادة", the translator employed a literal translation strategy in translating the statement; such a strategy is concerned with the denotative meaning and may thus not provide the intentional meaning of the euphemisms, while other translation strategies may be used to transport the right and proper semantics of the statement. For instance, the covert method or strategy which concerns the content and form of a source text can be adopted to translate the euphemistic expressions in a way that encompasses the effect in both the source text and target text. However, in the above example "Birth pangs, مخاض وولادة", the translator has not considered such aspects. A proper equivalence should be taken into consideration in the target text through finding the equivalence that can operate to demonstrate what the euphemism implies, where "مخاض وولادة" is not the right functional equivalence since it does not have the same effects in the target text.

On the other hand, some of seven standards of textuality (see 2.8 above) can be employed while translating such a euphemism in order to provide the proper meaning of the political euphemism in question. This is, of course, in addition to some of Paul Grice's maxims (see 2.8 above) which include quantity, quality, relevance and manner.

However, an ideology is adopted in the translation of such utterance which results in obfuscating the real meaning of the euphemism. This tends to lead the receiver

or reader away from the reality embedded in the euphemistic expression. This ideology might be adopted by the translator or by the party that controls the translation process through directing the translator to stick to the original formulation. This would affect such process which involves many elements such as selected language, receiver and culture.

Thus, I would propose another translation for the utterance "birth pangs of a new Middle East" which demonstrates the euphemism in a manner that is informed by relevant theoretical perspective and translation strategies: "خارطة سياسية لشرق أوسط جديد" or "تقسيم الشرق الأوسط".

Another example comes from Barak Obama, the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, who delivered a speech on 10 September 2013, in Washington, D.C. addressed to the nation regarding the US military action in Syria. In the speech, there are two euphemisms: "Others have asked whether it is worth acting if we do not take out Assad as some members of Congress have said, there is no point in simply doing a "pinprick" strike in Syria," (Obama, 2016). Therefore, the first euphemistic expression is "if we do not take out Assad", while the second is "pinprick". The former was translated as "إذا ابقينا الأسد", whereas the latter was translated as "ضربة" و"وخزة إبرة" في سوريا. These two euphemistic expressions will be discussed separately.

8. Source text: If we do not take out Assad Translation: إذا ابقينا الأسد

This speech was delivered to provide some information about the political situation in Syria, and the United States' position towards that situation. The US would eventually intervene to stop Assad from continuing to use chemical weapons against the Syrian population. However, Obama would not send American troops into Syria to conduct any military actions against what he described as a repressive regime, since his nation was basically tired of war.

Euphemisms are employed in these two expressions to beatify the intended meaning and purpose behind the words. The first euphemism is "do not take out Assad" which is translated into "إبقاء". This verb was used to express the notion that action should be taken against Assad. It is used in a negative form; however, it is affirmative in translation. The action of taking out someone refers to using force against someone or something to get away from a place or position. The action also reflects that such a person does not fulfil a responsibility or carry out accordingly duty. But the euphemism is used in such a way as to tone down language that is deliberately employed to lessen the harshness of meaning.

In this respect, the discourses used "do not take out" to express the intended action that could be taken against Assad. It is used in such a euphemistic manner in lieu of other words that might be considered unpleasant or offensive such as "overthrowing" or "de-grading" "إطاحة". Terms such as "overthrowing" or "de-grading" are used to express the idea of military action or operations which are conducted by the use of force against specific elements.

To reiterate, the translator conveyed "do not take out" in the affirmative form, and by using the modulation translation strategy. However, such a translation did not represent the meaning intended by the euphemism. The translation strategy adopted did not present the euphemistic expression. Further, the translator did not recognize the euphemistic aspect in the expression, an aspect that is extremely important while attempting to convey such a sensitive rhetorical device or strategy.

Therefore, the translator should be aware of the euphemistic expressions, which would lead to choosing the proper theories and strategies that can secure a suitable rendition. Thus, I propose "إطاحة" for "take out", so the rendition of this statement "if we do not take out Assad" would be "إذ لم نطح بالأسد". This translation maintains the euphemistic aspect of the original statement.

9. Source Text: A pinprick strike in Syria      Translation: ضربة "وخزة إبرة" في سوريا

The following is another euphemistic statement in the same speech delivered by Obama. He said "As some members of Congress have said, there is no point in simply doing a "pinprick" strike in Syria". The utterance "a pinprick strike in Syria" was translated, as ضربة "وخزة إبرة" في سوريا. This statement includes a euphemism through using the expression "pinprick" "وخزة إبرة", a form of words which refers to a type of military operation or attack to be conducted in Syria.

As discussed in chapter two, political euphemism has three typical features; one is a *strong characteristic of times*. Euphemism reflects the language of the social culture, so any changes in social development will be reflected in language. Thus, the concept of war or attack has been changing over time by how it has been employed throughout history. The term war has many euphemistic expressions such as: "police action", "conflict" "a rescue mission," and also by being replaced with words such as "operation" that have a positive and favorable tone, as in: "Operation Just Cause" and "Operation of Freedom".

The action "pinprick" was recommended by some members of Congress; they asked Obama to conduct a "Pinprick strike" in Syria. This expression is used, in the

speech, as a new euphemistic and metaphoric expression, which refers to a limited attack or strike. This request means that the US should do something, no matter how small, in Syria, against the current regime, which is described as repressive. "Pinprick" literally refers to something swift, but it could also be painful; however, the context should be taken into consideration in order to identify the surrounding linguistic, i.e. meta-linguistic elements, in addition to some of the seven standards of textuality such as intentionality, informativity, and situationality. Therefore, considering such elements will lead to a proper decoding of the meaning intended by such a metaphoric and euphemistic expression.

In this case, the translator should bear in mind all elements, linguistic and meta-linguistic, to provide a proper rendition of the euphemistic expression. The translation of such a political euphemism was offered in a direct way, i.e. literally, through conveying the metaphoric and euphemistic expression as is. The translator, see 9 above, adopted a literal translation strategy to transmit the euphemistic expression, which did not provide the proper rendition of the expression. Furthermore, literal translation leads to opaqueness in Arabic since it cannot include the embedded implicature and is incapable of representing the proper rendition of the utterance.

In order to translate such a political euphemism, the translator should employ the proper approach to demonstrate the intended meaning of such a euphemism. Therefore, "pinprick" in this context means a small-scale and limited strike, but it could also cause a critical degradation or damage to particular military capabilities, facilities or installations. Through considering the surrounding elements in the text, applying the right approach and adopting proper translation strategies, the translation of such a euphemistic expression would be appropriately conveyed. This would provide the listener and reader with the accurate rendition of the political euphemism. On the other hand, ideology was adopted by the translator through employing the literal meaning of the euphemism. This would affect translation process and the receiver by euphemizing the real meaning of the sentence in the TT. The translator should thus convey the actual meaning of the euphemistic expression in order to produce a more explicit rendition.

Therefore, "pinprick, وخزة إبرة" could be translated as "تنفيذ ضربة بسيطة/محددة", since the surrounding elements indicate that the strike may be conducted, but on a small, yet painful, scale. The translator may apply a communicative theory approach, a proper equivalence relation such as functional, connotative, or pragmatic, to produce an effect on the reader that is as close as possible to what was originally



intended. The translator may also look for proper dynamic equivalence of the political euphemism which makes sense, conveys the deep meaning of the original text, and produces a similar response from the target receiver or reader, i.e. one that can be clearly understood by the receiver. In addition, skopos theory can be applied for such a euphemism, a strategy that can convey the direct purpose of the euphemism.

Additionally, translation strategies should be properly adopted in order to convey the message embedded and the meaning intended in the euphemistic expression. In the above example, a literal strategy was adopted to convey the euphemistic expression, but it provided an opaque expression and meaning in Arabic. Therefore, other strategies may provide a clearer meaning of the euphemism. The euphemistic expression could be covertly translated since we all know that hidden meanings are vital when dealing with such a phenomenon. Explication strategy may be applied as well by providing an explanation of the euphemism. Equivalence strategy could also be employed to get and provide the correct equivalence in the target language. All of the above, could be used in the proposed translation of "pinprick, وخزة إبرة" leading to "تنفيذ" "ضربة بسيطة/محددة ولاذعة" which presents the sense, content and purpose of the euphemistic expression.

10. Source Text: Collateral Damage      Translation: أضرار مرافقة/خسائر جانبية

Another instance of political euphemism is initiated when political actors endeavor to obscure a questionable action taken legally. This is the atrocity of war which uses euphemistic expressions to alleviate or diminish the sentimental influence on the receiver, while those in command attempt to present an action as less cruel, somehow acceptable and less objectionable.

An excellent example of such a case is the expression "collateral damage" used in many contexts including, but not limited to, the war on Iraq and Gaza. The euphemism has been used to justify the killing of innocent civilians in such wars. Justifying such actions against innocent individuals is a true lie, as there is an overwhelming proof that the killing of civilians was on a large scale in Iraq and Gaza. Wars are often not comprehensible in terms of actual military objectives. As a principle, those involved in the conflict must consistently distinguish between civilians and combatants and between civilian targets and military targets. Therefore, it is imperative that combatants direct operations against military targets only, and not target unarmed civilians.

Through reviewing some Arabic press releases, articles, and commentaries by journalists such as Washington Institute Web Site, Alyaum Newspaper Web Site, and Alittihad Newspaper Web Site, the euphemistic expression "collateral damage" was translated into Arabic as "خسائر جانبية/ أضرار مرافقة". The English euphemism was used by politicians to conceal the actual facts and actions, whereas all the translation of this euphemism does is to reproduce the literal meaning of the source text, namely, 'collateral' as "جانبية/مرافق" and 'damage' as "خسائر/أضرار". In this respect, the literal translation definitely provided an opaque expression in Arabic as the target text wherein the receiver could not understand the real situation. However, when "collateral damage" is employed to illustrate the deliberate bombing of residential areas, where a lot of unarmed civilians reside, under the pretext of approaching the enemy's military objectives, then it should be taken in a different light and from an angle that provides the correct meaning of such a euphemism.

The result of the "collateral damage" is not as simple as "أضرار مرافقة أو خسائر" but it is more than what can be illustrated, declared, or even translated. Therefore, the translator should consider the embedded, intended but concealed meaning and sense, and should ensure that it is visible, in order to convey the proper translation of the euphemistic expression; otherwise, s/he would be an accomplice to a deceptive action. Being faithful to the source text, in such a case, would absolutely be in the interest of the translator's ethical responsibility towards his/her community and profession as a transformer and/or translator.

Utilizing literal translation in a particular situation, is a very weak, deceitful, and harmful decision. Furthermore, it provides an opaque expression in the TL; therefore, explicitation, connotative, covert, or proper equivalence should be employed to make the picture clearer to the receivers and help them to be aware of the hidden ideology and immorality behind using such euphemistic expression. On the other hand, adopting a literal translation of the euphemism "collateral damage" as "خسائر جانبية أو أضرار مرافقة" will reflect a personal ideology approach by the translator who is invisible here. This ideology is adopted by the translator or dictated by the party governing the translation process to reproduce the euphemism through providing an Arabic equivalent which would have the same effect and function in the target language. In addition, using the skopos approach would reflect the euphemism by identifying the purpose of such a euphemistic expression.

Thus, if the translator decided to adopt a literal translation for "collateral damage" as "خسائر أو أضرار مصاحبة، جانبية أو مرافقة", then addition could be employed in order to demonstrate the euphemism embedded in the expression, مثل "قتل المدنيين" to the translation of "الابرياء/قتل السكان / المدنيين العزل/ خسائر بشرية في منطقة العمليات/ على الهدف". The translator should also select an appropriate approach such as attempting proper equivalence that provides the same function of the euphemism, thereby, creating the same effect in the target text. Such a euphemism could be translated covertly since deep and connotative meaning is vital. Further, standards of textuality might be considered such as cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, and situationality while conveying such euphemisms. Therefore, "collateral damage" would be translated as "قتل المدنيين الابرياء" or "قتل السكان العزل" in order to demonstrate the political euphemism properly.

11. Source Text: Enhanced interrogation techniques      Translation: اساليب الاستجواب المعززة

Another example of a political euphemism is the phrase "enhanced interrogation techniques" which has been used widely in the media to describe the way of dealing with detainees in prisons. These techniques have been employed by the US Armed Forces and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in many places, most notably at Abu Ghuraib prison in Iraq. They were practiced by American interrogators against Iraqi people, whether military or civilians, in order to extract information.

The techniques or methods practiced included several horrific actions such as beating, binding in contorted stress positions, hooding, deprivation of sleep through using bright lights and loud heavy music, deprivation of food and drink, withholding medical care, walling, water boarding, subjection to extreme heat or cold, repeated slapping, nudity and sexual humiliation (Wofford, 2014).

Enhanced interrogation techniques are illegal and inhuman practices that are designed to break down detainees' resistance during the interrogation process. In other words, they reflect a kind of torture; therefore, it is a systematic program for torture of detainees. This expression was used euphemistically to beatify the real actions that the interrogators applied. An article published on December, 10, 2014, in *Business Insider* includes the expression "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques", and it was translated as "اساليب الاستجواب المعززة" in the Arabic version of the newspaper.

The translator should first have realized and been aware that the expression or utterance included a euphemism in order to interpret it professionally by considering

proper translation theories and strategies; otherwise, the sense will remain concealed. Moreover, the translator should be aware of the embedded meaning and subtle aspects of the utterance to reflect the right interpretation of euphemisms.

For instance, the translator should know what type of interrogation techniques are used in the questioning process and what the nature of such techniques are. This may help the translator provide the proper rendition. As mentioned previously, these techniques are used by US officers and the CIA to punish the detainees in prisons in order to elicit information that the US believes these prisoners hold; however, such techniques reflect torture.

Formal equivalence was also adopted to render "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques". However, this type of equivalence reflects the direct equivalent in the target language without providing the implicature of the message. Therefore, applying a literal translation or word-for-word translation, and formal equivalence theories would keep the original message, where the receiver may get the message directly. Furthermore, the skopos of the translation is properly employed to convey the expression; it provides the purpose of the translation to present a functionally adequate result.

Employing communicative equivalence is appropriate for conveying such utterances since it considers the target text and the target culture rather than the source language. This equivalence concerns content as more crucial than form, in order to provide correct semantic, pragmatic and functional features of the intentional and connotative meaning. Of course, this has to be reflected implicitly, yet comprehensibly, in the TT.

Applying proper equivalence in the target language would also help the translator find the appropriate rendition of the euphemism which will be acceptable for the target audience and culture, since the inappropriate rendition will affect both of them through the concealed meaning, where the situation is more than a process of "interrogation, استجواب" but "torture, تعذيب". Therefore, the translator shall realize the other elements related to the text, i.e. knowing the methods employed in the process itself, besides the connotative aspects which provide the reader or the audience with a clear view about the "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques" leading the translator to present a proper and non-obfuscated translation of such an utterance. Thus, eliciting equivalents in translation includes decoding the source language and attempting to

provide a proper equivalent in the target language to encode what is decoded in the source language, which definitely applies to the translation of political euphemisms.

Further, the seven standards of textuality (Hatim & Mason, 1990), can be applied to the translation of such a political euphemism as “Enhanced Interrogation Techniques.” Translators may use some of these standards in order to reflect the political euphemism. This is the case since the translation of such political euphemisms should cohere with the reader or listener's cultural or political knowledge and or background. Knowing the intention of the euphemistic expression plays a vital role in rendering such political euphemisms.

On the other hand, translation strategies are crucial and play a critical role in conveying the intentional but often obfuscated meaning embedded in the political euphemisms. In this specific example, the expression "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques, اساليب الاستجواب المعززة" was translated literally. Unfortunately, using literal translation on another word calque method, word-for-word or one-to-one equivalence is not able to reflect the concealed meaning of such an expression or its intent. This is in contradiction to Hatim and Mason's (1990) argument that “The meaning of an utterance has to do with what the utterance is intended to achieve, rather than merely the sense of the individual word.”(p. 31). The literal or calque translation could also mislead the receiver or listener, thus causing an inability to understand the real meaning of such a euphemistic utterance since the translator had provided an opaque meaning of the euphemism. Furthermore, the translator considered the form rather than the content of the utterance, thereby ignoring implicature which is essential to transform the message properly. Equivalence strategy can further be employed to provide the proper rendition and equivalency of such political euphemisms through opting for "interrogation, استجواب". The translation of such a euphemism can also be covertly reflected to provide the euphemism embedded in the expression since covert strategy deals with the deep meaning of the euphemistic expression. Using a covert strategy presents the euphemized expression in the correct manner.

Based on the above discussion, one may argue that this translation has not provided the intended message or the purpose of such "techniques". Therefore, as discussed earlier, the nature of these "interrogation, استجواب", techniques include the use of illegal and brutal methods to conduct the interrogation process carried out by some agencies like the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and diverse components of the US Armed Forces. As the "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques, اساليب الاستجواب المعززة"

reflect types of "torture, تعذيب", this will make the expression clearer and cope with real situation. The calque reflection would not provide the appropriate semantics; on the contrary, it would present an opaque meaning by conveying the expression literally causing the receiver to understand it as a normal interrogation process. Furthermore, an ideology governed such rendition either by translator or by the controlling powers. The translator is likely to find an Arabic equivalence to fulfill the purpose of the ideology without considering that such techniques are deliberate and intentional. Therefore, "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques" should be rendered as "اساليب الاستجواب المعززة" "بالتعذيب" to provide the proper message for the reader or listener.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter analyzed euphemisms taken from different sources including political speeches, on-line resources, and other sources that included examples of political euphemism. It discussed and analyzed the translation of the euphemisms and proposed different translations by applying the appropriate translation strategies. The proposed translations therefore were able to demonstrate the euphemistic expressions in an accurate manner, maintaining relevance and thereby making the euphemistic expressions clear to the target receiver. The next chapter will be the conclusion of this thesis. It will provide an overview of the present research as well as some recommendations for translating euphemistic expressions and utterances.

## Chapter Four: Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine the theoretical and practical perspectives of euphemisms that the translator may encounter when translating political discourse from English into Arabic. This thesis has endeavored to set up a practical framework for the translation of political euphemisms. It attempted to pave the way for the translator to overcome any issues s/he faces while translating political euphemisms. This was presented through adapting a number of different approaches and translation theories, and applying these to dealing with several examples taken from a diverse range of media sources. A variety of strategies were reviewed and examined to define the proper translation strategy or strategies for translating political euphemisms. It was established that euphemisms, particularly political ones, are essentially linguistic or rhetorical devices whose intentional, but concealed meaning, may not coincide with their literal meaning. Therefore, employing a literal or formal approach when translating euphemisms would in all probability fail to capture the actual meaning lurking behind the use of a source text euphemism.

This thesis focused on the challenges and difficulties imposed by a number of textual and contextual factors, which hinder rather than help the translator. Such challenges originate from cultural, ideological, social and indeed political sources that impact the translation process and which leave translators torn between loyalty to the source text and their ethical duty towards their audience.

The thesis showed that euphemism is a strategy used in order to conceal its actual meaning, which rarely, if ever, coincides with its literal meaning. Several translation theories and strategies were discussed to provide the translator with the proper methods and tools needed to decipher the embedded intended meanings of the euphemisms cited. Furthermore, this thesis attempted to help translators make the right decisions while rendering euphemisms, in particular political ones. Specifically, translators are guided through the process of overcoming the challenges and difficulties that arise from translating political euphemism. Indeed, the main concern throughout this study has been: should the translator decode and expose the “deceptive” or euphemized use concealed? And the answer adopted has systematically been that the translator should have the right to present the euphemized expression or utterance properly, in its actual meaning, when what is at stake is an entire culture or the fate of a community or an entity.

This thesis presented a general outline of discourse, and political discourse in particular, since it is the latter that is the main concern of this thesis. It provided some definitions of euphemism and its etymology, and reviewed categories and classifications of euphemism. In addition, it focused on political euphemism in terms of definition, features and use in political discourse, and outlined some translation theories and strategies related to political euphemisms. Furthermore, the thesis examined some examples taken from various sources including on-line sources, political speeches and some newspaper articles dealing with political affairs, along with their translation into Arabic, and discussed the challenges encountered while translating political euphemisms. In short, the thesis proposed selected methodologies to use and recommendations to heed, in dealing with this highly intriguing area – political euphemism.

The thesis stated that euphemism is a linguistic unit or fixed expression or a metaphor employed to relieve the receiver from any unpleasantness or embarrassment or indeed obfuscation of intentional but concealed meanings. Political euphemisms reflect and do in fact serve political agendas upheld by the speakers in order to distort the facts or change the reality of given situations. Translators should pay special attention to the meta-linguistic elements to realize the nature of the euphemized expressions, as a basis to establish the proper equivalency in the target society or culture. In this context, the translator should recognize the euphemism concealed within the utterances or expression by analyzing, understanding and decoding the euphemistic use, in order to utilize the right translation strategies or approaches, which may include but not limited to:

1. Literal equivalence.
2. Functional equivalence.
3. Cultural equivalence.
4. Covert translation.
5. Overt translation.

The translator may not be limited to a particular strategy or approach; s/he may choose what is most suitable, the sole criterion being whether the orientation is in favor of the receiver or reader to clear the intended meaning. At this level, the translator should make a decision as part of the process of translation; s/he can present the intention and the actual meaning of the euphemisms in the target language as clearly as it was intended.



Research should not stop at this stage; political euphemisms in Arabic speeches need to be addressed, or a contrastive study may be conducted to provide a full picture of the differences and/or similarities between English and Arabic euphemisms.

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## **Vita**

Mohannad Althawabeyeh was born on May 7, 1978, in Jordan. He holds a B.A. in English Language and Translation from Applied Sciences University in 1999. Mr. Althawabeyeh has three years of experience in teaching English language in secondary schools, and more than 8 years of experience in translation and interpreting; he worked as a free-lance translator in Jordan and UAE. Mohannad has more than 5 years of teaching English courses such as IELTS, TOEFL, conversation and levels for different categories of students. He has attended many certified courses in translation such as General Translation E-A-E, Legal Translation E-A-E at The German-Jordanian University and Simultaneous and Conference interpreting at Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Graduate School of Business. Mohannad joined the MATI program at American University of Sharjah AUS in fall 2013. Currently, Mohannad works as senior translator at a government agency.