Emotive expressions in President Bashar Al-Assad's political speeches with an eye to translation

Mohammad Qasem Al-Hamad
Universidad de Jordania de Ciencia y Tecnología
Jordania

Mohammad Awad Al-Shunnag
Universidad de Petra
Jordania

Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the figures of speech used in Arabic political speeches as a tool of communication to gain political advantages. The analysis of the data will mainly depend on four emotive figures of speech: simile, metaphor, personification, and euphemism. Throughout the study, detailed analysis of how emotive expressions are translated from Arabic into English, maintaining the emotive content of the source texts (the written manuscript of a speech), is also examined. The Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's political speeches are taken as a sample, (the Syrian President will be referred to here after as Al-Assad). An explanation of possible ways of rendering the emotive expressions accurately and effectively into English follows.

Keywords: emotive expressions; political discourse; translation; figures of speech; Bashar Al-Assad

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1. Introduction: Theoretical background and review of related literature

The emotive meaning can be defined as a trend in the language directly related to feelings and the psychological attitude of the speaker when expressing something; this in turn may produce affective responses in people towards the matter addressed. To illustrate this point, consider the following political expression "New Middle East" which does have a denotative equivalent in Arabic "الشرق الأوسط الجديد" but does not have the same emotive overtones in English. In the source language (SL), this expression denotes an American policy that seeks liberty, democracy, and reform in the region. In the Arabic language, however, this expression denotes an American policy that seeks to establish a new order in the Middle East serving Israel's interests. It is worthy to mention that this expression conjures for Arabs feelings of humiliation, dishonour, and deprivation of their rights and identity. In other words, it carries negative emotions for Arabs; whereas, it carries positive emotions for Americans and Israelis. Thus, in both languages it arouses different psychological and emotional responses.

Political discourse plays a considerable influence on the mind and behaviour of the members of a speech community. In the Arab World, more and more people are involved throughout their daily life in political actions by, for example, being asked to cast their votes in an election, watching the news on TV, reading a newspaper, or simply talking with friends about the consequences which recent decisions of the government might have for each individual. Zheng (2000) defines 'political discourse' as:

> A mixed product of personal development and the relevant social environment in which an individual grows. Any individual political discourse is the result of personal development in certain social settings. Personal development is affected by the individual's educational experiences, parental influence, social circles, political party, economic status etc.

To make sense of political discourse, it is necessary to think of language as mediation, based on the recognition that politics cannot be conducted without language. Newmark (1991: 146) asserts 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". Emotive expressions

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are used to provoke the feelings of an audience which may help in gaining their satisfaction and support to what is spoken. Lucas (1992: 339) points out that "one way to generate emotional appeal is to use emotion-laden words". In this domain, Arab politicians use emotive expressions in their speeches as a powerful means of conveying their feelings and attitudes towards critical political issues. They may emotively manipulate language to win their audience approval. As Wilson (1990: 18-19) states: "Certainly, politicians use words and sentences in an emotive manner; it is part of their aim to create a feeling of solidarity, to arouse emotions such as fear, hate or joy". Using emotive expressions enhances Arabic political speech and gives it a kind of power. This power cannot be understood easily by non-native speakers of Arabic and thus needs analysis in the full sense before embarking on any translational action. Therefore, it becomes the translator(s)' job to convey the same emotiveness to create the same effect and have the same impact on the target receivers as they had on the source receivers.

Generally speaking, no one can question the role translation plays in the life of people as well as nations. Translation used to be considered an inter-language transfer of meaning, which is the point of departure for research and study. Many definitions demonstrate this, since translation is understood as the process by which a meaning in a specific source language is linguistically as well as semantically transformed into another language. The duty of the translator is to know how to reconstruct the meaning of the source language (SL) and how to convey it in the target language (TL). For this reason, it is imperative that the translator possess a broad and profound knowledge of both languages.

Moreover, all over the world translators are subject to numerous constraints when translating from and into international world languages. Constraints vary according to the nature of the text, target and source languages involved, and the text's producers and receivers. Translating from Arabic into English language, for example, is regarded as difficult, due to the extended use of emotive and cultural-bound expressions. Such emotive expressions present translators with a dilemma of lexical incongruence. This situation then begs the question: how does a translator render such expressions accurately and effectively to give the intended impact in the target text with

minimal loss of meaning, if any, so that a better understanding between source and target languages could be achieved?

In the theoretical framework, the analysis and translation of emotiveness in this study can be seen in the context of Skopos theory and functionalism (Vermeer 1989). Usually, texts are produced and received with a specific purpose in mind. This is the main argument of the Skopos theory (derived from the Greek word *skopós*, which means 'purpose', 'aim', 'goal', and 'objective'). According to this theory, translation is a specific kind of communicative action; each action has a specific purpose, and therefore, the most decisive criterion for any translation is its purpose (skopos). Skopos theory and functionalism focus on the translator, giving him/her more freedom and responsibility. Moreover, the traditional notion of equivalence gradually loses its purpose.

Barkho (1987: 147) remarks that "a general characteristic of Arabic political terminology is that it is charged with high emotive meaning, which renders it difficult to translate". This can be a serious problem for a translator dealing with such discourse i.e. a problem in preserving the emotive meaning between the SL and the TL. Shunnaq (1993: 37-38) points out that: Three types of lexical items pertaining to Arabic-English translation can be identified:

> the first includes items of the source language (SL) which have straightforward equivalents in the target language (TL), the second includes items which have only partial equivalents, and the third includes items which do not have equivalents. Translating emotive expressions usually involves the second and the third types, which makes it necessary for the translator to struggle hard to preserve the emotive element in Arabic so as to achieve congruency.

In his book, Turk (1985) discusses emotion as a lever among other levers, such as habit and intellect, which a speaker can use to help persuade the audience. He describes emotions as the biological motive power and mentions several general points about the use of emotional appeals in persuasive speaking. One is that emotion is more dominant in groups and more hidden in individuals. Another is the fact that emotions are contagious. In addition, he suggests seven means which can be used to change the audience's mind on an issue: self-preservation, possessions, power, posterity, convention, sentiment and contrary suggestion.

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Zheng's (2000) examines how language can be used as a resource of cultural value and creative power in Australian English. He reveals how Australian politicians use language as a powerful tool in gaining political advantage. In this study, several segments of the so-called "public discourse" have been analyzed, but he mainly focuses on two areas of speech: how politicians use their language skills in gaining public support, and how they evade responsibility. He investigates three speeches; one is taken from the Australian Prime Minster, John Haward, one speech from the opposition leader, Kim Beazley, and the third speech is from the One Nation Party leader, Pauline Hanson. Special discourse features of these speeches have been compiled and categorized. The speeches are studied from the various angles of discourse analysis and political rhetoric techniques.

Nida (1964) defines connotative meaning as: "the aspects of author and the emotional response of a receptor. It can be bad or good, strong or weak". In this context, Nida concludes that emotiveness is the result of the interaction of author, text, and audience. He goes on to state three principles of connotative meaning: the speaker associated with the word, the practical circumstances in which the word is used, and the linguistic characteristics of the word.

Morillas (2002) argues for the need to distinguish two types of semantic models for the purpose of describing emotive expressions. On the one hand, some emotive expressions are straightforwardly 'extensionalist', that is, they can be represented linguistically by models that read out the semantic representation directly from the naturalistic experience, with minimal projective elaboration or amplification. On the other hand, some models of emotive expressions rely on analogical, cognitive models (e.g. metaphoric models). He concludes that in representing semantically emotive expressions we need both an extensionalist type of semantic representation format for the denotative concepts and an intentional-motivational one for the analogical, projective ones.

Shunnaq (1993) examines different aspects regarding lexical incongruence in Arabic–English translation due to emotiveness in Arabic. He divides emotive expressions into three types: positive, negative, and neutral. He classifies the main sources of emotive expressions into figures of speech, cultural expressions and naturally emotive expressions. Figures of speech include

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metaphor and simile, euphemism and dysphemism, and personification. Cultural expressions include religious, fatalistic, political, material, social expressions and synonyms. He concludes that translating Arabic emotive expressions is not an easy task because it deals with the connotative meaning which is very difficult to convey as it involves expressions dealing with culturally bound emotive concepts.

2. Objectives of the study

The study embarks upon analyzing how emotiveness is used in Arabic political speeches delivered by President Al-Assad and examining the way emotive expressions in these speeches are translated into English. It intends to point out that in some areas of these speeches, translator(s) failed to fully convey the same degree of emotiveness. To make matters clearer, the study addresses the following questions:

– How are emotive expressions used in the Arabic political speeches?
– Does the English translation maintain the emotive meaning observed in Al-Assad's speeches?
– How can a translator render such emotive expressions accurately and effectively to give the intended impact in the target text with minimal loss of meaning?

These questions have motivated the researchers to investigate the phenomenon of emotiveness in Al-Assad's speeches, which have not been investigated yet in translation studies. In order to explore the previous questions, the researcher will describe the study's methodology in the following sections.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

The data of the study consists of written manuscripts of Arabic speeches delivered by President Al-Assad along with their English translations. These speeches were delivered in the period between 2005 and 2006. In this period, Syria faced major challenges. These challenges were the result of regional and international developments involving the occupation of

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Iraq, the emergence of an influential trend among the Lebanese public opposing the Syrian military presence in Lebanon after the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri, the Palestinian question, Hezbollah, and the isolation imposed on it by the United States. All of the speeches were delivered inside Syria. This fact reveals that the President's main concern in his speeches is the Syrian people.

The researcher has gotten no assistance in collecting the data required for the study from the Syrian official side; therefore, he went to the Syrian Embassy in Amman and wrote to the Syrian Ministry of Information for this purpose but received no reply. For this reason, the researcher has collected Al-Assad's speeches and their translations from the website of the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), (www.sana.org), which is the official state news agency of Syria. From those speeches, the researcher has selected a sample for the purpose of the study. The sample contains ample examples of emotiveness.

Five speeches were selected for this study. One speech was delivered before the People's Assembly in Damascus on March 5, 2005, another at Damascus University on November 10, 2005, at the Arab Bar Association Conference in Damascus on January 21, 2006, before the General Congress of Arab Parties in Damascus on March 4, 2006, and the last speech of the President at Journalists Union 4th Conference in Damascus on August 15, 2006. The speeches in the Arabic language were published by different sources. The researcher collected and compared these texts with SANA written manuscript of the speeches to verify SANA texts authenticity.

The reasons for selecting these political speeches are simple. In terms of emotiveness, as mentioned earlier, there are ample examples of emotive expressions in these speeches. Moreover, they have not been investigated yet. Furthermore, these speeches continue to receive growing importance due to the increasing pressure Syria is facing.

To fulfil the purpose of the study, the researcher identified and analyzed emotive expressions using emotive figures of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, personification, and euphemism). He believes that the four figures of speech deserve a close examination because of their strong connection to the emotional aspect of language and their weight in political discourse. The researcher then subjects the translations to a translation critique

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to analyse and see whether the emotive meaning in the source language (SL) that the study would come up with is preserved in the English translation or not. These methods are applied in Chapter Five.

4. Results and Discussion

To achieve the purpose of this study, figures of speech can be an aid in both the understanding of source texts and the production of functionally adequate target texts. That is to say, applying figures of speech (simile, metaphor, personification, and euphemism) to the speeches will clarify aspects of emotiveness used, and assist in finding the most appropriate technique(s) to successfully render political emotive expressions into English preserving the intended emotive meaning, and draw insight to the President's speeches. It should be mentioned here that the work of Shunnaq (1993) has influenced some of this analysis.

5. Figures of Speech

It is important to recognize that "each language has its own patterns of figures of speech" (Shunnaq, 1993:40) due to the differences in linguistic system and cultural properties it contains. Figures of speech (also known as 'rhetorical figures') are linguistic devices used in a figurative or non-literal sense. They may add vividness to a speech because they are strongly connected to the connotative meaning and emotional aspect of language. Booth & Gregory (1987) and Zuck (1996) have commented that figures of speech relate to the form in which the words are used out of their ordinary sense, place, or manner for the purpose of attracting our attention to what is meant. Moreover, figures of speech are often used for emphasis or clarity; although clarity may suffer from their use.

Figures of speech are used in a speech when the speaker wants to make a strong impression on his audience. In this respect, Arabic is full of figurative expressions that have come to be used as common language expressions. It is noticeable that speakers of Arabic cannot deliver effective speech without attending to the figurative use of language.

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It must be said that the researcher has referred to many studies on figures of speech but the focus here will be on emotive figures of speech. Throughout the following part of the study, the analysis of the data will mainly depend on four emotive figures of speech: simile, metaphor, personification, and euphemism.

5.1. Simile

Specifically regarding types of emotive figures of speech, the simile will be studied first. A simile is a figure of speech involving an explicit comparison between two things using (مثل) 'like' or (ك) 'as'. More technically, simile is defined by Lucas (1992: 223) as "an explicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common. It always contains the words "like" or "as" ". After critical analysis of simile and metaphor, it can be said that every simile and metaphor can be analyzed in terms of three components (see Zuck, 1996: 106): a **topic** (the item being illustrated), an **image** (the representative figure), and a **point of similarity** (the actual meaning of the simile or metaphor in the context or the particular aspect being shared between the topic and the image). Consider this example: He [*topic*] is brave [*point of similarity*] like a lion [*image*].

Often the three components of a simile are not all explicit, as is the case in the previous example, especially when dealing with figurative language. One or more elements might be implicit in the simile.

Consider the simile in the following excerpt:

(1)   طبعا التجارة... تجارة البضائع هى مهنة محترمة لكن   **تجارة المواقف السياسية هى كتجارة الرقيق منبوذة**.

(From the speech before the People's Assembly on March 5, 2005)

The English SANA translation of the above excerpt is:

Of course trading in products is a respected trade but **trading in politics is like slave trade**.

In this example, the simile تجارة المواقف السياسية هى كتجارة الرقيق منبوذة can be analyzed in terms of the three components:

- Topic: تجارة المواقف السياسية (trade policy position)

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- Image: تجارة الرقيق (slave trade)
- Point of similarity: منبوذة (ostracized)

Here, all the components of the simile are explicit in the source text. Therefore, the hearer/reader of the source text will understand the picture that is painted by the President in the audiences' mind.

The translation suggested by SANA contains a number of glaring mistakes. At this time the researcher will only clarify the mistake that is made in translating the simile. One of the three components of the simile, which is the point of similarity, was not rendered in the target text. For this reason, no emotional appeals have been conveyed to the translation as the Arabic version successfully does. The researcher, because of this reason, produces an alternative translation:

Of course trading in products is a respected trade but **trading in politics is like slave trade; ostracised.**

Consider the SANA translation of the following lines:

(2)   استقلاب الخلية بحاجة الى سكر كمادة احتراق ليخلق
الطاقة التى تساعد الخلية على الحياة... والشىء نفسه بالنسبة للعلاقات
الدولية... **هذه المواد التى تحترق دائما هى الدول الصغرى وخاصة اننا نزج
انفسنا ونعرض انفسنا كمواد احتراق...**

(From the speech at Damascus University on November 10, 2005)

... cell metabolism which needs the sugar that generates energy which is essential for the life of the cell. The same applies to international relations. **The fuel is the small countries, particularly that we present ourselves as fuel**.

Reading the English SANA translation, the researcher thinks here that the translator has shown eminent success in conveying the purpose behind using the simile:

انفسنا ونعرض انفسنا كمواد احتراق

هذه المواد التى تحترق دائما هى الدول الصغرى وخاصة اننا نزج

being the provoking of emotional responses among the audience. The simile can be divided into the three components as:

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- Topic: الدول الصغرى (small states)
- Image: مواد احتراق (flammable materials)
- The point of similarity could be:

الدول الصغرى ينظر اليها كمواد احتراق تستخدم لتوفير الطاقة و الحياة للدول الكبرى

As we deal with emotive expressions in translation, at times it is more effective to adjust the image to a more familiar one in the target language. In this simile, the SANA translator adjusts the image and instead of using (burning materials) as the image, he/she uses (fuel) as alternative. Therefore, there is no need to add anything to the translation. Here, the translator should consider what sorts of similes are used in the target language so that the resulting translation is reflected in a natural and appropriate context.

Consider the SANA translation of the simile in this paragraph:

(3) اسرائيل هي من يتحمل المسؤولية... ولكن علينا أن نضيف عليها من يتحمل المسؤولية هم من شجعوا اسرائيل على المجيء الى لبنان ووقفوا معها ودعموها. جماعة١٧ أيار يتحملون مسؤولية الدمار والمجازر والحرب من أولها الى اخرها. لذلك **أتى هذا القرار كرافعة سياسية لهذه القوى**...

(From the speech at Journalists Union 4th Conference on August 15, 2006)

Israel is the party who should be held accountable. We still have to say that those who encouraged Israel to attack Lebanon, stood by and supported it should be held accountable as well. The May 17 Group is responsible for the destruction, massacres and the war from A to Z. Hence **come resolution 1701 as a political lift for this group**...

As noticed in the Arabic version, one of the three components of the simile is left implicit, which is the point of similarity.

5.2. Metaphor

"Looking at reality through different metaphors is like looking at light through different colored filters. When one filter is changed for another of a different color, a new version of reality may suddenly come into view" (Booth & Gregory, 1987: 247).

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another by saying that one is similar to another. Metaphor is convincingly established by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The theory of conceptual view of metaphor outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (ibid) sees metaphors as a means of understanding something in terms of something else. The theory of conceptual metaphor is useful for this study, since it implies that metaphors are used in everyday discourse including political discourse. Therefore, metaphors cannot generally be regarded as something literary. A metaphor is defined by Lucas (1992: 224) as "an implicit comparison between things that are essentially different yet have something in common". When used effectively metaphor –like simile– is an excellent way to bring colour to a speech, to make abstract ideas concrete, to clarify the unknown, and to express feelings and emotions. Wilson (1990: 104) points out that "Metaphors may be employed for connotative or emotional purposes in arousing emotions and reinforcing particular perspectives". In the same sense, Aziz (1995: 85) points out that "Metaphors provide the main source of an emotive message". Also, Arduini (1998:189) adds that "everyone uses metaphors in everyday speech; in fact, it is hardly possible to avoid meeting with thousands of figures, a richness no less than that to be found in works of literature."

Furthermore, Kövecses (2002: vii) indicates five features of metaphor that summarize what have been said about metaphor in this section:

> First, metaphor is a property of words; it is a linguistic phenomenon. Second, metaphor is used for some artistic and rhetorical purpose. Third, metaphor is based on a resemblance between the two entities that are compared and identified. Fourth, metaphor is a conscious and deliberate use of words, and you must have a special talent to be able to do it and do it well. Only great poets or eloquent speakers, such as, say, Shakespeare and Churchill, can be its masters. Fifth, it is also commonly held that metaphor is a figure of speech that we can do without; we use it for special effects…

Metaphors occupy a central place in the rhetoric of contemporary politicians. Emotive expressions in political speeches are metaphorized in terms of human and non human characteristics and are derived from nature, human body, or inanimate objects. Shunnaq (1993: 41) remarks that "in Arabic, emotions are often metaphorized in terms of fire, temperature, fluid, anger, pride, love, etc. English follows this pattern in its own way".

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A metaphor –like a simile– involves a topic, an image, and a point of similarity, but it does not use "like" or "as" or anything else to make it explicit that a comparison is made. So while a simile might be "she is like a snake" a corresponding metaphor might be "she is a snake."

On November 10, 2005, Al-Assad addressed the professors and students of Damascus University. When delivering this speech, he criticized the Lebanese government as a puppet for Syria's enemies and its Prime Minister, Fouad Siniora. The president says:

(6) فى الحقيقة ان ما نراه اليوم هو ان لبنان ممر ومصنع وممول لكل هذه المؤامرات. هذا يعنى ان السيد السنيورة لم يتمكن من الالتزام او لم يسمح له بالالتزام لانه **عبد مأمور لعبد مأمور**.

The SANA translation of this paragraph is the following:

In fact, what we see today is that Lebanon has become a route, a manufacturer and financier for these conspiracies. This means that Mr. Siniora was unable to live up to his commitments or he was not allowed to do so because **he receives orders from those who receive orders in their turn**.

Reading the English SANA translation, the researcher asserts here that the translator has not successfully conveyed the purpose behind using the metaphor 'عبد مأمور لعبد مأمور' by the President; being the provoking of negative emotional responses among the audience against the Siniora's government. When analyzing the metaphor, the researcher found that all the components of this comparison are explicit in the source text:

- Topic: Mr. Siniora
- Image: slave
- Point of similarity: Mr. Siniora, according to the President, receives orders from his masters just like a slave.

As with similes, when translating into the TL the translator sometimes finds it necessary to make an implicit component of the comparison explicit, and in light of the fact that a metaphor is defined as an implicit comparison it is sometimes necessary to make explicit the fact that a comparison is being made. When this scenario takes place a metaphor is translated as a simile. In this case, the suggested translation might be more emotive:

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> In fact, what we see today is that Lebanon has become a route, a manufacturer and financier for these conspiracies. This means that Mr. Siniora was unable to live up to his commitments or he was not allowed to do so because **he receives orders from those who receive orders in their turn just like a slave commanded by a commanded slave.**

To clarify this technique of translating metaphor, consider the following example:

(7) أرحب بكم فى سورية... سورية التى يطلق عليها الكثير من العرب اسم **قلب العروبة النابض**... و اذا كان للقلب أن ينبض... فلابد له من دماء... و أنتم الدماء التى أتت من مختلف أنحاء الجسد العربى حاملة معها كل العناصر العربية الغنية... و الغنية جدا... المتواجدة فى أنحاء هذا الجسد والتى تعطيه القوة والمناعة

(From the speech before the General Congress of Arab Parties on March 4, 2006)

The SANA translation of this very successful, full of emotion paragraph reads as:

I would like to welcome you to Syria, the country called by many Arabs **as the beating heart of Arabism**. There should be blood for a heart to beat, and you are the blood which came from various parts of the Arab body carrying all Arab very rich elements which empowers this body with strength and immunity.

Here, the expression "قلب العروبة النابض" is used metaphorically in order to express deep emotion and impress the audience at the beginning of the President's speech. Moreover, national identity (Arabism) serves as a means by which to target the widest possible section of Syrians and Arabs as, in the Arab World, national identity arouses certain emotional reactions and provokes the feelings of the Arabs. This is why President Al-Assad pays particular attention to the issue of national identity and addresses it in all his speeches.

5.3. Personification

Personification can be defined as a figure of speech, whereby inanimate objects or abstractions are referred to as having human qualities or forms. Personification is defined by Willis (1973: 246) as "Personification attributes human qualities to nonhuman objects or entities". The main purpose of personification is to help the speaker/writer avoid abstraction by achieving animation. This figure occurs when an expression deviates from

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the normal or ordinary manner realized in the world. In political discourse, such deviations can be used to attract the attention of the audience and to express excessive emotiveness especially when used in Arabic.

Speaking at the opening session of the Arab Bar Association Conference in Damascus on January 21, 2006, Al-Assad criticized the international community for using the policy of double standards when dealing with Arab-Israeli conflict. He says:

(15)   يضاف اليه الانتهاكات الاسرائيلية للاجواء والاراضي اللبنانية أمام أنظار المجتمع الدولى الصامت
طبعا المجتمع الدولى صامت فقط فى مثل هذه الحالات عندما يتعلق الامر بتصريح بسيط يزعج إسرائيل
قليلا **يتحول هذا المجتمع الدولى الى مجتمع فاعل ونشيط وله لسان يتكلم وأحيانا يكون شرسا**

The SANA translation of this excerpt is:

… added to that the Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and land before the eyes of a **silent** international community. Of course the international community is **silent** in such cases … when it comes to a simple statement that disturbs Israel a little bit … **here the international community turns into an active and influential society with a tongue to speak and sometimes this tongue become fierce**.

The international community is figuratively portrayed as a man who has the ability to speak and keep silent whenever he wants. In this case, the President, expresses his opinion through vivid language that makes the argument come alive.

The English SANA translation seems to be a literal translation. This kind of translation, in this particular case, does not convey the emotive meaning observed in the source of the text. For example, the word 'صامت' was literally translated into 'silent'; the researcher suggests 'holds tongue as if one hasn't any' which affects the listener more. Another translation that does not match the emotive touch is the phrase 'له لسان يتكلم' which was literally rendered into 'with a tongue to speak'; the researcher believes that it is better to say 'does not lack a tongue or a voice'. As a result, the alternative translation should be as the following:

… added to that the Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and land before the eyes of the international community which **holds its tongue as if it hasn't any**. Of course the international community **holds its tongue** in such cases … when it

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comes to a simple statement that disturbs Israel a little bit … **here the international community turns into an active and influential society which does not lack a tongue or a voice and sometimes this tongue become fierce**.

Consider the SANA translation of the following excerpt:

(16)   ومن ثم دفعهم للاستسلام لوهم الهزيمة المؤكدة... عند اول
محاولة للمواجهة والصمود فى وجه الضغوط الخارجية التى تتعرض لها المنطقة
عامة... وسورية بوجه خاص.
وقد توجه منظرو هذه الحرب الى الشباب تحديدا على اعتبار انهم لم
يستذكروا او يعايشوا تفاصيل الاحداث السياسية التى مرت منذ عقدين من
الزمن وقبل ذلك... حيث **تمكنت سورية حينها من الصمود فى وجه اعاصير اتت
من كل اتجاه وفشلت فى تحقيق اهدافها**.

(From the speech at Damascus University on November 10, 2005)

… and consequently pushing them to surrender to the illusion of certain defeat at the first attempt to confront and stand fast before outside pressure put on the whole region, and on Syria in particular.

Theorists of this war have targeted our youth, in particular, because they do not recall, or have not lived the details of the political events in the past two decades and earlier. For **Syria was able then to stand the storms blowing from every direction and which failed to achieve their objectives**.

In this example, Al-Assad figuratively describes the challenges and campaigns Syria was facing as 'storms.' These storms were given a human quality (movement) and a human form (failure). By using this emotive picture, the President is telling Syrians that they will stand strongly in the face of challenges and campaigns which aim at weakening their unity, building upon instances in the past where they had unified and stood together when facing similar challenges and campaigns.

For one who masters both Arabic and English, it is clear that SANA translation of this picture is emotive and natural. But, to make the translation more comprehensible and more emotive, the researcher believes it may be necessary, in this instance, to adjust as follows:

> … and consequently pushing them to surrender to the illu-
> sion of certain defeat at the first attempt to confront and

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stand fast before outside pressure put on the whole region,
and on Syria in particular.

Theorists of this war have targeted our youth, in particular,
because they do not recall, or have not lived the details of the
political events in the past two decades and earlier. For **Syria
was able to stand the storms blowing from every direction
and made them fail to achieve their objectives**...

5.4. Euphemism

Different contexts demand widely different vocabularies
when addressing sensitive issues that may cause a feeling of
pain for others; in this case, it is important to choose words
and expressions that avoid naming things directly or sugar-coat
ideas. This is the purpose of euphemism. Euphemism is a figure
of speech used by the speaker to be less offensive, disturbing,
or troubling than the expression it replaces. It is used to avoid
talking explicitly about some harsh, unpleasant, or distasteful
topic. Euphemism is defined by Allan (2001: 148) as "a word
or phrase used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression.
It avoids possible loss of face". Indeed, when an expression is
used as a euphemism, its literal meaning is dropped and for this
reason this figure of speech usually carries emotive meaning.

As was indicated in the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia (2006),
in Western Culture, euphemisms are applied to six areas of life:
death, poverty and low social status, religion, bodily functions,
war and politics, and sex. In his essay "Politics and the English
Language", Orwell (1946) pointed out the political tendency to
use euphemism. It is noticeable throughout contemporary po-
litical discourse that euphemisms are widely used as a result of
their ability to hide something behind a softened or manipulated
language. They are used to avoid admissions of possibly contro-
versial actions. Moreover, politicians tend to use euphemisms
in their speeches to speak about a topic through an indirect
way in order to avoid creating political crises among or between
countries. Consider this example in which the President states
clearly that he used euphemism:

(19)   النقطة الاخرى هى القاعدة الشعبية التى تشعر بالخزى والعار نتيجة الكثير من المواقف السياسية
وردود أفعالنا تجاه طروحات معينة... تجاه أحداث معينة... و تجاه قضايا معينة **لا ترقى الى مستوى
طموحات الشارع العربى .والحقيقة ان كلمة لا ترقى هى كلمة ملطفة... هى بعيدة جدا عن طموحات
الشارع العربى**

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(From the speech before the General Congress of Arab Parties on March 4, 2006)

The SANA translation of this excerpt is the following:

> The other point is the popular grass and roots which feel shame and disgrace over as result of many political stances and our reactions over certain questions…certain incidents… and **over certain issues that don't amount to the level of the ambitions of the man of the street. In fact "don't amount to" is a softened phrase, and it's very far from the ambitions of the ordinary man of the street**

In this example, Al-Assad's euphemistic portrayal of how disappointed the public is of the Arab official positions and reactions over certain political issues as ' لا ترقى الى مستوى طموحات الشارع العربى ' 'evoked emotive image of shame and discomfort (negative emotion). This expression was an attempt, according to the President, to soften the harsh reality of the gap that exists in the Arab World between ambitions of the public and the official policies.

The English SANA translation is influenced by the Arabic writing style. Moreover, it seems to be literal translation. The euphemistic expression ' الى مستوى طموحات الشارع العربى لا ترقى ' was translated into 'don't amount to the level of the ambitions of the man of the street'. This literal translation may work well in conveying the emotive meaning observed in the source text. Yet, SANA translator has a problem. He/she, once again, renders ' الشارع ' into 'the man of the street'; it is more appropriate to use 'layman in the street'.

To further address and clarify this issue, consider the following excerpt:

(20)   بالاضافة **لاستخدام هذه الظاهرة أى الارهاب** كأداة فى يد بعض القوى التى تدعى مكافحة الارهاب
من أجل ارهاب الاخرين وترويعهم والافتئات على ثقافتهم وهويتهم والتدخل فى شؤونهم الداخلية

(From the speech at the opening session of the Arab Bar Association Conference in Damascus on January 21, 2006)

The SANA translation of this excerpt is the following:

> … in addition to **the exploitation of this phenomena, namely terrorism**, as a tool in the hands of some powers which claim fighting terrorism in order to intimidate and terrorize the others and attack their cultures, identities and intervene in their internal affairs …

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It is noticeable that in modern political discourse the expressions 'fighting terrorism' and 'war on terror' became euphemisms for the campaign against Islam after the events of September 11th, as using religion as the target of military engagement would be diplomatically and strategically risky for the West as it would have the potential to inflame millions of Muslims worldwide. Here, 'terrorism' does not define the Muslim religion explicitly; it refers, according to them, to the enemy activity (violence).

The SANA translation is, except for some mistakes, acceptable. The translator renders wrongly the singular word 'الظاهرة' (phenomenon) into its plural form 'phenomena'. Moreover, there is a problem in the arrangement of the sentences. Therefore, the suggested translation would be:

... in addition to the exploitation of **this phenomenon, namely terrorism**, as a tool in the hands of some powers which claim fighting terrorism in order to intimidate and terrorize the others, attack their cultures and identities, and intervene in their internal affairs.

6. Conclusion   14

In this article we have investigated emotiveness in the political speeches by Bashar Al-Assad with an eye to translation. Data analysis has shown that translating emotive expressions is a difficult task where utmost care should be given to judging emotive overtones as overtones are not easily sensed. Moreover, there is no clear-cut distinction between emotive synonymous words/expressions. What looks as an emotive expression for one translator might not necessarily be so for another. This is why the researchers were, in many cases, hesitant to decide on the matter at hand. Hence, some translations suggested in this study could not be more appropriate than SANA's versions. This depends largely on the translator himself/herself who deals with such expressions.

We suggest that translating emotive expressions be broken down into three steps: First, the translator should determine whether to look for a literal or non-literal translation in the first place. Second, if the translator has decided to seek a figurative translation, he/she should mobilize some set of principles or strategies for generating a range of possible meanings. Third,

he or she should employ a further set of principles or strategies for identifying which meaning from among that range is most likely to be suitable in the present occasion. In this endeavour, the translator would do well to check his/her choice for comprehension and naturalness. Furthermore, translation of emotiveness in political speeches must not involve only an examination of the intended meaning of the speaker and the figurative language used in the source language, but also an examination of the emotive forms, if any exists, and the figurative devices available in the target language.

The translator of such discourse should first of all know what the text means. It is not enough to know the meaning of each individual word in the text, but one should also understand the higher levels of meaning (connotative meanings), including the purpose of the text. In addition, the translator should be able to make sense of the linguistic and rhetorical structure of both the source language and the target language. The translator of emotiveness should keep in mind that the addresser of the original texts depends on the shared background (common ground) with his target audience, while the translated texts must be prepared for a different audience who do not share the same background.

Applying figures of speech in particular and discourse analysis (DA) in general, in such studies it is possible to analyze and achieve a thorough and in-depth understanding of the source text. It is then possible for the translator to identify potential translation problems that may arise in the target text production and find suitable alternatives. To translate figures of speech literally without checking to see if it is understood is to translate inadequately. The idea that translating and interpreting should primarily take into account the function of both the source and target text (the functional approach) has a great affinity with Skopos theory. The function of a translation is dependent on the knowledge, expectations, values and norms of the target readers, who are again influenced by the situation they are in and by the culture. As illustrated by the analysis of the examples, these factors determined that the functions of the source text or passages in the source text, to a large extent, were not preserved by the translators (SANA). Therefore, SANA's versions were modified or even changed.

It is urgent and imperative for the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) to be more careful with their translations to make the

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translations of the Arabic speeches more natural and accurate; which would maintain the emotiveness strategy uses. Clearly, the principle of natural-sounding in translating emotive expressions is demonstrated to be more ideal than practical.

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