

The Cultural Alterity in Translated Media Discourse: A Critical Analysis of Translating the Term ‘LGBT’ Into Arabic

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Abstract—In today's world, many foreign concepts and terms travel through news discourse from one nation to another before they become topics of daily discussion, cultural debate, and information exchange. The current paper is a cognitive corpus-based critical discourse analysis that investigates how translating culture-specific terms such as the so-called ‘LGBT’ is made into Arabic. It was found that Arabic cultural and descriptive equivalents of the term ‘LGBT’ were regularly excluded (rarely used) and did not appear except a few times in the old public Arabic discourse, such as that of the UN before 2006. The findings revealed that whether the used translation strategy was linguistically a domestication or foreignization one, there was not much difference found, as there was always room for foreign concepts and their Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECR) to penetrate the target discourse and culture through various conceptual structures and cognitive mechanisms that underlie the mostly used translations. The study concluded with a call for translators translating into Arabic to critically deal with foreign narratives when they translate and shed further light on the importance of translation as an area of intercultural communication and socio-cultural practice.

Index Terms—critical discourse analysis, intercultural communication, translated media discourse, translating foreign terms into Arabic, LGBT

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, language use lies at the heart of everyday cross-cultural communication which takes place through the unprecedented use of mass media platforms. Many foreign concepts and terms are transmitted from one nation to another through news discourse before they become the topics of everyday discussion, cultural debate, and information exchange. Realizing that different cultures have different worldviews and social values, Baker (2005, 2014, 2006, 2019) questioned the narratives that a translated discourse can bring to the target language, where she stressed the importance of critically unpacking the source discourse before it is translated (cf. Niranjana, 1992; Venuti, 1995, 2008). For example, translating culture-specific terms becomes more difficult when drastic differences and cultural incompatibility between two cultures and their languages exist, such as those found between English and Arabic (Alwazna, 2014). The current paper is a cognitive corpus-based critical discourse analysis of how the term ‘LGBT’, as a culturally foreign term, was translated into Arabic discourse. Though the initial aim of this paper was to analyze the whole discourse using the term ‘LGBT’, due to the limitations of word limit and the abundance of the findings, its main focus was restricted mainly to how this term was translated into Arabic.

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES

A. ‘LGBT’ as a Culture-Bound Term

When examining the construct of the widely spread term so-called ‘LGBT’/ ‘GLBT’, Murib (2017, p. 14) stated that “the way gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender identities were linked together by political actors in the United States during the late 1990s and early 2000s produced a new political coalition and umbrella identity category, ‘GLBT’. Politically, the introduction of ‘GLBT’ as a unified political identity category with an associated agenda of political interests has been used to pose gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people as a coherent and large minority group that merits rights and recognition under the law. Symbolic importance has also been attached to ‘GLBT’, with the grouping of these identity categories”.

As seen in the quote above, the term GLBT/ known widely as LGBT is problematic in its original Western-English discourse, this loading of the term with variant meanings and incoherent associations is thought to have a political agenda behind it (ibid), see also Brettschneider et al. (2017). As for the Islamic stance towards the so-called ‘homosexuality’ (‘LGBT’), the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC, 2018) announced:

From the Islamic standpoint, homosexuality is a forbidden action; a major sin and anyone who partakes in it is considered a disobedient servant to Allah \that will acquire His displeasure and disapproval. This is clearly stated in the three main sources of the Shariah: The Quran, the Sunnah, and the consensus of all scholars, which extends from the time of the Prophet till today. There has never been any debate or discussion regarding this viewpoint

amongst the scholars, past or present, simply because the matter was always comprehensive and immutable. (Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), 2018)

A similar stance is found in Arabic Muslim countries such as Egypt, Saudi and Jordan. For example, Dar al Ifta in Egypt stated that the act of doing homosexuality or promoting it is forbidden in Islam (Jumaa & Dar al Ifta, 2005). It is worth noting here that those who suffer from physical or psychological problems that make them feel undetermined about their gender identity are not included in this Islamic ruling, instead, they are encouraged to seek appropriate treatment depending on their condition, see, for example, the Fatwas cited in Skovgaard-Petersen (1997).

Every culture has its own *ideology* i.e. its socio-cognitive model of shared values, thoughts and behavior (van Dijk, 1998) which distinguishes it from other communities. Therefore, what is important to the scope of this paper is to show how the act of promoting 'homosexuality' as given in the term 'LGBT' contradicts Eastern cultures (mainly that of Muslims). In April 2022, China and many Gulf countries among them Saudi Arabia asked Disney to remove 12 seconds from 'Dr. Strange 2' movie as it was found to promote 'homosexuality' (see The Guardian, 2022; Alekhbariya, 2022). The incident exemplifies that promoting 'homosexuality/ LGBT' is unacceptable and contrary to the socio-cognitive model (ideology, including religious values) of Islamic culture and Arab countries.

B. Translating Culture-Bound Terms

The translation of culture-specific terms from or into Arabic has always posed a challenge to translators due to the cultural gap between Arabic and other Western cultures (Faiq, 2004; Alwazna, 2014). Alwazna (2014, p. 187), found that "due to the strongly tight connection between language and culture, texts pertaining to any particular language are formulated on the basis of the language norms and culture to which these texts belong", c.f. Al-Hejin (2012) and Elewa (2019). Scammell (2018, p. 35) observed that the idea of viewing translation between two languages as an act of intercultural communication is well-established in modern translation theories [as in Munday, 2012] and that "the role the journalist-translator performs as inter-cultural communicator becomes particularly relevant". News journalists sometimes report news in a way that appeals to the expectations and socio-cultural perspective of their readers (Elewa, 2019). In this vein, Venuti (1995, 2008, p. 14) argues that translation "is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text with a text that is intelligible to the translating-language reader. These differences can never be entirely removed, but they necessarily undergo a reduction and exclusion of possibilities – and an exorbitant gain of other possibilities specific to the translating language".

The way translated news discourse is situated within the language of the target culture either appeals to its readers' expectations or triggers a kind of exoticism and alterity in their minds, see Shamma (2009), Al-Hejin (2012) and Elewa (2019). In "post-colonial contexts, translation assumes a particularly added significance: choice of texts for translation, the use of particular discursive strategies, circulation of the translations, etc" are all socio-cultural practices (Said, 2004, p. 3) through which the creation of meaning, power, cultural supremacy, construction of identity and ideological manipulations are exercised through translated discourse (see Faiq, 2019; Daghigh & Guo, 2024). Therefore, it "is essential for the translator, in this regard, to estimate how his/her handling of the alterity of the source text will play out in the totality of reception parameters in the target culture before deciding on a foreignizing or a domesticating strategy" (Shamma, 2009, p. 122).

C. Strategies for Translating Culture-Bound Terms

Lörscher (1991, p. 76) defined a translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another". The problem of translating culture-bound texts is that their source meaning and cultural connotations differ from 'the totality of reception parameters in the target culture' (in Shamma's 2009 words) which again poses a challenge of how this 'alterity' of cultural concepts will be handled in translation – as a process- and intercultural communicative act – the product. Similar to Venuti (1995, 2008), Alwazna (2014, p. 182) concluded that "domestication leads to translation violence through the reconstruction and adaptation of the source text so as to fit the beliefs and values specific to the target language culture, whereas foreignization gives rise to exoticism through inserting cultural references peculiar to the source language culture in the target text, thus creating foreign terms to the culture of the target reader".

Scammell (2018, pp. 60-61), in analyzing strategies that the news agencies have used to translate news from French into English, utilized Pedersen's (2005) model which is based on Venuti's (1996, 2008) scale. The scale indicates how *foreignizing* or *domesticating* culture-specific terms are used to overcome differences between the target and source culture. The strategies in this scale are broken into 1) Source Language (SL)-oriented (*foreignizing*) strategies, 2) Target Language (TL)-oriented (*domesticating*) strategies and 3) *omission*. Although these strategies are argued to account for cultural non-equivalences and incompatibility between the source and target languages as claimed by Venuti (1996, 2008), Wendland (2019) doubted this and stated that a foreignization strategy, for example, may not be enough encounter or account for cultural differences and/or foreign narratives, especially in non-Western contexts such as that of the Arabic language. The current research will see whether this skepticism about the dichotomy of domestication versus foreignization applies to its findings or not.

Nevertheless, Pedersen (2005) stressed the importance of understanding the "Extralinguistic Culture-bound References" (**ECRs**, henceforth) a source cultural term or text encodes before and after translation. The concept of ECRs is similar to

the cognitive linguistics idea of ‘cognitive models’¹ and their ‘conceptual frames’ that a lexical item (Evans, 2009). These models consist of a set of conceptual frames that store and contain all the encyclopedic knowledge a word, such as *fasting*, *pilgrimage* and *polygamy*, or its use can evoke. For example, it is only through this encyclopedic information the concept of *fasting in Ramadan* and how it is different from other types of fasting done by other communities, religions and cultures can be understood. In fact, in “the process of rendering Arabic texts into English, there is a certain degree of variation in translation due to the clearly noticeable linguistic and cultural differences between the two languages” (Alwazna, 2014, p. 185). These differences also apply in the opposite direction when translating from English into Arabic.

In translating culture-specific terms, Bell (1998, p. 188) differentiated between global and local strategies where global strategies deal with whole texts and local strategies are those that deal with text segments such as culture-bound terms e.g. ‘LGBT’. In this vein, while Pedersen’s (2005) scale – discussed earlier- was mainly developed for translating texts and TV subtitles, Newmark’s (1998) procedures for translating culture-bound terms were found to be, not comprehensive but, the most informative to the discussion of the current paper specifically in explaining what procedures the ‘LGBT’ underwent to be translated into Arabic. Newmark (1998) gave a number of translation procedures, these include:

- **Transference:** transliteration and transcription of the source language (SL, henceforth) term using the target language (TL, henceforth) letters.
- **Cultural equivalent:** a TL term or expression that is close to the source term meaning but not as accurate as its original meaning.
- **Descriptive equivalent:** the culture-bound term (CBT, henceforth) is explained in several words in the TL.
- **Modulation:** the translator reproduces the SL message of the original text in the TL text in according to the norms of the TL because the SL and TL are different in terms of perspectives.
- **Couplets:** is a procedure that Newmark (1988) has devised to refer to situations where the translator combines the use of different procedures.

While Pedersen’s (2005) scale classifies the type of strategy used and how it deviates from the source or target language, Newmark’s (1988) translation procedures explain the detailed process of meaning transfer used in each translation. Therefore, both scales were used in the current research. Lastly, unlike ‘translation studies’ that are usually concerned with the transfer of the literal meaning or the function of the source text ‘faithfully’ (Nord, 2005), critical discourse analysis (CDA) is more concerned with how ideology, power relations, social impetus and manipulations are put into public discourse to bring about a social influence or change (see Fairclough, 1995; Charteris-Black, 2006, 2014; Chilton, 2005; Hart, 2007, 2010). That is why recent research in translation studies started to incorporate CDA in its methodology of understanding and analyzing translated texts (see Elewa, 2019).

III. METHODOLOGY

Recent research in translation studies has proven to be very informative when critical discourse analysis is used as a methodology in studying translated discourse (see Al-Hejin, 2012; Elewa, 2019; Daghigh & Guo, 2024). The current study aims to answer the following research questions using a corpus-based critical discourse analysis that utilizes cognitive linguistics (see Koller, 2004, 2006; Charteris-Black, 2004, 2006, 2014, 2019) through which the translated discourse using the term ‘LGBT’ is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

A. Research Questions

- 1- How is the English term ‘LGBT’ translated into Arabic in public discourse?
- 2- How the social actors given in the ‘LGBT’ acronym are re-constructed through translating this acronym into Arabic?
- 3- What implications does the analysis of the ‘LGBT’ translations suggest to researchers and translators?

B. Data Collection and the Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure of critical discourse analysis; as described by Fairclough (1995) is summarized in three verbs *identify*, *interpret* then *explain*. In the **identification stage** (corpus-based), the research corpora were searched for instances of how the term ‘LGBT’ was translated into Arabic. The research corpora were built from a number of parallel corpora (Malamatidou, 2017) where translations along with their source texts are given next to each other in parallel concordances online, see Table 1 below. The found translations were, then, analyzed and interpreted (**interpretation stage**) as they appeared in their original context i.e. *keywords in contexts* KWINC (Baker, 2023). More particularly, the most frequent translations used in the research corpora. Lastly, analytical concepts from cognitive linguistics (Evans & Green, 2006) such as *profiling* (Langacker, 2008), *metaphors* and *metonymy* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Dirven et al., 2003), and *cognitive models* (Dirven et al., 2003; Evans, 2009) were used to reveal how the social actors given in the acronym ‘LGBT’ are re-presented (re-constructed) in Arabic and what ‘translation procedures’ (Newmark, 1998) were used. It is then that the analysis moved to explain (**explanation stage**) how the found translation acts as socio-cultural practices in the target culture through the translated discourse.

¹ Nevertheless, Pedersen’s (2005) concept of ECRs given above will be retained in the discussion of this paper, as it is relevant to readers of translation studies.

Baker (2023) stated that material that is disseminated and available in public domains can be used for corpus-based discourse analysis research purposes, however, with the right acknowledgement of their sources. The criteria for which data to use in the current research were constructed after a preliminary search on the web for the available sources i.e. online parallel bilingual corpora, see Malamatidou (2017). The final criteria used for the inclusion of texts in the research corpora were 1) the platform has parallel bilingual corpora of translated texts from English into Arabic, 2) the concordance lines in the platform can show/ retrieve the translations of the term ‘LGBT’ from English into Arabic clearly and lastly 3) the translated texts are retrievable through which a research corpus can be built and analyzed.

The platforms that have met the criteria are 1- *Sketch-engine (the UN corpora)* 2- *Glosbe* and 3- *Reverso* which are commonly used by Arabic translators in the Arab world, a description of each is given in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1
THE ONLINE PARALLEL CORPORA USED

| Corpora | Website | Size and type |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Sketch-engine UN corpora | https://app.sketchengine.eu/ | A billion words corpora of news and other types of public discourse. It includes a large parallel corpus of translated United Nations news discourse among them is English – Arabic discourse. United Nations Parallel Corpus (UNPC) – Arabic 545549235 tokens |
| Glosbe | https://glosbe.com/ | Glosbe is an AI-powered parallel corpora which deals mainly with translated discourse. It is also used as a translation platform and dictionary tool by Arab translators. The size of the corpus is unknown. |
| Reverso | https://www.reverso.net/ | An AI-powered parallel corpora which deals mainly with translated discourse. It is also used as a translation platform and dictionary tool by Arab translators. The size of the corpus is unknown. |

A corpus of each parallel corpora was built through retrieving parallel texts that were found to use the term ‘LGBT’ including its Arabic translation; the total size of each corpus is shown in Table 2 below. It is worth noting here that data collection was terminated only when the platforms did not provide further examples.

TABLE 2
THE PARALLEL CORPORA OF THE ‘LGBT’ TRANSLATED DISCOURSE (‘LGBT’ ARABIC PARALLEL CORPORA)

| Corpus | Reverso corpus | Glosbe corpus | Sketch Engine: UN Corpus |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Size in words/ tokens | 17697 | 12277 | 121505 |

Using the parallel corpora given above, the term ‘LGBT’ was keyed into the concordance of each parallel corpora to see how this foreign term was translated into Arabic. Recent ‘Arabic’ terms were found to be used as translations of the foreign term ‘LGBT’; some of these translations have never been used in the Arabic language or context before.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The English term ‘LGBT’ was found to occur in each corpus as follows 1) 1631 occurrences in the UN corpus, 2) 490 occurrences in the Reverso corpus and lastly 3) 232 occurrences in the Glosbe corpus. The translations found were filtered based on the first 50 concordance lines taken from each corpus in a preliminary step to understand the translations found in the whole corpora before each corpus was searched comprehensively and individually. The data extracted from each platform has shown common and variant translations of the English term ‘LGBT’. In this vein, the most recurrent translation in the whole corpora was the word ‘(al)mithlieen’ which is a recently devised term (in the 1960s, see Al-Shadidi, 2020). The term ‘(al)mithlieen’ was derived from the Arabic root/ lemma ‘mithl’ which means ‘the same’; ‘(al)mithlieen’ besides some other translations were used to reconstruct the Western concept of the so-called- ‘LGBT’ group(s) in the Arabic discourse i.e. the Target Language (including its culture). The Raw Frequencies (RF, henceforth) of the occurrence of the Arabic roots/ lemmas of the found and most recurrent translations are listed in Table 3 below:

TABLE 3
FREQUENCIES OF THE ROOTS/ LEMMAS USED AS TRANSLATIONS OF THE TERM ‘LGBT’ IN THE RESEARCH CORPORA

| NO | The Arabic Translation with its ‘transliteration’ | English explanation | UN | Glosbe | Reverso | Total |
|----|---|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| | | | Size: 121505 | Size: 12277 | Size: 17697 | |
| 1 | ‘il ji bi ti’ إل جي بي تي | LGBT | 0 | 2 | 80 | 82 |
| 2 | ‘mujtamae almieem’ مجتمع الميم | M Society | 0 | 5 | 112 | 117 |
| 3 | ‘(al)mithliee*’ المثلي* المثليين / المثليات ‘(al)mithlieen’ | Same (used to mean same-gender) | 3295 | 414 | 63 | 3772 |
| | ‘(al)mithlieeon’ / المثليون ‘(al)mithlieen’ | Sameness (both male and females) | 2292 | 314 | 39 | |
| | ‘(al)mithlieeaat’ المثليات ‘(al)mithlieeaat*’ مثلي* | Sameness - for females | 982 | 89 | 5 | |
| | ‘(al)mithlieeaat*’ مثلي* | Same (to mean same-gender) | 21 | 11 | 19 | |
| 4 | السحاقيات والمثليين ومشتهي الجنس والمتحولين جنسياً ‘(al)sihaqiaat wa (al)mithlieen wa mushtahi aljinsayn wa almtahawulieen jnsyaan’ | Lesbians, same-genders, bi-sexuals and transgenders | 118 | 8 | 0 | 126 |
| 5 | السحاقيات والواطيين ومشتهي الجنس ومغايري الهوية الجنسية ‘(al)sihaqiaat wa (al) wa (al)lliwaatieen wa mushtahi aljinsayn wa almtahawulieen jnsyaan’ | Lesbians, gays, the both-genders likers and transgenders | 21 | 1 | 0 | 22 |
| 6 | الأقليات الجنسية ‘al’aqaliyaat aljinsia’ | Sexual minorities | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 7 | ‘hawula’ هؤلاء | these | 54 | 4 | 10 | 68 |
| 8 | هذه الفئة-المذكورة ‘hadhih alfiatu-a lmathhkura’ | This class/ this aforementioned class | 54 | 2 | 14 | 70 |
| 9 | ‘almunharifin’ المنحرفين | perverts | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | ‘thawrat alyasamin’ ثورة الياسمين | Jasmine Revolution | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 11 | Omission (The term LGBT was omitted in the TL translation) | | NA | NA | 1 | 1 |

The most frequent Arabic translations of the ‘LGBT’ term in each platform are also given in Figures 1-3 below.

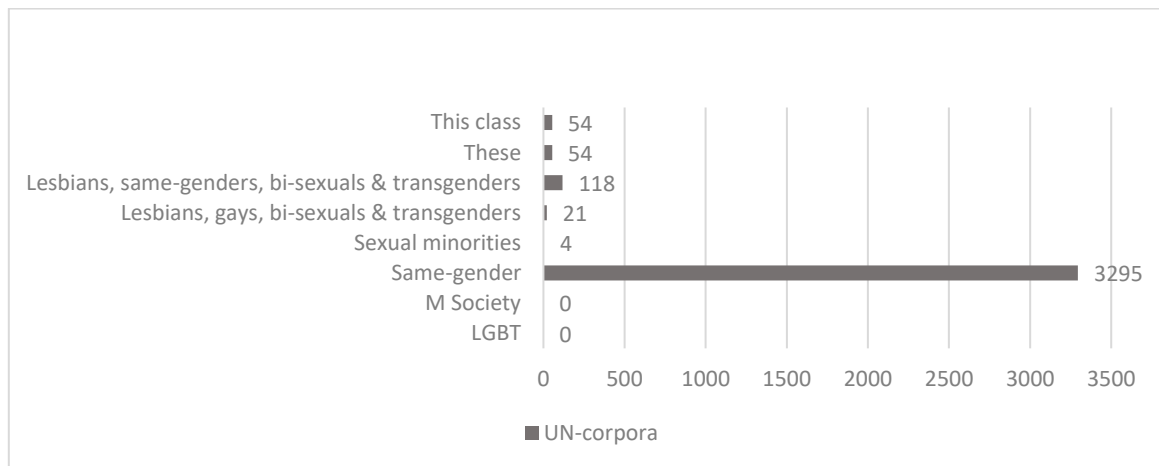


Figure 1. The Most Frequent Translations in the UN Corpus

When examining the UN corpus, (al)mithliee* = which means *same gender(s)* was found to be the most used translation. It was found to start to occur more recurrently in recent UN discourse from 2006 and afterwards, translations before then have mostly used *cultural* and *descriptive equivalence* procedures (Newmark, 1988) where each category in the acronym ‘LGBT’ was explained in the target/Arabic language with the available cultural equivalent(s), see No. 4 & 5 in Table 3 above. This indicates a shift in their public translated discourse into Arabic that can be explained in the words of Al-Shadidi (2020) who classifies himself as an Iraqi ‘LGBT’ advocate where he wrote:

Thus, the word (al)mithlieeah remained trapped in Qutb’s book and other literature, far from the use of people, not even “homosexuals” themselves, since 1952. The term that was used in the Arabic-speaking press and media remained ‘alshuthooth aljinsi’ [= homosexuality/sexual abnormalities]’ throughout the nineties, however, with the existence of individual pressures coming from people residing in the West of Arab origins towards replacing ‘alshuthooth aljinsi’ term with “(al)mithlieeah” that Qutb used. ‘Amithlieeah’ played the role of the positive pole in a duality with ‘alshuthooth aljinsi’. Then the media began to yield to this pressure adopted by local homosexual associations since the beginning of the third millennium. Media platforms have also begun to divide between platforms that use ‘alshuthooth aljinsi’ and platforms that use “lesbian.” In the end, those who oppose “homosexuality” also began to use the word ‘Amithlieeah’ in their anti-LGBT rhetoric. Should we be happy that those who incite against us use the term (al)mithlieeah instead of ‘alshuthooth aljinsi’? (Al-Shadidi, 2020)

Al-Shadidi's attributed the change in translating the term 'LGBT' in Arabic public discourse to 'a Western' pressure on Arabic newspapers, media and intellectuals to stop using Arabic terms such as '*homosexuals*' and '*lesbians*' that they think have 'labelled the 'LGBT' individuals negatively'.

On the other hand, the Glosbe corpus (see Figure 2 below) has shown a lexical preference to translate 'LGBT' into (*al*)*mithliee* (*same-genders*). It was also the top translation found in Glosbe with an RF=414.

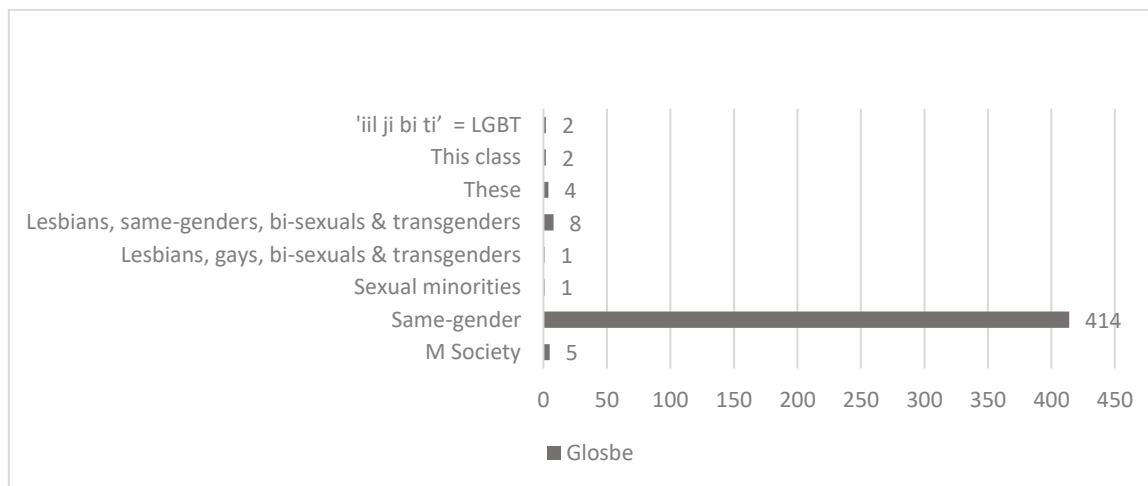


Figure 2. The Most Frequent Translations in the Glosbe Corpus

The second recurrent translation procedure in the Glosbe corpus was a *descriptive equivalence* translation procedure (Newmark, 1998) where the term 'LGBT' was unpacked into *Lesbians, same-gender(s), bi-sexuals* (i.e. *both-genders likers*) and *transgenders* (RF=8, Figure 2).

Thirdly, in the Glosbe corpus '*mujtamae almieem*' (*M society*), where the M is seen by some to stand for the M letter in the Arabic words '*(al)mithlieen*' (*same-genders*) and/or '*(al)mutahawilayn jnsyaan*' (i.e. *transgenders*), appeared in the Glosbe corpus five times (RF=5).

It is worth noting here that, unlike Glosbe and the UN corpora, the translation '*mujtamae almieem*' (*M society*) was the most recurrent translation found in the Reverso corpus, see Figure 3 below.

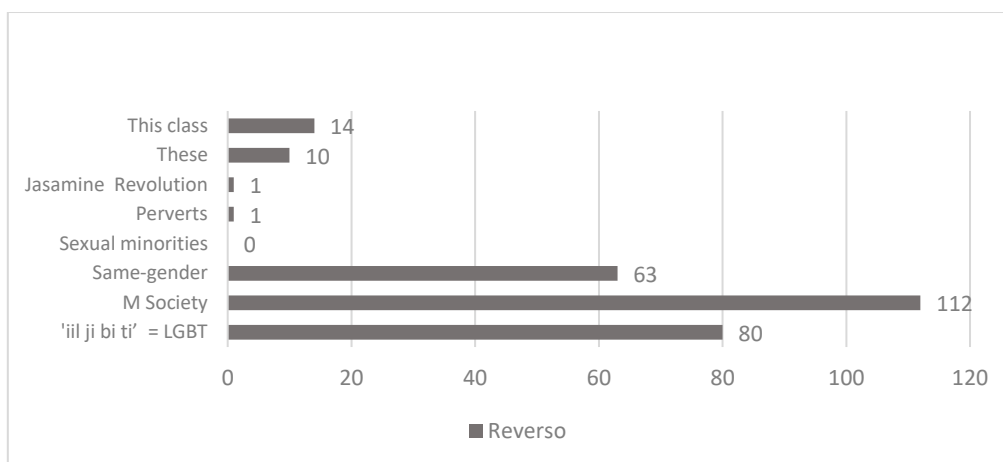


Figure 3. The Most Frequent Translations in the Reverso Corpus

The Reverso corpus has shown that its most recurrent translation was that of the '*mujtamae almieem*' which means the *M society* i.e. the *same-gender society*, followed by its second preferred translation procedure of the acronym 'LGBT' which was a transliteration into Arabic '*iil ji bi ti*' with a row frequency of an RF=80. Remarkably, unlike the UN and Glosbe corpora, the use of the Arabic translation (*al*)*mithliee** (*same-genders*) came third – not the first as in the formers – with an RF=63, nevertheless it is still frequent as well as its related derivation '*mujtamae almieem*' which came as the top preferred translation in Reverso (see Figure 3).

On the other hand, there were also two main anaphoric references within the translated discourse in the Reverso corpus; these are *this class* (F=14) and *these* (F=10) which were used to refer to the 'LGBT' a second time after it had been already mentioned earlier in the text².

² These were also used in the UN and Glosbe corpora, see Figures 1 and 2.

The Reverso corpus has also revealed the coinage of two other new terms that did not appear elsewhere in the whole research corpora these are 1) *Almunharifin* which means in English perverts and 2) *'thawrat alyasamin'* which means in English, 'the Jasmine Revolution'. Although each of these translations has appeared once in the Reverso corpus with an RF=1 for each, their underlying conceptual structures and semantic connotations differ a lot from the ones given in the source term. These will be discussed in Tables 10 and 11 later in addition to the translation '*sexual minorities*' that was found in the Glosbe Corpora (see Figure 2 above and Table 9 below). The reason for discussing these rare terms is related to our critical discourse analysis view of translation as a sociocultural practice where the *exclusion* versus *inclusion* (see, van Leeuwen, 2008) of particular concepts and their ECRs is essential to the construction of identities, narratives and exercise of cultural dominance and power. For example, unlike *thawrat alyasamin'* which is totally irrelevant to the individual words of the 'LGBT' acronym, the translation *Almunharifin* can be used in Arabic to refer, at least, to three of the categories encoded in the 'LGBT' acronym which are *lesbians*, *gays* and *bisexuals*, as will be explained later.

Overall, it can be seen from the findings above that the most frequent translation of the 'LGBT' was the term '*mithliee**' and its' lexical derivations (given in Table 3 above) which means 'the same(ness)'³. It appears in the UN parallel corpora with a frequency of 3295 followed by an RF= 419 in the Glosbe Corpora and an RF of 63 in the Reverso parallel corpora which indicates the lexical preference⁴ for this translation in each platform.

TABLE 4
COINAGE OF A NEW TERM: (AL) MITHLIEE*

| Its English transliteration and explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|---|---|---|
| المثليين '(al)mithliee*' = (the) Same-gender(s) | Coining/ coinage: a new/ recent term was devised to be used as a translation of the acronym 'LGBT' from English into Arabic. | Domestication: This term was classified 'linguistically' a domestication' strategy because it was a linguistic coinage of a new Arabic word that was derived from an Arabic linguistic root/ lemma- to denote the source-culture (SL, English) concept including its ERCs. |

Given that, 'LGBT' is spelt in English as *Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexual and Trans-gender*, it is surprising to see that each word in the 'LGBT' acronym was not translated through its cultural equivalents in Arabic. The translation *(al)mithliee**, discussed earlier, is 'a recent term' that has been devised to substitute and override the Arabic equivalents⁵ through using a new lexical concept (Evans, 2009) with an empty mental space (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) to be filled with the SL term's semantic connotation and pragmatic meaning. The Arabic translation lumps the different groups in the English acronym under one new name (*(al)mithliee**). Linguistically, this is a domestication strategy because the new term was devised – through a coinage of a new word that was derived from an Arabic linguistic root/ lemma. The newly coined word was used to denote the SL term, including its ERCs, but in the TL i.e. Arabic. Nevertheless, culturally this is a source-culture (SC)-oriented translation because it imposes the foreign fallacies of the 'LGBT' term on the target text through this translation, see Murib's (2017) argument about the fallacies of the English acronym 'LGBT' discussed earlier.

In cognitive linguistics terms, the produced translation is a cognitive mechanism of using the PART to refer to the WHOLE i.e. conceptual metonymy. SAME(GENDER) LIKERS is used to represent THE WHOLE 'LGBT' GROUP(S). The cognitive mechanism employed here reduced the acronym variant ECRs to denote only two classes(groups) by the Arabic translation. Deeper than this, is the fact that the expression '*(al)mithliee**' is metaphoric and metonymic at the same time, it uses the sexual behavior/ inclination i.e. *the same-gender likers* (ACTION) to stand for the variant 'LGBT' group(s) (AGENT). This 'conceptual profiling' (Langacker, 2008), where the ACTION of some groups highlights the whole Agent[doers], is a cognitive mechanism where the WHOLE (different LGBT groups) is reduced to the actions of SOME. The translation practice here involves a cultural reduction and exclusion of possibilities as well as an 'exorbitant gain of other possibilities specific to the translating language' (Venuti, 1995, 2008). In this context, the idea of '*foreignizing the alterity*' (suggested by Shamma, 2009) seems undoable because the *domestication* strategy discussed above (Table 4) has served the role of penetrating the socio-cognitive model (van Dijk, 1998, 2001) of the target culture where these categories/group (s)- in the acronym '*LGBT*'-have never been put together under one name in the TL or culture i.e. Arabic before this translation was used.

Similarly, the term '*mujtamae almieem*' (the M society) was mostly preferred in the Reverso platform with RF= 112 in comparison to an RF=5 in Glosbe and an RF=0 in the UN corpus. This indicates a strong 'lexical preference' (Hoey, 2005) for its use in the translated discourse of the Reverso platform. However, the 'LGBT' real SL meaning cannot be found anywhere in this Arabic translation. Therefore, the translation '*mujtamae almieem*' deserves a critical examination for its ambiguous connotations including what it can denote and how far it deviated from the original meaning of the English term 'LGBT', see Table 5 below.

³ See also classical Arabic dictionaries such as *Lisan Alarab* retrievable from Almaany (2024).

⁴ See Hoey (2005), for more information about lexical preferences and lexical priming in discourse.

⁵ See Al-Shadidi (2020) for example.

TABLE 5
COINAGE OF A NEW EXPRESSION: 'MUJTAMAE ALMIEEM'

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|---|---|--|
| مجتمع الميم ' <i>mujtamae almieem</i> ' = The M society | Coining/ coinage: a new expression was devised - out of nowhere- to be used as a translation of the term 'LGBT' into Arabic. | Domestication: Linguistically, it is a domestication strategy because it was a coinage of a new phrase in Arabic - to denote the source-culture (SL, English) concept including its ERCs, nevertheless, it is a SC-oriented translation at the same time. |

The translation '*mujtamae almieem*' was found to be based on a socio-cognitive model that adheres to the source culture (English) as it lumps the different 'groups', given by the LGBT English acronym, into one society it called the 'M society'. The cognitive mechanism used in this translation is PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE. The part that is used here is the initial letter of one of the Arabic cultural equivalents of the groups denoted by the acronym 'LGBT'. The M='almieem', which is said to stand for the first letter of the Arabic translation '(al)mithlieen' (same-genders) and/or '(al)mukahawilayn jnsyaan' (transgenders), is used to stand for the WHOLE 'LGBT' four different group(s). The second conceptual structure (metaphor) that underlies this expression is that of VARIANT PARTS ARE ONE COHERENT ENTITY i.e. the different 'LGBT' individuals and categories are now reconstructed through this translation to be presented to the Arabic readers as 'one coherent society'. These cognitive mechanisms reduce and exclude the radical variations that exist among the 'LGBT' individual groups.

The third most frequent translation found in the research corpora was a Transliteration/ transference procedure (Newmark, 1988) of the term 'LGBT' where the acronym was transferred from English into Arabic using Arabic letters (see Table 6 below). The transliteration *iil ji bi ti* إيل جي بي تي could be seen as a good foreignization strategy to distance the acronym's ECRs, nevertheless, if single quotation marks had been used it would have made the foreignization and distancing of the concept from the Arabic culture more evident, unfortunately, this was not the case in all the translations found (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
TRANSLITERATION/TRANSFERENCE: *iil ji bi ti*

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>iil ji bi ti</i> = LGBT | Transliteration/transference: the term LGBT was transferred into Arabic using the Arabic letters. | Foreignization: I classify this strategy, linguistically, as foreignization strategy because it transferred the SL term into the TL language letters. |

However, although the transliteration above used Arabic letters, it is still a source-culture-oriented translation in which the transcribed acronym has no meaning in the Arabic language or culture except that it is a transcription of a foreign concept. The cognitive mechanism employed here is that of a PART stands for the WHOLE where the transcription of the English using Arabic letters stands for the whole English acronym including its ECRs. In other words, its meaning is irretrievable without adopting the foreign ECRs of the 'LGBT' acronym because it opened as a new 'lexical concept' (Evans, 2009) with an empty 'mental space' (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) that cannot be filled except with the source meaning of the English acronym including its ECRs. Notably, Arabic cultural equivalents such as the Arabic translations of *lesbians* and *gays* were overridden in this translation procedure, although these Arabic cultural equivalents appeared recurrently in the UN corpus before 2006, see Table 7 below.

TABLE 7
CULTURAL + DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENTS

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|--|---|--|
| المسحاقيات والمثليين ومشتهمي الجنسين والمتحولين جنسياً '(al)sihaqiaat wa (al)mithlieen wa mushthahi aljinsayn wa almtahawulieen jnsyaan'= Lesbians, gays, the both-genders likers and transgenders | 'Cultural + descriptive equivalents': The term 'LGBT' was translated into Arabic using two translation strategies i.e. couplets (Newmark, 1988). | It is partly a domestication strategy. |

This translation of the 'LGBT' term from English into Arabic (Table7) adheres partly to the Arabic Culture (mainly that of Muslims), the names of some categories were given their cultural and descriptive equivalents in the target culture. While the first category in the English acronym 'LGBT' *lesbians* was translated using the cultural equivalent '(al)sihaqiaat' which has a negative connotation in the TL based on the target culture socio-cognitive model, the term *gays* was translated using the previously discussed translation i.e. that of (al)mithlieen = same-gender(s) which is a generalization that may include the previous category (lesbians) as well, c.f. Tables 4 and 7 above. However, the other two groups in the 'LGBT' acronym (i.e. *bi-sexuals* and *transgenders*) were usually translated by a *descriptive equivalence procedure* (see Tables 3, 7 and 8). Therefore, the translation strategy used here is partly a source-culture-oriented translation, on one facet, and a target-culture-oriented translation on the other. In other words, the found translation procedures have shown again the use of translation as a sociocultural practice that involves both a cultural reduction and exclusion of possibilities as well as an 'exorbitant gain of other possibilities specific to the translating language' (Venuti, 1995, 2005).

TABLE 8
CULTURAL AND DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENCE.

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|---|--|--|
| السحاقيات والمواطنين ومشتهي الجنسين ومغايري الهوية الجنسية '(al)sihaqiaat wa (al) wa (al)lliwaatieen wa mushtahi aljinsayn wa almtahawulieen jnsyaan '= Lesbians, same-genders, bi-sexuals and transgenders | 'Cultural + descriptive equivalences' (couplets): The term 'LGBT' was translated into Arabic using two translation strategies. | It is partly a domestication strategy. |

In this translation, while the two SL terms *lesbians* and *gays* were translated, using the cultural equivalence procedure, into '(al)sihaqiaat and (al)lliwaatieen' which have a negative connotation in the TL and TC, the latter two groups (bi-sexuals and transgenders) in the 'LGBT' acronym were translated using a *descriptive equivalence procedure* (see Newmark, 1988). This strategy can be classified here as partly a domestication strategy; the used translation procedure is partly a source-culture oriented, on one side, and partly a target-culture-oriented translation on the other. Hence, again the used translation procedure here involves both a cultural reduction and exclusion of possibilities as well as an 'exorbitant gain of other possibilities specific to the translating language' (Venuti, 1995, 2008).

TABLE 9
DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT (CALQUE): AL'AQALIYAAT ALJINSIA'

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|---|--|---|
| الأقليات الجنسية 'al'aqaliyaat aljinsia'= Sexual minorities | 'Descriptive equivalent'(calque): The term 'LGBT' was translated literally into Arabic using an Arabic phrase that describes marginalized groups/ minorities, It referred to the 'LGBT' acronym as <i>gender/sexual minorities</i> . | Domestication: Linguistically, it is a domestication strategy because it was a direct translation of the acronym into an Arabic phrase. However, this phrase is not used in Arabic discourse to denote the source-culture (SL, English) concept including its ERCs. The word <i>minorities</i> usually comes in a political context to denote ethnicities but not sexualities. |

The translation of the SL term 'LGBT' from English through the phrase 'al'aqaliyaat aljinsia' (RF=1) (see Table 9; Figure 2) ambiguates the different groups that the English acronym 'LGBT' encodes and positions them collectively together within the domain of minorities which is, in turn, located within the political international discourse of minorities' rights! Although the used translation procedure utilized Arabic words, it remains a *source-culture-oriented* translation where the Arabic translation (phrase) has no meaning in the Arabic language or its culture until it is situated within the source (Western) discourse of 'minorities' rights' which is a political discourse. As mentioned earlier, Murib (2017, p. 14) questioned the use of the acronym 'LGBT' to pose 'gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender' people as a unified coherent political identity with a 'unique political agenda' "that merits rights and recognition under the law". Therefore, the translation procedure that was used here can be classified as a linguistic domestication strategy that used the TL, however, it is also a source-culture-oriented one at the same time through which the socio-cognitive model of the target culture was invaded by foreign narratives and discourse, see Niranjana, (1992), Venuti (1995, 2008), Baraladi et al. (2009) and Wendland (2019).

In comparison to the previously discussed translations, the last two phrases that were found to be used as a translation of the term 'LGBT' were as follows 1) *perverts* and 2) *Jasmine revolution* which appears in the Reverso corpus only. First, the word *perverts* pronounced in Arabic as *almunharifin* was found once (RF=1) in the Reverso corpora but did not appear in the other two parallel corpora, see Table 10.

TABLE 10
CULTURAL EQUIVALENCE AND MODULATION: ALMUNHARIFIN

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|--|---|---|
| المنحرفين <i>Almunharifin</i> =Perverts | 'Cultural equivalence' + Modulation(couplets): The term 'LGBT' was translated into Arabic using an Arabic word that denotes one category of the 'LGBT' acronym which is that of 'the same-gender likers'. | Domestication: through the use of cultural equivalence procedure, the SL concept was domesticated. |

The word *Almunharifin* (perverts in English, Table 10) is derived from the Arabic metaphor that describes the skewed (not straight) movement of an object to convey the deviation of something or someone from the cultural and religious norms (see Almaany, 2024). Therefore, it adheres to the target culture (mainly Islamic) that considers the sexual desire towards the same gender as abnormal, morally inappropriate, and religiously forbidden behavior. Although the translation strategies, that were used here, transferred the SL concept to the target community receiving this discourse through a cultural equivalent from Arabic, the translation remains problematic. The translation *Almunharifin* (perverts) is established based on two conceptual structures 1- SOME (perverts) stands for THE WHOLE (LGBT groups) and 2- the ACTIONs of SOME i.e. these perverts⁶ STANDS for the WHOLE 'LGBT' different groups (AGENT) i.e. ACTION STANDS FOR AGENT.

⁶ In the Arabic context, perverts are usually the same-gender likers and those who commit morally forbidden behavior.

The strategy used here can be classified as a domestication strategy because it was derived from both the target language and its socio-cognitive model. Nevertheless, this translation has reduced the four different 'LGBT groups' into three groups that are perceived negatively in the target culture which is that of 'the same-gender likers' (lesbians, gays and bisexuals). This may lead to cultural fallacies, for example, the 'transgender' individuals among which some have physical and psychological abnormalities that need to be medically treated are labelled in this translation as 'perverts'. It is worth noting here that this translation was very rare; in fact, it appeared only once in the whole research corpora.

Similarly, the translation *Jasmine revolution* was found to occur once in the Reverso corpus as an Arabic translation of the phrase 'LGBT revolution' but was not found in the other two corpora. The context of this occurrence is given in Table 11 below:

TABLE 11
COINAGE OF A NEW TERM

| Its English explanation | The translation procedure used | The Translation Strategy |
|---|--|--|
| ثورة الياسمين thawrat alyasamin' = Jasmine Revolution | Coining/ coinage: a new expression was devised in the TL out of nowhere to be used as a translation of the term 'LGBT' into Arabic. ST: Is the LGBT Revolution eating its young? TT: هل تأكل ثورة الياسمين أبناءها؟ | Domestication: The used translation procedure here was classified as a domestication strategy – linguistically- because it was devised to denote the source-culture concept (English, including its ECRs) through a new but irrelevant expression in the Arabic language. |

The translation here – surprisingly- evokes a political activity that is given positive attributes through the metaphor: PURSUING 'LGBT RIGHTS' is FLOWERS REVOLUTION (REVOLUTIONARY ACT). The translation given here tries to establish similarities between the Jasmine blooming and pursuing the rights of the variant groups in the acronym 'LGBT'. The conceptual mapping in this metaphor evokes the positivity of a flower that seeks growth based on life dynamics 'naturally'!⁷

Finally, the *omission* strategy. Despite the fact that it is difficult to document the use of this strategy in large corpora, the current analysis was fortunate to document its use in the research corpora which was collected from translated public discourse. In the Reverso corpus, *omission* was found to be used in the Arabic translation of the term 'LGBT' once, see the found example given in Table 12 below.

TABLE 12
TRANSLATION THROUGH OMISSION

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Source Text: | I joined the LGBT knitting community five years ago... and I cannot imagine my life without it now. |
| Target Text: | لقد انضمت إلى مجتمع الحياكة منذ ما يقارب الـ 5 سنوات ولا يمكنني أن أتخيل حياتي بدونها |

The Arabic translation (given above) has deleted the term 'LGBT' in the target text. This exemplifies the type of exclusion done through translation that Venuti (1995, 2008) talked about. Nevertheless, unlike Pedersen's (2005) classification which considers *omission* a separate strategy in translating cultural texts, *omission* has acted here as foreignization strategy; where it was biased/oriented towards the target language and its culture. The omission strategy exemplifies here a 'resistant' (Venuti, 1995, 2008) socio-cultural practice that aims at distancing the 'alterity of the other' (Shamma, 2009) to protect the target culture's socio-cognitive model (van Dijk, 1998) from the insertion of contrasting/invading narratives about 'our world, values and identities' (Baker, 2006, 2019; Baraladi et al., 2009).

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, it was found that translation of the 'LGBT' term into Arabic was done mostly through coining new terms and overriding/neglecting the cultural equivalents available in the Target Language (TL) and its culture. The most used translations were respectively 1) (*al)mithliee** (*same-gender*), 2) '*mujtamae almieem*' (*M society*) and 3) *iil ji bi ti*. Therefore, similar to Wendland's (2019) argument discussed earlier, the idea of '*foreignizing the alterity*' (suggested by Shamma, 2009) seems undoable here because coining new terms in Arabic, although is 'linguistically' a domestication strategy nevertheless it, has served the role of penetrating the socio-cognitive model (van Dijk, 1998, 2001) of the target culture with a foreign invading narrative. The different categories/group (s) in the acronym '*LGBT*'-have never been put together under one name in the TL or culture i.e. Arabic. These translations were all recently devised in Arabic discourse, with unprecedented connotations in its language and culture.

Following Niranjana (1992), Venuti (1995, 2008) and Wendland (2019), these translations have acted as a violent socio-cultural practice that neglected the 'cultural equivalents' (Newmark, 1988) for the sake of conveying the foreign ECRs of the 'LGBT' term into the target/ Arabic culture (mainly that of Muslims). The three most used translations, given above, were found to be based on the conceptual metonymy PART STANDS FOR WHOLE; this part can be a group as in (*al)mithliee** (*same-gender*) or letters as in *mujtamae almieem*' = *M society* and the transliteration *iil ji bi ti*. Therefore, translation practices used here involved a cultural reduction and exclusion of possibilities and social categories/ groups embodied by the acronym as well as sometimes an 'exorbitant' (Venuti, 1995, 2008) loss of possibilities specific to the

⁷ See Murib (2017) and Bretschneider et al. (2017) for discussion of the political connotation and agenda of the 'LGBT' acronym.

translating (target) language e.g. excluding the cultural equivalents available in the target language. On the other hand, Arabic words such as *lesbians* and *gays* السحاقيات والواطيين were found to be used as cultural equivalents in the UN discourse, however, before 2006 and were gradually excluded since then, perhaps because they evoke the target culture's rejection of these sexual behaviors, see ANIC (2018); Al-Shadidi (2020).

Thus, translation does not serve here as a 'faithful' carrier of meaning between two different cultures but works instead as an effective socio-cultural practice that may lead to penetrating or hegemonizing (Niranjana, 1992; Venuti, 1995, 2008) the target culture's socio-cognitive model. Therefore, with the elevating global debate about the 'LGBT' discourse, which is travelling from the West to other nations, researching critically how this term and its associated ECRs are translated into other cultures and languages is of vital importance both to media discourse and translation studies.

To sum up, a serious call is also made to researchers to critically study and understand how public platforms - mainly Reverso, Glosbe and the UN corpora in this paper - include or exclude certain translations in their translated discourse. Is the inclusion and spread of certain translations more than others driven or informed by publication policies or a hidden agenda of Western cultural hegemony and/or globalization, or could it be arbitrary? If the latter is true, then critical researchers may ask why the Arabic cultural and descriptive equivalents of the term 'LGBT' were regularly excluded (rarely used) and did not appear except a few times in the old public translated discourse such as that of the UN i.e. before 2006 (see Table 3 above). Finally, similar to Wendland's (2019) argument that Venuti's (1995, 2008) strategies of *domestication* versus *foreignization* may not be enough to encounter the cultural incompatibility of the source discourse in non-Western contexts, the current research found that whether the used strategy is linguistically a domestication or foreignization one there is not much difference as there will always be room for foreign concepts to penetrate the target culture through various conceptual structures and cognitive mechanisms used as in the translation '*the M society*'. Therefore, translators should play a 'decisive role' (Baker, 2006, 2019) to sustain 'the alterity' (Shamma, 2009) of the target culture's socio-cognitive model (van Dijk, 1998) from the insertion of contrasting or opposing narratives about 'our world, values and identities'.

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