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Political Translation in the Yemeni Media: Between Linguistic Mediation and Political Manipulation

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Abstract

This study investigates the complex role of political translation in Yemeni media, highlighting how it operates between the realms of linguistic mediation and political manipulation. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis, the research analyzes five news texts reporting on the Yemeni conflict, with the aim of uncovering the ways translation choices can influence the representation of events. The findings reveal two contrasting tendencies: neutral translations that preserve objectivity and accuracy, and manipulative translations that strategically reshape meaning. The latter reframe events, amplify ideological messages, and direct public opinion toward specific political stances. Among the strategies identified are lexical intensification, shifts in agency, selective omission or addition, and recontextualization, each contributing to subtle yet impactful changes in the narrative. The study argues that political translation functions not only as a linguistic transfer but also as a process of ideological negotiation, with implications for both domestic and international audiences. By shedding light on these dynamics, the research underscores the ethical responsibility of translators and media professionals in conflict-sensitive contexts, emphasizing the need for critical awareness of how translation can shape perceptions and narratives of war and politics in Yemen.

Keywords: Linguistic Mediation, Media Framing, Political Manipulation, Political Translation, Yemeni Media.

Introduction

In times of political instability and social upheaval, language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a powerful tool for shaping public opinion and constructing political realities. Translation, in particular, plays a decisive role in mediating political messages across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Within the Yemeni media landscape, translation is not a neutral activity; it is deeply embedded in ideological struggles, competing narratives, and the pursuit of political legitimacy. The translation of political discourse often involves selective choices, omissions, additions, or reframing

of information, which may serve either as acts of linguistic mediation or deliberate political manipulation.

The Yemeni media environment, marked by polarization and conflict, provides a critical site for examining how translation practices contribute to political discourse. Competing factions and international actors disseminate political statements, news reports, and policy declarations through multilingual platforms, each aiming to project their version of "truth" to domestic and global audiences. In such contexts, the translator is not merely a linguistic mediator but also an agent who may reinforce, reshape, or resist political agendas. Consequently, political translation in Yemen reveals the interplay between language, power, and ideology in conflict-driven communication.

This research seeks to investigate the dynamics of political translation in the Yemeni media, with particular attention to the tension between its communicative function and its instrumental use in political manipulation. By analyzing selected texts from print and digital media, this study explores how translation choices influence public perception, construct political realities, and either bridge or widen ideological divides. The study is significant not only for understanding translation as a linguistic and cultural practice but also for unveiling the hidden mechanisms through which political power is negotiated and contested in Yemen.

Literature Review

The protracted and multi-faceted conflict in Yemen has been characterized not only by military engagements but also by a fierce information war. Within this landscape, translation acts as a critical, yet under-examined, site where narratives are contested, ideologies are negotiated, and international perceptions are shaped. This review synthesizes literature from the fields of Translation Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis, Media Studies, and Yemeni political analysis to frame the complex role of translation, oscillating between genuine mediation and overt political manipulation in the Yemeni media context.

1. Theoretical Foundations

Translation, Ideology, and Power The theoretical bedrock for this inquiry is found in the shift within Translation Studies from a purely linguistic exercise to a socio-cultural and political practice.

The Manipulation School, pioneered by scholars like Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), posited that translation is a form of rewriting inevitably manipulated by ideological and poetological constraints. This concept is fundamental to understanding how source texts from Yemen are altered to fit the target audience's worldview.

Mona Baker's (2006) application of narrative theory to translation is particularly salient. She argued that translators are active participants in constructing narratives about conflict, using strategies like framing, selective appropriation, and labeling. This provides a robust framework for analyzing how Yemeni conflict narratives are shaped for international consumption.

The work of Hatim and Mason (1997) on the ideological and discursive dimensions of translation offered practical tools for analysis. Their focus on lexical choice, transitivity, and modality allows for a micro-analysis of how agency is assigned or obscured in translated reports (e.g., martyred vs. killed, militia vs. forces).

Further deepening this, Tymoczko (2010) explored how translation can be an act of activism and resistance, a relevant concept for considering how certain Yemeni voices might use translation to amplify their cause on the global stage.

However, it is crucial to problematize the concept of "neutral translation" itself. As translation theorists suggest, absolute neutrality in translation is largely an illusion, as every translational choice inherently involves a degree of interpretation, selection, and decision-making (Levý, 1967; Venuti, 1995).

In conflict zones, linguistic mediation exists on a continuum rather than as a strict binary of absolute fidelity versus intentional manipulation. Furthermore, characterizing translations solely as either "neutral" or "manipulative" risks oversimplifying the complex realities of media production. Translators frequently operate under severe structural and institutional constraints including editorial policies, the political economy of media ownership, funding sources, professional ethics, and personal safety concerns. Consequently, many translational shifts may reflect these institutional pressures and structural limitations rather than a deliberate, individual act of manipulation by the translator.

2. Media, Conflict, and the Construction of Reality

The function of media in conflict zones extends beyond reporting to becoming active participants in the war effort, often serving as propaganda tools.

The propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky (1988), though focused on Western media, provides a useful lens for understanding how structural factors (ownership, funding, sourcing) can filter and distort information, directly impacting which texts are chosen for translation and how.

Entman's (1993) concept of framing is crucial. It explained how media texts, through selective emphasis and exclusion, promote a particular problem definition and moral evaluation. Translation becomes a key mechanism for transferring or altering these frames across linguistic boundaries.

Scholars like Schleifer (2006) have documented the evolution of Arab media and its role in shaping public discourse during times of crisis, noting the prevalence of partisan allegiances that inevitably influence content, including translations.

3. The Yemeni Context

A Fractured Media Landscape the Yemeni media environment is a reflection of the country's political fragmentation, making it a prime case study for ideological translation.

Works by researchers like Alviso-Marino (2018) reported from the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (2021) detailed the extreme polarization of Yemeni media, outlining how outlets are aligned with specific factions (the Houthis movement, the internationally recognized government, the Southern Transitional Council, etc.). This alignment dictates their editorial and translational policies.

Al-Sarori and Zheng (2021) analyzed the propaganda strategies employed by the warring parties in Yemen, providing essential context for the types of discourses and terminologies that translators must navigate. Their work highlights the deliberate use of language to dehumanize opponents and sanctify one's own side.

Humanitarian communication is another critical dimension. Scholars like Footitt and Kelly (2012) and Drugan and Tipton (2017) examined the ethical challenges of translation in crisis settings, which is directly relevant given the role of NGOs and international bodies in translating humanitarian needs and human rights reports from Yemen, often requiring careful negotiation of politically charged terminology.

4. The Arab Media and Translation Nexus

While literature specifically on Yemeni media translation is limited, research on translation in the broader Arab world offers valuable insights and methodological approaches.

Faiq's (2007) work on cultural encounters in translation from Arabic explored the asymmetries of power and cultural specificities that translators must negotiate, which are amplified in a conflict setting like Yemen.

Studies on translating political and religious concepts are highly relevant. Mazid (2008), in his analysis of translating the Iraq War, and Silberstein (2004), in her work on post-9/11 discourse,

demonstrate the terminological battles over words like "terrorism," "martyrdom," and "resistance" all central to the Yemeni conflict discourse.

The rise of digital and citizen media adds another layer. Pérez-González (2014) explored how non-professional translators and activists intervene in the flow of news, a phenomenon evident in Yemen where social media accounts and activist platforms often provide translated content that challenges official narratives from all sides.

To sum up, identifying the gap the existing literature provides a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing ideology in translation and a growing body of work on the Yemeni media landscape. However, a significant gap remains in the systematic application of Translation Studies frameworks (particularly Narrative Theory and CDA) to the specific case of intra- and inter-lingual mediation in the Yemeni conflict. Most studies focused on Western media translating foreign conflicts. This research aims to address this gap by critically examining how translation functions within the Yemeni media ecosystem itself, analyzing how it is used not merely as a tool of communication but as an instrument of war, shaping domestic allegiances and international policy responses.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how political translation in Yemeni media functions as both linguistic mediation and political manipulation.
2. To analyze the strategies and choices used by translators in rendering political discourse across different media outlets.
3. To investigate the impact of translation practices on shaping public perception and constructing political realities in Yemen.

Research Questions

- 1- How does political translation in Yemeni media function as both linguistic mediation and political manipulation?
- 2-What translation strategies and choices are most commonly used to reframe or reshape political discourse in Yemeni media?
- 3- In what ways do translation practices influence public perception and contribute to the construction of political realities in Yemen?

Statement of the Problem

In conflict-affected societies such as Yemen, the media landscape is highly polarized and politically fragmented, with different outlets aligned to rival factions and external sponsors. Within this environment, translation becomes more than a linguistic bridge; it is often a strategic tool for shaping political narratives and influencing public opinion. Political news and statements, whether translated from Arabic into English for international audiences or from English into Arabic for local consumption, are rarely transmitted neutrally. Instead, they are filtered, reframed, or selectively edited in ways that reflect ideological biases and political agendas.

Despite the evident role of translation in constructing competing political realities in Yemen, systematic research on how translation operates in this context remains limited. Most existing studies on translation and politics focus on global news agencies or broader Arab media, while Yemen's case marked by civil war, foreign intervention, and information warfare remains underexplored. This creates a knowledge gap regarding how translation functions both as linguistic mediation (facilitating communication across languages) and as political manipulation (deliberately reframing messages to serve partisan objectives).

Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding the mechanisms through which political translation shapes narratives of legitimacy, resistance, and conflict in Yemen. Without such research, the international community and Yemeni audiences alike risk consuming distorted messages that obscure rather than clarify political realities.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant on several levels:

- 1. Academic Contribution:** The research contributes to the growing body of literature on political translation by situating the phenomenon within the Yemeni media context, a case largely overlooked in translation studies. While existing scholarship has examined political translation in global or regional media, Yemen's polarized and conflict-driven environment offers a unique setting to explore the tension between translation as linguistic mediation and as political manipulation. By bridging translation studies with Critical Discourse Analysis and media studies, the research enriches theoretical discussions on ideology, power, and the socio-political functions of translation.
- 2. Practical Relevance for Media and Journalism:** The findings help media practitioners, translators, and editors recognize how translation choices can shape, distort, or reinforce political narratives. By uncovering the mechanisms of manipulation such as selective omissions, lexical reframing, and ideological trans editing, the study highlights the ethical responsibility of translators and journalists to ensure accuracy and transparency in politically sensitive contexts.
- 3. Societal and Political Importance:** For Yemeni society, where information is a contested resource, the study sheds light on how translation influences public perception and contributes to either bridging or widening ideological divides. Understanding these dynamics is essential for promoting media literacy, fostering critical awareness among audiences, and encouraging responsible communication in times of conflict.
- 4. Global and Policy Implications:** Given Yemen's strategic importance and international visibility, the research also benefits policymakers, NGOs, and international media outlets by exposing how translation mediates the flow of political information between Yemen and the outside world. This can inform more balanced reporting and aid in countering misinformation and propaganda.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Translation Studies frameworks. A qualitative approach is suitable because the study focuses on interpreting and explaining the ideological and linguistic strategies used in political translation rather than measuring frequency alone. The CDA framework (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1998; Wodak, 2009) help uncover how translation choices reproduce or challenge power relations, while Translation Studies theories (e.g., Venuti's foreignization/domestication, Baker's narrative theory, and Stetting's trans editing) provide tools to analyze translation strategies.

Sample and Data Collection

The study employs purposive sampling to select political news texts translated between Arabic and English in the Yemeni media. Outlets are chosen to represent different political alignments, including:

- Pro-government sources (e.g., *Saba News Agency*).
- Houthi-aligned outlets (e.g., *Al-Masirah*).
- Southern/independence-oriented media (e.g., *South24*).
- International news agencies reporting on Yemen (e.g., *BBC News*, *Al Jazeera English*).

Timeframe

The corpus covers translations published between 2020–2025, a period marked by ongoing conflict, international negotiations, and significant media polarization.

Corpus Size and Selection Rationale

Approximately 5 paired texts (originals and translations) are collected, focusing on press releases, political speeches, official statements, and news reports. These specific texts were purposively selected not to provide a statistically exhaustive representation of all Yemeni media, but rather as highly illustrative examples (critical cases). They were chosen because they encapsulate the most salient translational shifts and the typical mechanisms of manipulation prevalent in the broader media landscape during this conflict period, effectively representing the diverse ideological spectrum of the warring factions.

Analyzing of Data

Step 1: Comparative Textual Analysis

Each source text is compared with its translation to identify shifts in:

Lexical choices (e.g., resistance vs. rebels).

Modality and evaluation (e.g., must vs. should).

Agency representation (active vs. passive voice).

Omissions, additions, and paraphrasing.

Headlines and paratexts (framing strategies).

Step 2: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA tools are applied to reveal how these linguistic shifts contribute to ideological framing, legitimacy building, or delegitimization.

Step 3: Categorization of Mediation vs. Manipulation

Translation instances are categorized based on whether they:

- Function as **linguistic mediation** (facilitating cross-linguistic understanding with minimal ideological distortion).

- Serve as **political manipulation** (strategically reframing discourse to align with partisan or ideological agendas).

4. Validation Strategies

Triangulation: Data is cross-checked with multiple outlets to verify whether similar political events are translated differently across competing factions.

Peer Review: Findings and coding categories are discussed with academic peers specializing in translation and political communication to ensure reliability.

In this section analyzes how political translation in Yemeni media functions as both linguistic mediation and political manipulation, highlighting key patterns in lexical choices, agency, omissions, and framing that shape public perception.

CDA Analysis of the Text 1

Textual Analysis (Description)

The text 1 highlights renewed U.S. strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen after threats against Israeli ships, resulting in heavy casualties, while Houthis attacked U.S. naval forces and Israel resumed Gaza bombardment, collapsing the January ceasefire. (appendix A).

Neutral/technical vocabulary: (*resumed military strikes, pressure campaign, large-scale bombardment*). These terms create an impression of routine military operations rather than acts of aggression.

Passive voice usage: (*53 people dead and more than 100 injured*) removes explicit agency, depersonalizing responsibility for civilian casualties.

Temporal sequencing: The text links U.S. strikes with subsequent Israeli bombardments (less than two days after), implicitly framing events as interconnected without directly attributing causality.

Numerical framing: Precise figures (*53 vs. 400*) emphasize the scale of violence while inviting comparison across conflicts.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

The text appears in the context of **international media discourse**, reflecting how Western outlets typically frame Middle Eastern conflicts:

Representation of actors

- *U.S. forces* are portrayed as strategic actors engaged in (*a pressure campaign*).
- *Houthis* are constructed as aggressors who (threaten shipping lanes) and attack U.S. vessels.
- *Israel* is described in terms of (*resumed bombardment*), foregrounding its military actions in Gaza.

Intertextuality: The text draws on narratives of *regional instability, terrorism, and geopolitical rivalry (Iran & U.S.)*. These discursive resources align with dominant Western policy discourses.

Potential for translation shifts: In Arabic media, the same text may be recontextualized with terms like **عدوان (aggression)** or **جرائم حرب (war crimes)**, thereby transforming neutral reporting into politicized discourse.

Social Practice (Explanation)

At the macro level, the discourse reflects **hegemonic power relations** and the struggle over narrative ownership in the Yemeni conflict:

Hegemony: The U.S. is legitimized as a global actor conducting a “campaign,” while the Houthis are delegitimized as disruptors of international trade.

Ideology: The text naturalizes U.S. and Israeli military actions as responses to threats, rather than as provocations, aligning with Western ideological positions.

Media translation as manipulation: When transferred into Yemeni or Arab media outlets, this discourse is often re-encoded to resist Western hegemony by emphasizing *civilian suffering, colonial aggression, and solidarity with Gaza*. Thus, translation itself becomes a site of ideological struggle.

In brief, using CDA, the text reveals how language constructs competing realities: one that normalizes U.S. and Israeli military actions through technical neutrality, and another (via translation and recontextualization) that politicizes these actions to align with anti-imperialist and pro-Palestinian narratives. This duality directly connects with the research theme “between linguistic mediation and political manipulation.”

CDA Analysis of the Text 2

Textual Analysis (Description)

The text 2 is about the **ongoing Houthi threats against Israel**, highlighting the mayor of Eilat's warning that the city and its port remain targets, while the Israeli army confirmed intercepting drones, a crash near Ramon Airport, and an increase in missile attacks since the assassination of Houthi leaders in Sana'a. (appendix A).

Lexical Choices

- (*Houthis have not forgotten Eilat*) implies a continuous and deliberate threat; the Houthis are portrayed as a strategic actor keeping the city within their agenda.
- (*Still pose a threat*) emphasizes a persistent danger, reinforcing the Israeli security perspective.
- (*Interception of three Houthi drones*) presents the Israeli army as a capable defender, while Houthi actions are framed as attacks.
- (*the incident is under investigation*) a bureaucratic-technical phrasing showing control and transparency.

Agency

- The Houthis are represented as active agents (*have not forgotten, launched*).
- The Israeli army appears as **defensive/proactive** (*confirmed the interception*).
- Human impact or civilian casualties is entirely absent, framing the conflict as a technical-military issue.

Framing

- Focus on **Houthi threat to Eilat** situates the discourse within an Israeli national security framework.
- Reference to (*since the assassination of several of their leaders*) implicitly justifies Houthi actions while presenting them as retaliatory terrorism rather than resistance.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

- The text is likely produced by **Israeli media sources** (*Israeli army, Israeli radio*).
- It reflects common war reporting patterns:

Highlighting Israeli defensive capabilities (intercepting drones).

Demonizing the Houthis as a continuous cross-border threat.

- In Arabic translation, **reframing is possible**:
 - Pro-Israel media may preserve terms like (*threat* and *interception*).
 - Resistant or Yemeni media may reframe the text as: (*The Israeli army failed to protect Eilat despite intercepting three drones*), emphasizing Israeli weakness rather than superiority.

Social Practice (Explanation)

- The text reproduces **Israeli media hegemony**, achieving:
 - Legitimization of Israeli military responses as defensive.
 - Linking the Houthis to regional security threats, particularly Iran.
- On a broader level, the discourse reflects **Israeli national security ideology**, justifying militarization and framing the conflict as part of regional threats.

- In Arabic or Yemeni contexts, translation can serve as **resistance discourse**, by:
- Emphasizing (*Israeli assassinations*) as the primary cause of escalation.
- Framing Houthi attacks as (**legitimate retaliation**), not mere threats.

In short, the text demonstrates how media constructs the Houthis as a dual figure of **threat**, while positioning Israel defensively. From a CDA perspective, the language is ideologically loaded rather than neutral. In political translation, the same text can either mediate information or be manipulated to support alternative ideological narratives, reflecting the core tension of this study: **between linguistic mediation and political manipulation**.

CDA Analysis of the Text 3

Textual Analysis (Description)

The text 3 describes how five years of war in Yemen have caused massive human, economic, and social devastation, while the coalition has failed to achieve its intended goals. (appendix A).

Lexical Choices

- (*significant human losses*) emphasizes the human cost, evoking empathy and moral concern.
- (*collapse of the economy, destruction of infrastructure, expansion of poverty, fragmentation of the social fabric*) series of parallel structures that intensify the perception of total societal devastation.
- (*heavy cost*) reinforces the scale and severity of the war's consequences.
- (*the coalition has been unable to achieve the objectives*) subtly highlights **failure** despite effort, framing the coalition as ineffective.

Agency

- The coalition is explicitly named as the actor failing to achieve objectives.
- Victims of the war are represented passively through consequences (*human losses, fragmentation of the social fabric*), with no active agent assigned, which depersonalizes suffering while emphasizing structural damage.

Grammatical and Rhetorical Features

- Use of **cumulative listing** (*losses, collapse, destruction, expansion, fragmentation*) amplifies the negative impact.
- The contrastive conjunction *Despite this heavy cost* signals a **tension** between the material losses and political/strategic outcomes, foregrounding the coalition's failure.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

- The text appears in a **political-analytical discourse**, typical of international reports or academic summaries on conflict.
- It frames the Yemeni conflict in terms of **humanitarian and socio-economic impact** rather than purely military achievements.
- Translation into Arabic or other languages can produce different ideological effects:
- **Neutral translation** maintains descriptive tone:
 - أدت الحرب المستمرة في اليمن إلى خسائر بشرية كبيرة وانهيار الاقتصاد
- **Manipulative translation** could intensify blame on coalition actors:
 - تسببت الحرب التي شنتها قوات التحالف في اليمن بخسائر بشرية هائلة وتدمير الاقتصاد والبنية التحتية

shifting the frame from objective description to active responsibility.

Social Practice (Explanation)

- The discourse reflects a broader **critical stance on the coalition's intervention**, emphasizing societal suffering and failure to achieve political goals.
- It aligns with a **humanitarian and socio-political ideology**, focusing on the lived consequences of war rather than military or strategic narratives.
- In translation or media use, this text can serve as:
- **Awareness-raising** about human costs (neutral, educational function).
- **Political critique** of foreign intervention (manipulative, ideological function).
- These dual potential highlights the **power of discourse and translation** in shaping perceptions of the Yemeni conflict.

To sum up, from a CDA perspective, the text demonstrates how language constructs both **humanitarian concern** and **political evaluation**. Lexical choices, cumulative structures, and agency attribution collectively frame the coalition as an actor failing to achieve its objectives, while foregrounding the suffering of Yemeni society. Translation and recontextualization can either preserve neutrality or enhance ideological framing, reflecting the study's central theme: **the tension between linguistic mediation and political manipulation**.

CDA Analysis of the Text 4

Textual Analysis (Description)

The text 4 reports that the Armed Forces launched a joint operation using numerous drones and cruise missiles just as U.S. forces were preparing a major airstrike on their country. (appendix A).

Lexical Choices

- (*joint operation*) conveys organization, coordination, and military efficiency; frames the actors as strategic and competent.
- (*large number of drones and cruise missiles*) emphasizes military capability and scale of the operation.
- (*our country*) establishes in-group identity and solidarity, distinguishing between defenders (*us*) and external threats (*US forces*).
- (*major aerial attack*) highlights the severity of the threat, reinforcing urgency and justification for defensive actions.

Agency

- The armed forces are represented as active and competent agents conducting the operation.
- The U.S. forces are positioned as potential aggressors, preparing an attack; agency is assigned to both sides, but the tone favors the defending side.

Grammatical Features

- The sentence structure links cause and effect: the joint operation is contextualized as a response to the imminent U.S. attack.
- Passive construction is absent; the active voice emphasizes agency and preparedness of the armed forces.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

- The text reflects **state-centered military discourse**, likely originating from official or semi-official sources.
- It frames the military as **proactive, organized, and capable**, portraying the U.S. as an external aggressor.
- In translation, ideological effects can be shifted:
- **Neutral translation** preserves the factual description:

تم تنفيذ العملية المشتركة بعدد كبير من الطائرات المسيّرة والصواريخ، بينما كانت القوات الأمريكية تستعد لشن هجوم جوي كبير على بلدنا.

- **Manipulative translation** could intensify heroism or threat:

نفذت قواتنا العملية المشتركة ببراعة باستخدام عشرات الطائرات المسيّرة والصواريخ، بينما كان العدوان الأمريكي يتهدد لشن أكبر هجوم على وطننا.

Social Practice (Explanation)

- The discourse serves to **legitimize military actions** by portraying them as defensive and necessary against foreign aggression.
- It reinforces **nationalistic ideology**, highlighting in-group solidarity (*our country*) versus an external enemy (*US forces*).
- In media or translation contexts, the text can be mobilized to:
- Generate **domestic support** for military operations.
- Construct **external threats** to justify defensive strategies.
- This dual potential demonstrates the **intersection of language, ideology, and political manipulation**.

To conclude, from a CDA perspective, this short text demonstrates how language constructs **military competence, national identity, and threat perception**. Lexical choices, active agency, and framing reinforce the armed forces as defenders while portraying external actors as aggressors. Translation and recontextualization can either maintain neutrality or enhance ideological framing, reflecting the study's focus on **linguistic mediation versus political manipulation**.

CDA Analysis of the Text 5

Textual Analysis (Description)

The text 5 reports that Major General Aidarus al-Zubaidi met with Education Minister Tarek al-Akbari in Aden to discuss preparations for the new academic year and efforts to ensure a smooth resumption of schooling across provinces. (appendix A).

Lexical Choices

- (*Presidential Leadership Council member*) emphasizes formal authority and political legitimacy.
- (*temporary capital of Aden*) situates the meeting within a politically and geographically sensitive context, highlighting instability.
- (*upcoming academic year*) frames the discussion in terms of planning and forward-looking strategy.
- (*Smooth return to educational activities*) conveys a positive, constructive outcome and normalcy.

Agency

- Major General Aidarus al-Zubaidi and the Minister of Education are represented as **active agents**, shaping policy and ensuring educational continuity.
- Provinces are passive recipients of the ministry's actions (*ensure a smooth return to educational activities across various provinces*), emphasizing top-down authority.

Grammatical and Rhetorical Features

- Active voice emphasizes initiative and leadership.
- The text employs **neutral, formal diction**, reflecting a government or institutional report style.
- The mention of multiple actors (*Council member, Minister, ministry, provinces*) constructs a hierarchical and organized governance structure.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

- The text reflects **official administrative discourse**, highlighting governmental planning and leadership.
- It frames education as a **priority for state-building and social stability**, emphasizing institutional competence and proactive governance.
- Translation into Arabic or other languages can shift ideological emphasis:

Neutral translation preserves administrative focus:

التقى عضو المجلس الرئاسي، اللواء عيروس الزبيدي، مع وزير التربية والتعليم، طارق العكبري، في العاصمة المؤقتة عدن، لمناقشة الاستعدادات للعام الدراسي القادم وضمان عودة سلسة للأنشطة التعليمية في مختلف المحافظات.

Manipulative translation could foreground political legitimacy or authority:

عقد اللواء عيروس الزبيدي، عضو المجلس الرئاسي، اجتماعًا هامًا مع وزير التربية لضمان سيطرة الدولة على التعليم في العاصمة المؤقتة عدن.

highlighting political control rather than neutral educational planning.

Social Practice (Explanation)

- The discourse reflects the broader **state-building ideology**, portraying political leadership as capable, organized, and responsible for public services.
- It legitimizes governance through **visible administrative actions**, reinforcing the authority of the Presidential Leadership Council and the Ministry of Education.
- In translation or media usage, emphasis can shift to:
- **Neutral reporting**, focusing on educational preparations.
- **Political reinforcement**, highlighting loyalty to the leadership or central authority.

In short, from a CDA perspective, this text constructs a narrative of **proactive governance, leadership legitimacy, and institutional competence**. Lexical choices, agency distribution, and positive framing collectively promote the image of organized state action in education. Translation or recontextualization can either maintain neutrality or shift the focus toward ideological and political messaging, illustrating the dual function of political translation as **linguistic mediation versus political manipulation**.

Discussion

In this section, five texts are presented and analyzed through tables. Each table provides a brief description and discussion of the corresponding text.

CDA Comparative Table 1

Category	Original Expression (English)	Function in Source Text	Possible Neutral Translation (Arabic)	Possible Manipulative Translation (Arabic)
Lexical Choice	<i>renewed pressure campaign</i>	Presents U.S. actions as strategic and legitimate	حملة ضغط جديدة	حملة عدوانية جديدة
Lexical Choice	<i>large-scale bombardment</i>	Technical/neutral description of Israeli strikes	قصف واسع النطاق	قصف وحشي واسع
Agency	<i>53 people dead and more than 100 injured (passive voice)</i>	Obscures the responsible actor (U.S.)	مقتل 53 شخصًا وإصابة أكثر من 100	ارتكبت القوات الأمريكية مجزرة أدت إلى مقتل 53 وإصابة أكثر من 100
Framing (Causality)	<i>Less than two days after the American escalation in Yemen, Israel resumed large-scale bombardment in Gaza</i>	Creates a temporal/implicit causal link	بعد أقل من يومين على التصعيد الأمريكي في اليمن، استأنفت إسرائيل قصفها الواسع على غزة	العدوان الأمريكي في اليمن مهد الطريق لعدوان إسرائيلي وحشي على غزة
Framing (Actors)	<i>Houthis claimed responsibility for attacks on a U.S. aircraft carrier and a destroyer</i>	Frames Houthis as aggressors against legitimate military targets	أعلن الحوثيون مسؤوليتهم عن هجمات على حاملات طائرات ومدمرة أمريكية	المقاومة اليمنية أعلنت استهدافها لحاملة طائرات ومدمرة أمريكية

Table 1 highlights the tension between neutral mediation and ideological manipulation in political translation. On the one hand, **neutral translations** (e.g., *حملة ضغط جديدة* or *قصف واسع النطاق*) reflect an attempt at **linguistic mediation**, maintaining the journalistic tone and objectivity of the source text. On the other hand, **manipulative translations** (e.g., *حملة عدوانية جديدة* or *العدوان الأمريكي في اليمن مهد الطريق لعدوان إسرائيلي وحشي على غزة*) demonstrate how translation can serve as an instrument of political discourse. By amplifying agency, intensifying lexical choices, or reframing causality, such translations transform the text into a tool for ideological positioning.

This comparative analysis demonstrates that translation in the Yemeni media often oscillates between these two poles: either preserving the neutrality of international news sources or re-encoding the discourse to align with local ideological agendas. In doing so, translation becomes both a site of **linguistic mediation** and a mechanism of **political manipulation**, directly reflecting the central argument of this study.

CDA Comparative Table 2

Category	Original Expression (English)	Discursive Function	Neutral Translation (Arabic)	Manipulative Translation (Arabic)
Lexical Choice	<i>Houthis have not forgotten Eilat</i>	Emphasizes persistent threat	الحوثيون لم ينسوا إيلات	الحوثيون يواصلون تهديد إيلات باستمرار
Lexical Choice	<i>still pose a threat</i>	Highlights ongoing danger	لا يزالون يشكلون تهديدًا	ما زالوا يشكلون خطرًا كبيرًا على أمن المدينة
Lexical Choice	<i>interception of three Houthi drones</i>	Portrays Israeli military capability	اعتراض ثلاث مسيرات للحوثيين	اعترف الجيش الإسرائيلي بفشل جزئي رغم اعتراض ثلاث مسيرات
Agency	<i>launched eight ballistic missiles and seven drones</i>	Presents Houthis as active aggressors	أطلق الحوثيون ثمانية صواريخ باليستية وسبع مسيرات	المقاومة اليمنية أطلقت صواريخ ومسيرات ردًا على الاغتيالات
Framing (Causality)	<i>since the assassination of several of their leaders</i>	Suggests retaliatory context	بعد اغتيال عدد من قادتهم	ردًا على الاغتيالات الإسرائيلية
Framing (Actors)	<i>the incident is under investigation</i>	Shows control, reduces blame	يجري التحقيق في الحادث	تحاول إسرائيل التغطية على فشلها في حماية إيلات

Table 2 demonstrates how specific linguistic choices in the text construct ideological positions and shape readers' perceptions of the actors involved. On the one hand, **neutral translations** aim to maintain the source text's journalistic tone and factual reporting, preserving lexical items such as (*اعتراض ثلاث مسيرات للحوثيين*) or (*لا يزالون يشكلون تهديدًا*). On the other hand, **manipulative translations** highlight or intensify particular elements, reframing events to support a political agenda, as seen in expressions like:

تحاول إسرائيل التغطية على فشلها في حماية إيلات. or المقاومة اليمنية أطلقت صواريخ ومسيرات ردًا على الاغتيالات

This analysis illustrates the dual function of political translation: it serves both as **linguistic mediation**, conveying information across languages, and as a tool of **political manipulation**, shaping narratives to align with ideological perspectives. The table thus provides a concrete method to identify and compare these strategies, making it a valuable framework for understanding how Yemeni media may recontextualize international news to serve local political and social discourses.

CDA Comparative Table 3

Category	Original Expression (English)	Discursive Function	Neutral Translation (Arabic)	Manipulative Translation (Arabic)
Lexical Choice	<i>significant human losses</i>	Emphasizes human cost and tragedy	خسائر بشرية كبيرة	خسائر بشرية هائلة تسببها الحرب
Lexical Choice	<i>collapse of the economy</i>	Highlights socio-economic impact	انهيار الاقتصاد	تدمير الاقتصاد بشكل كامل على يد التحالف

Lexical Choice	<i>destruction of infrastructure</i>	Underlines material damage	تدمير البنية التحتية	تدمير البنية التحتية نتيجة الهجمات العدوانية
Lexical Choice	<i>expansion of poverty</i>	Shows worsening social conditions	اتساع الفقر	تفشي الفقر والحرمان بين السكان
Lexical Choice	<i>fragmentation of the social fabric</i>	Emphasizes societal breakdown	تمزيق النسيج الاجتماعي	تمزيق النسيج الاجتماعي بفعل الحرب المدمرة
Framing (Contrast)	<i>Despite this heavy cost, the coalition has been unable to achieve the objectives</i>	Highlights coalition failure despite effort	رغم هذه الكلفة الباهظة، لم يتمكن التحالف من تحقيق أهدافه	رغم الخسائر الهائلة، فشل التحالف في تحقيق أي من أهدافه
Agency	<i>the coalition has been unable to achieve the objectives</i>	Assigns responsibility to coalition	لم يتمكن التحالف من تحقيق أهدافه	أثبت التحالف فشله الذريع في تحقيق أهدافه

Table 3 illustrates how **lexical choices, framing, and agency** shape ideological meaning:

- **Neutral translations** maintain factual, descriptive reporting, focusing on humanitarian and socio-economic impacts.
- **Manipulative translations** intensify blame, portray deliberate destruction, and frame the coalition as actively responsible, thereby adding political or moral judgment.

This demonstrates that **translation is both linguistic mediation and a potential tool for political manipulation**, directly reflecting the research theme of your study.

CDA Comparative Table 4

Category	Original Expression (English)	Discursive Function	Neutral Translation (Arabic)	Manipulative Translation (Arabic)
Lexical Choice	<i>joint operation</i>	Emphasizes coordination and military organization	العملية المشتركة	العملية المشتركة الناجحة
Lexical Choice	<i>large number of drones and cruise missiles</i>	Highlights military capability and scale	عدد كبير من الطائرات المسيّرة والصواريخ	عشرات الطائرات المسيّرة والصواريخ المتطورة
Lexical Choice	<i>major aerial attack</i>	Conveys severity of the threat	هجوم جوي كبير	أكبر هجوم جوي محتمل على وطننا
Lexical Choice / Framing	<i>our country</i>	Establishes in-group identity and solidarity	بلدنا	وطننا العزيز
Agency	<i>US forces were preparing to launch a major aerial attack</i>	Positions U.S. as potential aggressor	كانت القوات الأمريكية تستعد لشن هجوم جوي كبير	كان العدوان الأمريكي يتهدد لشن أكبر هجوم على وطننا
Agency / Action	<i>The joint operation was carried out</i>	Emphasizes proactive and capable action by armed forces	تم تنفيذ العملية المشتركة	نفذت قواتنا العملية المشتركة ببراعة

Neutral translations maintain factual reporting and descriptive tone, focusing on military events without overt judgment.

Manipulative translations intensify heroism, threat, or ideological framing, emphasizing national pride and enemy aggression.

Table 4 demonstrates that **language in military reporting is ideologically loaded**, and translation can either mediate information neutrally or reinforce political and ideological narratives, consistent with the study's focus on **linguistic mediation versus political manipulation**.

CDA Comparative Table 5

Category	Original Expression (English)	Discursive Function	Neutral Translation (Arabic)	Manipulative Translation (Arabic)
Lexical Choice / Authority	<i>Presidential Leadership Council member, Major General Aidarus al-Zubaidi</i>	Emphasizes formal authority and political legitimacy	عضو المجلس الرئاسي، اللواء عيدروس الزبيدي	اللواء عيدروس الزبيدي، رمز السلطة والسيطرة في المجلس الرئاسي
Lexical Choice / Location	<i>temporary capital of Aden</i>	Situates meeting in politically sensitive context	العاصمة المؤقتة عدن	العاصمة المؤقتة عدن، مركز السيطرة السياسية
Lexical Choice / Planning	<i>upcoming academic year</i>	Frames discussion as forward-looking planning	العام الدراسي القادم	العام الدراسي القادم تحت إشراف الدولة
Lexical Choice / Outcome	<i>smooth return to educational activities</i>	Emphasizes positive, constructive outcome	عودة سلسلة للأنشطة التعليمية	ضمان السيطرة على التعليم وعودة منظمة للأنشطة التعليمية
Agency	<i>met with the Minister of Education</i>	Shows initiative and leadership	التقى مع وزير التربية والتعليم	عقد اجتماعاً هاماً مع وزير التربية لضمان تنفيذ توجيهات الدولة
Agency / Action	<i>ministry's efforts to ensure... across various provinces</i>	Shows top-down governance	جهود الوزارة لضمان... في مختلف المحافظات	جهود الوزارة لضمان تنفيذ سيطرة الدولة في جميع المحافظات

Neutral translations maintain formal, descriptive reporting focused on educational administration.

Manipulative translations emphasize political control, authority, and state legitimacy, transforming a routine administrative meeting into a statement of governance and power.

Table 5 illustrates how **lexical choice, framing, and agency** can mediate information neutrally or be used for ideological purposes, exemplifying the dual function of translation in political discourse: **linguistic mediation versus political manipulation**.

Summary of CDA Tables for Five Texts

Text	Key Lexical/Framing Features	Neutral Translation Approach	Manipulative Translation Approach
1. Yemen War: Political & Social Implications	Highlights human, economic, and social consequences (<i>human losses, collapse of economy, fragmentation of social fabric</i>); coalition as failing actor.	Maintains descriptive tone; emphasizes humanitarian and socio-economic impact.	Intensifies blame on coalition; frames consequences as deliberate or catastrophic.
2. U.S. Strikes and Houthis	Military action verbs (<i>pressure campaign, large-scale bombardment</i>); Houthis as aggressors, U.S. and Israel as active military actors.	Reports events factually; emphasizes military operations without moral judgment.	Frames U.S./Israel as aggressors; reframes Houthi actions as resistance or justified retaliation.
3. Eilat Threats	Continuous threat (<i>still pose a threat</i>), defensive action (<i>interception of drones</i>); Israeli security perspective.	Maintains defensive and neutral reporting of threats.	Emphasizes Houthi aggression or Israeli failure; reframes threat or resistance ideologically.
4. Armed Forces Operation	Proactive defense and military capability (<i>joint operation, drones and cruise missiles</i>); U.S. as potential aggressor.	Factual reporting of military actions.	Amplifies heroism, nationalism, and threat perception; emphasizes defensive success.
5. Educational Preparations in Aden	Authority and leadership focus (<i>Presidential Leadership Council member</i>), positive outcome (<i>smooth return to educational activities</i>); top-down governance.	Reports administrative planning and educational preparations neutrally.	Emphasizes political control, central authority, and state-building; frames leaders as dominant actors.

The summary table demonstrates consistent patterns across all five texts in terms of **lexical choice, agency, and framing**. Key observations include:

- Lexical Choice:** Terms such as *human losses, pressure campaign, or joint operation* are loaded with ideological meaning. They can be maintained neutrally or intensified manipulatively in translation.
- Agency:** Active agents (military forces, leadership councils) are foregrounded, while passive recipients (victims, provinces) are backgrounded, reflecting power relations.
- Framing:** The texts frame events either as neutral reporting (humanitarian impact, administrative planning, defense operations) or as ideologically charged narratives emphasizing threat, blame, or political legitimacy.
- Translation Function:** Neutral translation preserves factual content and tone, while manipulative translation amplifies ideological, political, or moral dimensions, aligning with specific agendas.

To sum up, across all texts, CDA analysis illustrates the dual role of translation in the Yemeni media: it serves as **linguistic mediation** by conveying information accurately, and as a tool of **political manipulation** by shaping narratives, assigning blame, and reinforcing ideological positions. This framework provides a systematic method for comparing original expressions with neutral and manipulative translations, highlighting how discourse operates at both linguistic and socio-political levels.

Findings/Results

In this section, the answers to the research questions are presented based on the data analysis and discussion. The findings are supported and clarified through the results shown in the previous tables.

1. How does political translation in Yemeni media function as both linguistic mediation and political manipulation?

Political translation in Yemeni media functions on a spectrum between **linguistic mediation** and **political manipulation**. On the one hand, neutral translations convey factual information across languages, maintaining journalistic integrity and clarity, this is **linguistic mediation**. On the other hand, translators may intentionally or unintentionally **reframe events, emphasize certain actors, or amplify threats and failures** to align the narrative with ideological or political agendas, this constitutes **political manipulation**. CDA analysis of the texts shows that lexical choices, agency attribution, and framing are the main mechanisms through which this dual role operates.

2. What translation strategies and choices are most commonly used to reframe or reshape political discourse in Yemeni media?

Common strategies include:

Lexical intensification: Choosing words with stronger connotations (e.g., *horrific losses* vs. *human losses*).

Agency shift: Highlighting or downplaying actors' roles (e.g., foregrounding coalition failure or Houthi resistance).

Framing and recontextualization: Changing temporal, causal, or moral framing to emphasize threat, heroism, or legitimacy.

Addition or omission: Adding interpretive clauses or omitting neutral context to align with ideological objectives.

These strategies collectively allow translators to **reshape the narrative** while ostensibly conveying the original message.

3. In what ways do translation practices influence public perception and contribute to the construction of political realities in Yemen?

Translation practices shape public perception by:

Reinforcing ideological positions: Manipulative translations can frame certain actors as heroes or villains, influencing political allegiance.

Guiding emotional responses: Lexical intensification and threat framing evoke fear, empathy, or moral judgment.

Controlling narrative focus: By emphasizing certain events or actors and backgrounding others, translators affect which narratives gain prominence.

Shaping cross-linguistic discourse: How foreign audiences interpret Yemen's conflict can be influenced depending on whether translations maintain neutrality or highlight political bias.

In sum, translation becomes a **key tool in the dissemination of competing political narratives**, mediating information while also enabling subtle manipulation of public opinion.

Conclusion

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the five selected texts demonstrates that language plays a central role in shaping perceptions of political, military, and social events in Yemen. Across all texts, lexical choices, agency attribution, and framing patterns reveal how media discourse can construct ideologically loaded narratives.

Neutral translations generally preserve factual information and descriptive reporting, functioning primarily as **linguistic mediation**, conveying information accurately across languages. In contrast, manipulative translations tend to amplify ideological, political, or moral dimensions, highlighting threats, failures, or heroism, thus serving as tools of **political manipulation**.

The analysis shows that political translation is never neutral. Every lexical choice, syntactic construction, and framing strategy can influence the target audience's perception of events, actors, and responsibilities. This underscores the importance of considering **both linguistic and socio-political contexts** in translation, particularly when dealing with conflict-related content.

Furthermore, the study reveals patterns of power and authority: active agents (military forces, leadership councils) are foregrounded, while affected populations (civilians, provinces) are backgrounded, reflecting underlying social and political hierarchies. Such patterns are crucial in understanding how media and translations can reinforce dominant ideologies or challenge them.

Recommendation

1. For Translators and Media Professionals

- Maintain awareness of potential ideological bias in source texts.
- Strive for **neutral linguistic mediation** when the goal is objective reporting, particularly in conflict-sensitive contexts.
- Clearly distinguish between factual reporting and opinion or interpretive framing to avoid unintentional manipulation.

2. For Academics and Researchers

- Apply CDA to translation studies as a systematic method to reveal how power, ideology, and language intersect.
- Consider comparative studies across multiple media sources to identify consistent patterns of framing and agency attribution.

3. For Policy Makers and Educators

- Recognize the impact of media framing and translation on public perception, policy support, and conflict narratives.
- Encourage the use of **balanced reporting** in educational materials and public communications to foster critical media literacy.

4. For Future Research

- Extend the study to other regions and languages to examine cross-cultural differences in political translation.
- Investigate audience reception to understand how manipulative versus neutral translations influence public opinion and perceptions of legitimacy.

Limitations

This study is limited by the size and scope of the data set, as only a selection of Yemeni media outlets and texts were analyzed, which may not capture the full diversity of translation practices. Furthermore, the focus on Arabic-English translations exclude other highly relevant language pairs. Given the international and regional dimensions of the Yemeni conflict, which involves various external actors, future research should investigate translation practices involving languages such as Persian, Turkish, and French. Examining these languages could reveal different patterns of ideological manipulation tied to the specific agendas of other key regional stakeholders.

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Appendix (A)

Armed Forces: The joint operation was carried out with a large number of drones and cruise missiles while US forces were preparing to launch a major aerial attack on our country.

Meeting on Educational Preparations in Aden

On Monday, the Presidential Leadership Council member, Major General Aidarus al-Zubaidi, met with the Minister of Education, Tarek al-Akbari, in the temporary capital of Aden. This meeting focused on the upcoming academic year and the ministry's efforts to ensure a smooth return to educational activities across various provinces

The Political and Social Implications of the Ongoing War in Yemen for the Past Five Years

The war that has been raging in Yemen for the past five years has resulted in significant human losses, the collapse of the economy, the destruction of infrastructure, the expansion of poverty, and the fragmentation of the social fabric. Despite this heavy cost, the coalition has been unable to achieve the objectives for which it entered the war.

The mayor of Eilat explained that the Houthis have not forgotten Eilat despite the army's operations deep inside their territory, stressing that the city's port is out of service and that the Houthis still pose a threat to them.

The Israeli army confirmed the interception of three Houthi drones, noting that a fourth drone crashed in the area of Ramon Airport. It added that sirens were not activated at the airport and that the incident is under investigation.

Israeli radio reported that the Houthis had launched eight ballistic missiles and seven drones since the assassination of several of their leaders in Sana'a at the end of the week before last.

U.S. Strikes and the Designation of the Houthis: Shifting Dynamics of the Yemeni Conflict

On March 15, U.S. forces resumed military strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen, as part of a renewed pressure campaign on the group and its main backer – Iran. These developments follow Houthi threats to resume blocking Israeli ships from crossing the Red Sea by targeting them, in response to Israel's prevention of aid from entering Gaza. The U.S. bombing campaign has so far left 53 people dead and more than 100 injured, with reports indicating strikes on the provinces of Sanaa, Saada, Al-Jawf, Marib, Dhamar, Al-Hudaydah, Al-Bayda, and Taiz.

In this context, U.S. officials noted that the strikes are likely to continue for several weeks. In turn, the Houthis claimed responsibility for several attacks on a U.S. aircraft carrier and a destroyer. Less than two days after the American escalation in Yemen, Israel resumed large-scale bombardment of Gaza, killing more than 400 people. This effectively collapsed the ceasefire agreement reached last January, which had ushered in a period of relative calm in the Red Sea.