

Translation and Ideology: When Faithfulness Becomes a Luxury in Translation

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Abstract

Every discourse, written or oral, is the conveyer of some hidden agenda of the producer, most importantly in such genres of speech as journalism, politics, propaganda, and advertisements. Given the role of translation in discourse, a difference exists between when the translator carries the ideological values of the elite in contrast with one with patriotic preferences. In this study a comparison was made between translation products resulting from the work of 15 postgraduates of translation studies viewed as freelancers and another published product carrying the elite's ideology whose works appeared in published in the state media. The results of our comparisons, both qualitative and quantitative showed that there existed two types of difference: the ideology of the elite on the one hand, and the preferred culture related values of the freelancers on the other. The differences revealed that both groups translated under the influence of some pre-disposed influence dividable into different categories. Employing strategies of manipulation would be considered as an identity marker showing the social identity of the translator. The effect could be either their cultural preferences or, in contrast, the elite's favorable set of preferences imposed on both the translator and the product of translation.

Keywords: translation, ideology, manipulation, culture, politics

For hundreds of years translations were considered as second rate copies and translators were regarded as ones whose responsibility was to replace linguistic codes from one language into another. The author's superiority over translator has been undermined by several other sources of effect. However, Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) have dismissed the traditional study of translation that focused merely on linguistic comparisons and did not consider the text in its given cultural environment. In recent years, under the influence of new post-structural as well as functional advancements, the focus of attention has been shifted to the issue of translator's own set of values of the world spoken of. In the process of translation, various ideological effects, in addition to the translator's own values of the world they live in,

could sway translators' choices: the original author, the publisher, the target readers' preferences all impose pressure on the ultimate product of translation (Al-Shehari, 2007).

Media as a significant medium of information dispersal is likely to be subject to ideological influences arising from various sources (Venuti, 1992). As a result of religious-political changes which occurred after the 1978 Islamic Revolution, the dominant ideology underwent political and religious changes which resulted in major shifts in the set of accepted ideological values of the Iranian society. The present study examines the weight of the ideological exercise based on the three Iranian newspaper translations compared with the translations of 15 freelancers to seek answers to the following question:

- How can sources of influence from outside of the ST to be translated affect the translation product?

Review of Literature

Ideology and its impact on translation has become a research focus and ample explorations have been done. Lefevere (1992) put forward the influential theory of rewriting and manipulation. He claimed that translation, historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing are all different forms of rewriting. Lefevere maintained that rewriting can either be ideological, or be poetological i.e. conforming or rebelling against the dominant/preferred poetics in the TL culture. Simon (1996) approached translation from a gender perspective and criticized translation studies for using the term culture 'as if it referred to an obvious and unproblematic reality'. Another chapter of ideo-cultural perspective towards translation was orchestrated by postcolonialist theorists: a broad cultural approach to the study of power relations between different groups in which language, literature and translation may play a role (Hatim & Munday, 2004). Gayatri Spivak (2000) was the avant-garde and in her 'the politics of translation' questions what she terms as 'translationese' or 'translatese', translations which eliminate the identity and ideology of politically less powerful cultures or individuals.

Brazilian cannibalism was a movement within postcolonialism structure. Cannibalism in translation shows the infinite ability of the translators to manipulate the original text in terms of ideology, culture, history and the like to make it acceptable to the target reader. In this situation the concept of loyalty to the original and ethics of translation are out of place (Munday, 2001).

In 1970 Vermeer introduced Skopos into translation theory which is technically a term for the *purpose* of a translation. Skopos theory focuses on the purpose of translation which has a key role in determining the translation strategies and methods so as to produce a functionally adequate result (Munday 2001, p.79). An upside of this theory is that a text can be translated in different ways according to the TT purpose or the commission given to the translator, however, this may happen at the expense of the sacrifice of the ideology of the original text.

Among the major studies reviewed in terms of ideology and translation, one can distinguish two major strategies that are often implemented in translation practice. One enjoying the positive attitude towards foreign cultural and ideological elements, letting the 'foreign' to shine through in translation. The other approach advocating the fluency and acceptability of the SL text in TL culture that wishes to do whatever it takes to manipulate the original text into a modified version compatible to the target reader's interests (Venuti, 1995).

A short review of research literature will immediately show that the topic in question has poorly been addressed in the field of translation (Al-Shehari, 2007: 11). A few papers have already been published in the area of translation of news, more particularly on the translation of newspapers. More specifically, while CDA approaches to media discourse date back to several decades ago, it is interesting to see that translation scholars have not been attentive enough to the application of CAD to the area of translation of news.

As for the translation of news, the research vacuum may be attributed to the fact that news reports are not typically taken as being separate from the main news stories and, accordingly, their analysis is not assumed to be separate from the analysis of their relevant texts. However, news reports, in general, and those of newspapers, in particular, have the highest readership (Al-Shehari, 2007), though in many cases, the readers merely suffice to a rapid scanning of news titles on the counter of news dealers or on the on-line news pages mostly without reading their main texts. So, it seems to be of some significance to analyze news reports, as elements sometimes playing independent roles of their own.

Our search of recent works on the topic has resulted in just a few papers among the most relevant works; those of Montgomery (2006), Valdeón (2007), and Al-Shehari (2007).

Montgomery (2006) adopted Jacobson's concept of intralingual translation (Jacobson 1959) to address the transfer of expressions from one domain of the public sphere, such as presidential speeches or broadcast interviews, to another domain, such as newspaper headlines. Valdeón (2007) attempted to analyze the ways in which translational processes have an effect on the informative and persuasive functions of news headlines with regard to the target language readership; and finally, Al-Shehari (2007) tried to investigate the strategies adopted by *Aljazeera* news network in its English translation of news stories published originally in Arabic in order to explore how certain ideologies can be signaled out semiotically through the translation of news headlines. The findings of the above research works can be summarized as follows:

1. The translation of news reports is sometimes subject to ideological (political/cultural) manipulation;
2. Ideological interferences with the news translation are mostly conscious and rarely unconscious;
3. Target readers' ideological expectations may affect the *skopus* and strategies of news headlining in translation.

Methodology

Participants

A group of 15 postgraduate students of translation studies from the University of Isfahan were randomly selected to render 20 sample news reports.

Material

Three Iranian newspapers were randomly selected, then, two volumes of each newspaper were randomly selected. In these six volumes, the translated news reports (six news reports) were analyzed and compared with the original sources and the ideological manipulations were detected.

Procedures

A comparison was made between the original versions of the English sources of the given news and their translations in the newspapers. The strategies employed by newspaper translators were classified and the frequency of each category was measured. In the next phase, the materials (the 20 extracted sentences) were given to the population of our 15 translators to compare the translation product of these two groups. They were told that their target readers were to be Iranians. Qualitative and quantitative analysis on how and by what strategies the materials were translated included the next step.

Results

The analysis of the data showed us that strategies have been employed by newspaper translators the effects of which had caused changes which can be classified as: addition, deletion, partial adjustment, and total change. Examples from the corpus were selected which demonstrate the strategies mentioned above:

Addition

Addition involves adding a concept to the entity addressed, it could be an element or a whole sentence in translation that does not exist in the ST. Below examples are given for instances of additions. The sample is from New York Times⁽⁷⁾, about Mecca; and its Persian translation published in Keyhan Newspaper is provided⁽³⁾. The journalist translator makes some added concepts due to showing respect for the holiness of *Mecca* where the center of Islamic yearly worshiping of pilgrims is located, The translator has added *the great* to the expectations of the Muslim community in Iran.

Extract 1:

(1) The Saudi government is being criticized for construction projects in the historic core of Mecca that many find appalling.

(1.A.) دولت عربستان به علت ساخت و ساز وسیع در مکه مکرمه مورد انتقادات شدیدی قرار گرفته است.

(1.B.) (Back Translation): The Saudi government is being heavily criticized for huge constructions in the great Mecca.

Deletion

The second strategy employed is removing a concept or a cluster of concepts in the TT. The ST contained an ideologically unfavorable. Number two is a piece of news from New York Times⁽⁸⁾, it is about the UN resolution against Islamic Republic of Iran and its Persian translation was published in Iran Newspaper⁽¹⁾: The translator has removed the concept of receiving an *overwhelming support* by members of the UN; on the other hand, the change has been added to change the modifier "*anti-Iranian*" in the Persian translation:

Extract 2:

(2) The UN resolution against Iran, approved overwhelmingly, urged Iranian government to clarify its nuclear programs.

(2.A.) تصویب قطعنامه ضد ایرانی در سازمان ملل و درخواست از ایران برای شفافیت در برنامه‌های هسته‌ای

(2.B.) (Back Translation) The anti-Iranian resolution at the UN and the request for clarification of nuclear programs.

Partial Adjustment

Another alteration involves parts of the information to change the ideological effect in favor or against the source as opposed to the target audience. The sample is from Washington Post⁽¹⁰⁾, and is about the eight-year-war between Iraq and Iran; the Persian translation was published in Keyhan Newspaper⁽⁴⁾. The translator has changed "*Iran-Iraq war*" into the "*imposed war*", the most common form of addressing the eight-year-war in Iran.

Extract 3:

(3) The truce was arranged by the United Nations and cease-fire took effect in 8-year Iran-Iraq war.

(3.A.) قرارداد صلح در سازمان ملل تهیه شد و به هشت سال جنگ تحمیلی خاتمه داد.

(3.B.) (Back Translation) The truce was arranged in the UN and ended the eight-year-old imposed war.

Total Change

As the name implies total change refers to changing a conceptual item in the original text with an entirely new item without necessarily showing any correspondence with the original. The sample has been taken from Los Angeles Times⁽¹²⁾ and is about a clash in *Israel* followed by its Persian translation published in Shargh Newspaper⁽⁶⁾: The translation product agrees with the dominant view of the media by complying with the accepted policies; the term “*Zionist Regime*” to refer to Israel.

Extract 4:

(4) Two Israeli police officers were slightly injured in a clash in Jerusalem that erupted during a demonstration after Friday Prayer, and one Arab protester was arrested.

(4.A)

طی درگیری معترضان با نیروهای رژیم صهیونیستی در بیت المقدس چند تن بازداشت شدند.

(4.B) (Back Translation) In an struggle between protesters and Zionist regime forces in the Holy House several got arrested.

A statistical analysis of the translated texts elicited showed that the translators have applied various strategies to sway the ideological equation to the favorable audience. Among the 55 translation alterations in the corpus, 52% went for partial adjustment, 21% for addition, 19% for deletion, and 8% for total change (figure1).

In the next phase of this study, 20 randomly selected pieces of news, translated by the original translator of the media, were given to the participants for translating into Persian. Then a comparison was made between the translations of the two groups. The results showed that regarding political news 86% of the translators (13 out of 15) rendered a version that was different from those observed in newspaper translations. However, in terms of cultural and religious news, the results showed that the participants had a similar translation to the original translators to the point that 96% of the translators employed alterations to glorify Iranian cultural and religious heritage. Comparisons showed that ‘addition’ was the most frequent strategy, with a frequency of 77.5 %, employed by the freelance translators (see Table1). This indicates that concepts which are ordinary for the western journalists in addressing, need to be respected in reference by means of adding an additional concepts.

Table1. *Strategies Used by Freelance Translators; The Frequency And Percentage.*

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Partial Adjustment	23	11.5 %
Addition	155	77.5 %
Deletion	10	5 %
Total Change	12	6 %

The second category of data includes those instances which dealt with the ideological preferences which were displayed to be freelancer’s favorable. The concepts of translation could be altered due to either the dominance of the elites’ ideology or could reveal cultural preferences of the translators who participated in the task. The alterations done by the free translators were, in some cases, identical with the ones presented in the media; however, there were instances of translated concepts for which the translators did not show any tendency for employing strategies of change.

The thing is that examining the works did represent a difference in the values maintained by the freelancers compared with the translations by the professional translators whose work represented the dominant views of the social elite. The cultural concepts which required translator’s manipulation did not necessarily include those which were observed in the original translations’ work. The freelancers preferred to maintain faith to some greater extent in comparison with the ones which appeared in media examined. Freelancers did not support fully the ideology that we call the dominance of the elite. Examples below show how

freelancers' renderings do not correspond with those which were media translators. The freelancers did not display the effect of the elite's dominant ideology in their renderings. Extract five below shows freelancers' translations of culturally loaded concepts which were not the accepted ones in the target culture audience. 13 from 15 translators preferred to keep the word *Israel* in their translations.

Extract 5:

Israel expresses its gratitude to US for اسرائیل مراتب قدردانی خود از آمریکا در قبال بررسی اوضاع increasing monitoring in the middle-east. خاور میانه ابراز داشت.

Extract 6 is another instance which shows how freelancers did not choose to impose change on the expressions used in the target text as a result of their ways of evaluating ideas which had a degree of culturally oriented value. They preferred to keep *Iran-Iraq war* in their translations rather than referring to it by *the imposed war*; in comparison with the media translation which referred to the same concept by the *imposed war*. As is clear, the comparison shows how the importance of a political issue affects the translations produced in established media in Persian target language. One has serious invested interest in calling the war the imposed type implying a set of facts which are important to the elite

Extract 6:

Iran-Iraq war officially began on جنگ ایران و عراق بطور رسمی در ۲۲ دسامبر ۱۹۸۰ با September 22, 1980 with an Iraqi land and حمله ی زمینی و هوایی عراق به مناطق غربی ایران آغاز شد. air invasion on western Iran.

Still another example (7) reveals how reference to a religious and political leader who enjoys a great deal of popularity in Iran. Reference to this person is made by a linguistic item showing the great respect of the user. The confessed respect latent in the expression takes a compulsive sense having been the favorable reference of the individuals who believe in the referent's greatness. 12 out of 15 renderings used a different name than the one preferred by the media: their strategy was to keep "*Ayatollah Khomeini*" in their translations rather than *Imam*.

Extract 7:

Ayatollah Khomeini was the one who آیت الله خمینی کسی بود که دستور تشکیل سپاه پاسداران ordered to establish IRGC. را داد.

In contrast with what was observed in our examination of the works of the professional media translators, freelance translations showed that they were not consistent in their strategy dealing with cultural and religious elements. Findings showed that they used alterations to change neutral or negative cultural connotations into reference with good social connotational meanings. This evidently shows that translators' loyalty in dealing with culturally sensitive issues outweighed their tendency to keep the faith which ethically has to be maintained. Ignoring keeping the concepts in the target version in favor of using referents which connotated valuable ideas was a motive freelancers all kept as a result of influence they received from a number of sources: various bias every individual carries when dealing with values and principles, non-convergent to the existing political structure which are realized in decision making processes, not carrying the dominant ideology as one's own preferred set of values, or having respect or concern for certain national, religious, and ethnic, custom related social or political issue. The effect of the latter, the incentives which can push one toward choice of referring expressions for a referent which is sacred, or an attribute which has importance because of one's identity is realized by the choice of referential forms which show the concern or the prejudice which might exist for a cultural ethnic issue. Extract eight is an example of addition as a strategy which becomes volunteer show of respect for a holly

entity. Freelancers did all change the religious-cultural element of “Qur’an” to “Holy Qur’an”.

Extract 8:

Afghan anger over Qur’an burning an emblem of nation’s culture war. خشم افغان ها بخاطر سوزاندن قرآن کریم نمادی از جنگ فرهنگی ملت افغانستان علیه غرب است.

Extract 9 below is mentioned in which case 8 translators changed the religious element of *The Shrine of Shia’s first Imam* to *The Shrine of Imam Ali (PBUH)* and 7 translators rendered it into the highly glorious form of *The Holy Shrine of Imam Ali (PBUH)*.

Extract 9:

The bomb exploded near the shrine of بمب در نزدیکی مرقد مطهر امام علی (ع) منفجر شد.
Shia’s first Imam.

Extract 10:

Another example of patriotic preference is demonstrated in Extract 10, in which case, 12 of 15 translators preferred to change the religious element of *Mecca* to the respectful form of *The Holy Mecca*.

Mecca is host of many important mosques مکه می مکرمه مساجد مهمی را که قدمت برخی به ۱۵۰۰ سال قبل بر می گردند در خود جای داده است.
which some of them date back to 1500 years ago.

The statistical comparison of the data produced by the freelancers show that most of the translators kept the value by not changing the translation in their own or the elite’s favor. If we divide the reasons for change in translation into two: following the ideology of the elite, and keeping some ethnic, religious, national, etc value which we refer to as patriotic, figure 2 and 3 show what percentage of the translators did make change in their work to submit to their own patriotism.

Discussion

Reflecting on the translations of freelancers it became clear that there were significant differences in their translations due to translators’ loyalty to the original text and freedom of thought. It can be inferred from the data that in both translations, translators pursued some norms on the basis of which they altered translations of issues related to politics or culture. Above all, some significant contradictions in freelancers’ behavior were visible. They rendered political elements as close as possible to the original ideological perspective, however, in case of cultural but not political matters, they changed the TT ideologically. Change of the critical type did happen in both translations; however, the incentive for the change was considerably different. The freelancers were affected by social variables which were different from those affecting the newspaper translators.

The fact that additions were highly employed could be considered as a new phenomenon to deal with. Freelance translators have used this strategy more: almost all of the additions were concerned with cultural and religious concerns. Almost all of them were used to either neutralize the negative connotations of a concept or to glorify it as shown in the above examples (Extracts 8-10).

Several entities are usually translated with some respect; these entities include: a) religious leaders b) holy places c) prophets and imams and d) political leaders. It is safe to assume that translators all have used this strategy under the influence of the dominant religious context of the country which owes respect to Islamic values and cultural heritage.

Strategies which deal with ideologically loaded translations could be employed for either of two purposes: The first purpose implies that the translator is presenting his own preferred

ideology which could be matters which deal with culture including ethnic, national, religious, etc factors. The second reason for change was to draw a clear line between a US self group in contrast with OTHERS who are against our ideology and should be kept under control. One is mostly self-preservation of the principle values and the other is the imposed divisions between communities into us and others (figure 4).

Results of the study were, to some extent, consistent with those of Montgomery (2006), Valdeón (2007), and Al-Shehari (2007) regarding the conscious manipulation of translations and the conformation to the expectation of target readers for the case of cultural and religious concepts. However, this study highlighted the point that ideological alterations were not only consciously-made but they were strictly selective.

Conclusion

The effect of ideology on translation has been acknowledged by translation scholars through theories that they have proposed and classifications that they have introduced. The present study showed how ideological effects on the translation product may vary in type. Having analyzed the strategies by which translations are done, we found out that there were two major orientations. The first is to come up with a, reliable and universally accepted translation (Jelveh, 2012) in agreement with the original without drawing a line between us/other separations, although changes might be made due to the translators' self-possessed values which are not related to excluding the others in the process. Another is a patriotic translation (Jelveh, 2012) which contains critical changes which result from the influence of either the dominant ideology of the elite or by both the preferred favorable values of the former plus line drawing type which display an opposition between the two called idiomatically us vs. them.

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Appendix A:

Iranian Newspapers	English Sources of News
1-Iran, March 20, 2011	7-New York Times, January 12, 2011
2-Iran, October 25, 2011	8-New York Times, March 17, 2011
3-Keyhan, April 21, 2011	9-Washing Post, March 08, 2011
4-Keyhan, May14, 2012	10-Washing Post, May 11, 2012
5-Shargh, March 6, 2011	11-Los Angeles Times, March 2, 2011
6-Shargh, November 17, 2011	12-Los Angeles Times, August 6, 2012

Appendix B:

Translate the following sentences:

- 1- The Iran-Iraq war was originally referred to as Gulf War until the 1991 Iraq-Kuwait conflict.
- 2- The Arabian Gulf has many good fishing grounds, extensive coral reefs, and abundant pearl oysters.
- 3- The Iranian Regime is trying to negotiate with the protesters at the first place.
- 4- The aftermath of the Israel attack on Gaza flotilla.
- 5- Jerusalem is also the holy city to three major Abrahamic religions- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- 6- Mohammad gathered his coterie in Mecca.
- 7- Cyrus was the one who set the Persian Empire after too many local wars.
- 8- Most of Zoroaster's life is known through Zoroastrian text.
- 9- The bomb exploded near the shrine of Shia's first Imam.
- 10- Mecca is host of many important mosques which some of them date back to 1500 years ago.
- 11- Quran is regarded as the finest piece of literature in the Arabic language.
- 12- Iran was condemned at UN for the alleged terror attempt.
- 13- The resolution against Iran received overwhelming support by members of the UN general assembly.
- 14- Iran-Iraq war officially began on Sept. 22, 1980 with an Iraqi land and air invasion on western Iran.
- 15- Israel expresses its gratitude to US for increasing monitoring in the middle-east.
- 16- Afghan anger over Qur'an burning an emblem of nation's culture war.
- 17- Iranian protesters to the election results tried to occupy a military base.
- 18- Security forces killed three protesters in two days.
- 19- Cyrus established the most powerful rule in Persian history.
- 20- Ayatollah Khomeini was the one who ordered to establish IRGC.

Appendix C:

List of the referents which required one out of the two changes in translating.

Politically Loaded Words Newspaper Translations Freelancers' Translations

Iran-Iraq War	جنگ تحمیلی	جنگ ایران و عراق
- Iranian Regime	جمهوری اسلامی ایران	حکومت ایران
- Ayatollah Khomeini	امام خمینی	آیت الله خمینی
- Ayatollah Khamene`i	مقام معظم رهبری	آیت الله خامنه ای
- Israel	رژیم صهیونیستی	اسرائیل
- Jerusalem	بیت المقدس	اورشلیم
- CIA	سازمان جاسوسی آمریکا	سازمان سیا
- Mossad	سازمان جاسوسی رژیم صهیونیستی	موساد
- MI6	سازمان جاسوسی انگلیس	ام آی سیکس
- Department of Defense (Israel)	وزارت جنگ	وزارت دفاع

Culturally Loaded Words	Newspaper Translations	Freelancers` Translations
Qur`an	قرآن کریم	قرآن (کریم)
Mohammad	رسول اکرم/حضرت محمد	رسول اکرم/حضرت محمد
Shia`s First Imam	امام علی (ع)	امام علی (ع)/حضرت علی
Zoroaster	ذرتشت پیامبر	ذرتشت پیامبر/حضرت ذرتشت
Cyrus	کوروش (کبیر)	کوروش (کبیر)
(Arabian) Gulf	خلیج فارس	خلیج فارس
Mecca	مکه مکرمه	مکه مکرمه
Medina	مدینه منوره	مدینه منوره
Karbala	کربلای معلی	کربلای معلی
Najaf	نجف اشرف	نجف اشرف
Mashhad	مشهد مقدس	مشهد (مقدس)
Jesus Christ	حضرت مسیح	حضرت مسیح/عیسی

Appendix D: Figures:



Figure1. The Percentage of Strategies Used by Translators of Newspapers

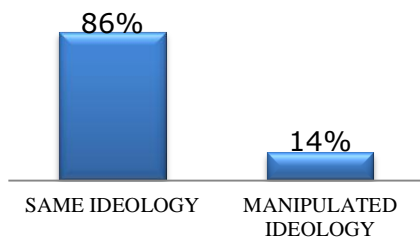


Figure2. *Freelancers` work in Translating Political Words*

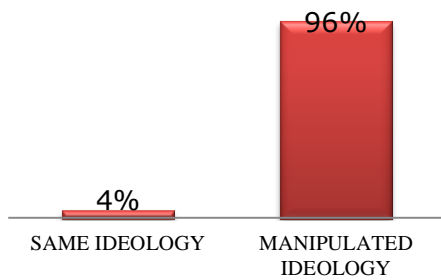


Figure3. *Freelancers` work in Translating Political Words*

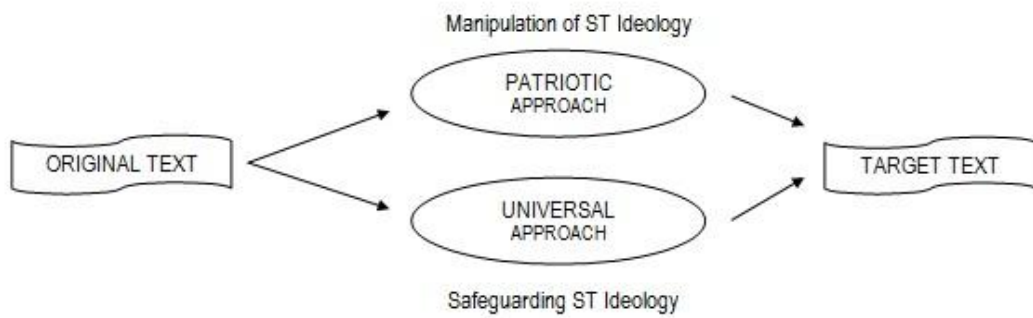


Figure 4. *The Route Through which Original Text is Rendered into the Target Text*