

Translator Interventions in Middle-East Peace Initiatives.

Detours in the Roadmap?

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Introduction: Peace initiatives and translator interventions

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people is one of the most complicated in modern history; diplomatic efforts to resolve it are as old as the conflict itself. The most recent efforts came immediately after the collapse of the Camp David II peace negotiations in 2000 and the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada *Al-Aqsa* on 28 September 2000. Those two major events resulted in an atmosphere of political despair and frustration and consequently gave rise to a number of political documents called “peace initiatives,” formulated within the general framework of a two-state solution. These initiatives can be seen as attempts by key international and local political players to outline a resolution of the conflict. Since the players are both international and local, the texts have operated in both international and local languages: most of these documents have been produced in English and many have then been translated into Hebrew and Arabic.

Here we shall focus on translations of the document known as the “Roadmap Plan.” The English text was drafted by the US State Department and put forward by the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations (the “Quartet”), with the details being made public on 30 April 2003. Within one day Arabic translations were published by the US Department of State, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CNN, and the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds*, with the United Nations version appearing a week later and the *Al-mty* network putting its translation online within the month. Hebrew translations were also published within a day by the Knesset, the right-wing newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* and the left-of-centre newspaper *Ha'aretz*, with a Hebrew version by the activist organization Peace

Now remaining undated. In all, this gives a corpus of ten translations from various political standpoints.¹

Even cursory analysis of the translations shows significant and often surprising shifts, to an extent that cannot be explained by different language systems or discursive conventions. The shifts are of various kinds and operate at different political levels. Our problem here is to determine which of the shifts might usefully be labelled “translator interventions.” We start from the position that, in this context, the term “intervention” minimally implies that the translation decision, no matter who is ultimately responsible for it, is intended to play a role in the political process. Our main task will be to turn this implication into a useful working definition. We thus work in the overlap of translation analysis and the study of political discourse, in a domain pioneered by the work of Christina Schäffner (see for example Schäffner 2004a; 2004b), in whose footsteps we tread.

1. The nature of translator interventions

Since translations are always different from their sources, a normal correlative of any claim to equivalence should be the presence of translation “shifts,” usually understood as “departures from formal correspondence” (Catford, 1965: 73). Here we have no need to dwell on the enormous theoretical problem of defining shifts. Let us merely accept that there are a lot of them about, as a normal background phenomenon, but that some shifts are somehow patterned and motivated enough to be labelled “translator interventions.” The basic question is then *how* patterned and *how* motivated the shifts need to be. On the one hand, the term “intervention” can only be meaningful if reserved for a highly significant level of action; we do not want to see it dissipate into general observations of translational difference, creativity or awareness of target-side effects.² On the other, cases of “intervention” should be common

¹ These and other translations of Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives are the object of doctoral research by Ahmad Ayyad, initiated with the Intercultural Studies Group in Tarragona in 2003 and carried out at Aston University in Birmingham since 2005, under the supervision of Professor Christina Schäffner. Parts of this text were presented by Anthony Pym at the workshop “Profession, Identity and Status: Translators and Interpreters as an Occupational Group”, Tel Aviv University, in March 2009:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AnthonyPym#p/a/u/0/8QpDfVC0Di0>.

² Dissipation into politically correct fashion would indeed seem to be the risk of indiscriminate usage of the term “intervention”, as for example in some of the articles edited by Munday as *Translation as Intervention* (2008). Similarly too broad for our purposes would appear, at least initially, Sarma’s definition of intervention as “translation decisions made deliberately ‘on the basis of textual effects, cultural values, social functions that translations

enough for some degree of generality to obtain and thus form the basis for meaningful principles. Here we attempt to navigate between those two desiderata; usefulness should lie somewhere between the extremes.

Our first task is then to describe the degree of background or relatively obligatory shifts that we would *not* want to label as overtly interventionist. Let us tentatively and no doubt inaccurately call them cases of “non-intervention.”

2.1. The nature of non-intervention

2.1.1. Non-intervention because of languages or rhetorical conventions

Consider the following passages from the English-language Roadmap (the italics are ours, here and throughout):

Example 1:

Roadmap Arab states cut off public and private funding and all other forms of support for groups supporting and engaging in violence and *terror*.

Roadmap Palestinians declare an unequivocal end to violence and *terrorism* and undertake visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere.

The text of the Roadmap includes the terms “terror” and “terrorism” six and three times respectively. In English, there can be a semantic difference between the two. For instance, Baker (2006: 45) claims that “terrorism” refers to “one or more incidents that involve violence, with localized and containable impact,” whereas “terror” is “a state of mind, one that can rapidly spread across boundaries and encompass all in its grip.” Much cunning ideological manipulation might occur in the slippage from one term to the other: Israeli actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories can create psychological “terror” yet somehow

possess in target situations” (2008: 74, the remit is to Venuti, 2003: 249). Since all those values are social functions are inscribed in language, this seems to imply that some decisions can be made without deliberate attention to the target language.

not be condemned as “terrorism.” In the Arabic and Hebrew languages, however, no such distinction is operative: both “terror” and “terrorism” are translated as ‘الإرهاب’ (*al-erhab*) into Arabic and as ‘הטרור’ (*ha-terror*) into Hebrew. The movement from two terms to one (curiously absent from Kade’s 1968 list of equivalence strategies) might count as a shift, according to some definitions, but for us it is merely due to the background natures of the languages concerned; it should *not* count as translator intervention.

A further example is found in the following fragment and its translations:

Example 2:

Roadmap The following is a performance-based and goal-driven *roadmap*, with clear phases, timelines, target dates, and benchmarks aiming at progress through reciprocal steps by the two parties in the political, security, economic, humanitarian, and institution-building fields, under the auspices of the Quartet [the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia].

US Department of State ما يلي هو خارطة طريق مدفوعة بتحقيق الهدف ومرتكزة إلى الأداء، ذات مراحل واضحة وجداول زمنية ومواعيد محددة كأهداف، ومعالم على الطريق تهدف إلى تحقيق التقدم عبر خطوات متبادلة من قبل الطرفين في المجالات السياسية والأمنية والاقتصادية والإنسانية، ومجال بناء المؤسسات، برعاية المجموعة الرباعية (الولايات المتحدة والاتحاد الأوروبي والأمم المتحدة وروسيا).

Gloss:

The following is *roadmap*...

Knesset המסמך הבא הנו מפת דרכים המבוססת על עשייה וחותרת ליעדים, הכוללת שלבים מסגרות זמן, תאריכי יעד וציוני דרך, אשר מטרתה להשיג התקדמות באמצעות, ברורים שיינקטו על-ידי שני הצדדים בתחום המדיני, הביטחוני, הכלכלי, צעדים הדדיים ההומניטארי מוסדות, בחסות ה'רביעייה' (ארה"ב, האיחוד האירופי, האו"ם ורוסיה).

Gloss:

The following document is *Roads-map*...

Metaphors, even the most apparently innocuous, are key elements in the ideological function of political discourse (Schäffner, 2004b). One could undoubtedly read much into the fact that the Arabic translation invites us to the one true road, which has religious connotations in Islam, and the Hebrew text, on the other hand, presents multiple possible roads, with choices to be made.

In this case, however, as in the rendition of “terror,” discursive precedents have limited the translator choices: all roadmaps are of “roads” in Hebrew, and of “road” in Arabic. There are no doubts shifts involved, but there is nothing particularly shifty about them: the causes cannot be attributed to any special motivation. Here we will not term such cases “translator interventions.”

2.1.2 Non-intervention because of non-interpretation

A further set of shifts are not so easily attributed to the decisions accrued in the prior nature of languages. Consider the following:

Example 3:

<i>Roadmap</i>	Arab state acceptance of <i>full normal relations</i> with Israel and security for all the states of the region in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.
<i>US Department of State Gloss</i>	قبول الدول العربية إقامة علاقات طبيعية كاملة مع إسرائيل The acceptance of the Arab states to establish <i>full normal relations</i> with Israel.
<i>CNN Gloss</i>	تقبل الدول العربية بتطبيع كامل للعلاقات مع إسرائيل The Arab states accept <i>full normalization of relations</i> with Israel.
<i>Knesset Gloss</i>	הסכמה של מדינות ערב לנורמליזציה מלאה של היחסים עם ישראל The acceptance by Arab states of <i>full normalization of relations</i> with Israel.
<i>Yediot Aharonot Gloss:</i>	מדינות ערב יקבלו את היחסים המלאים והנורמליים עם ישראל Arab states will accept <i>the full and normal relations</i> with Israel.

The immediate problem here is that what is “normal” is quite probably different for each party concerned, so “normal relations” could mean quite different things for different readers. What should a translator make of these terms? Almost all the Arabic and Hebrew translations render the phrase “full normal relations” quite literally, with no intervention to interpret what it means. In so doing, they pass the problem of interpretation on to the future

users of the texts, to the people who, after all, mark out the human landscape where negotiations are to take place. This deliberate non-interpretation should be recognized as non-intervention. Note, though, that two of the above translations opt for the term “normalization,” which is a little trickier and will be considered below (see 2.2.3).

Something similar happens in various parts of the English text where vague language is used so as to open space for future negotiations. In Example 4, for instance, we find a reference to “further actions,” without any specification of what actions are involved, how many, or when they are to take place. How should a translator render this?

Example 4:

<i>Roadmap</i>	Creation of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders through a process of Israeli-Palestinian engagement, launched by the international conference. As part of this process, implementation of prior agreements, to enhance maximum territorial contiguity including <i>further action on settlements</i> in conjunction with establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders.
<i>US Department of State</i>	إقامة دولة فلسطينية مستقلة ذات حدود مؤقتة عبر عملية تفاوض إسرائيلي-فلسطيني، يطلقها المؤتمر الدولي. وكجزء من هذه العملية، تطبيق الاتفاقات السابقة، لتعزيز أقصى حد من التواصل الجغرافي، بما في ذلك إجراءات إضافية بشأن المستوطنات تتزامن مع إقامة دولة فلسطينية ذات حدود مؤقتة.
<i>UN</i>	إنشاء دولة فلسطينية مستقلة ذات حدود مؤقتة من خلال عملية ارتباط إسرائيلية فلسطينية يطلقها المؤتمر الدولي، ويتم كجزء من هذه العملية تنفيذ الاتفاقات السابقة بغية تحقيق أقصى قدر من التقارب الإقليمي بما في ذلك اتخاذ إجراءات إضافية بشأن المستوطنات تترافق مع إنشاء دولة فلسطينية ذات حدود مؤقتة.
<i>CNN</i>	انشاء دولة فلسطينية ذات حدود مؤقتة من خلال عملية تفاوض فلسطينية اسرائيلية يطلقها (المؤتمر الدولي. وكجزء من هذه العملية تنفيذ الاتفاقات السابقة وتحقيق أقصى حد من التواصل الجغرافي بما في ذلك خطوات إضافية على صعيد الاستيطان بالتزامن مع انشاء الدولة الفلسطينية ذات الحدود المؤقتة
<i>Al-mtym network</i>	انشاء دولة فلسطينية ذات حدود مؤقتة من خلال عملية تفاوض فلسطينية - إسرائيلية يطلقها المؤتمر الدولي. كجزء من هذه العملية، تنفيذ الاتفاقات السابقة، وتحقيق أقصى حد من التواصل الجغرافي بما في ذلك خطوات إضافية على صعيد الاستيطان بالتزامن مع انشاء الدولة الفلسطينية ذات الحدود المؤقتة.

<i>AL-Quds newspaper</i>	إقامة دولة فلسطينية مستقلة بحدود جزئية عن طريق المفاوضات الفلسطينية الاسرائيلية. و يعلن عنها في المؤتمر الدولي و في اطار هذه العملية يتم تطبيق الاتفاقات السابقة و التعزيز الاقصى للتواصل الاقليمي بما في ذلك المزيد من العمل حول مسألة الاستيطان بالتزامن مع تأسيس دولة فلسطينية بحدود جزئية. تعزيز الدور الدولي في مراقبة المرحلة الانتقالية بالتعاون الفاعل مع اللجنة الرباعية .
<i>Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>	إقامة دولة فلسطينية مستقلة ذات حدود مؤقتة من خلال إجراء اتصالات إسرائيلية فلسطينية، تنطلق من المؤتمر الدولي. وستشمل هذه العملية تطبيق الاتفاقيات السابقة لتوفير أكبر قدر من التقارب الإقليمي، بما في ذلك إجراءات بشأن المستوطنات تتزامن وإنشاء دولة فلسطينية ذات حدود مؤقتة.
<i>Peace Now</i>	הקמת מדינה פלסטינית עצמאית עם גבולות זמניים באמצעות תהליך של מעורבות ישראלית-פלסטינית שמתחיל ע"י הוועידה הבינלאומית. כחלק מהתהליך הזה, ביצוע של הסכמים קודמים כדי להגדיל מקסימום רצף טריטוריאלי, כולל פעילות נוספת לגבי ההתנחלויות בהקשר של הקמת מדינה פלסטינית עם גבולות זמניים.
<i>Ha'aretz newspaper</i>	כינון מדינה פלשתינית עצמאית בגבולות זמניים, בדרך של הידברו ישראלית-פלשתינית, שבה הוחל בוועידה הבינלאומית. כחלק מתהליך זה, ייושמו הסכמים קודמים להגברת רצף טריטוריאלי מרבי, כולל פעולה נוספת בהתנחלויות , המקבילה לכינון מדינה פלשתינית בגבולות זמניים.
<i>Knesset</i>	הקמת מדינה פלסטינית עצמאית בגבולות זמניים, באמצעות תהליך של מעורבות ישראלית-פלסטינית, שתושק בוועידה הבינלאומית. כחלק מתהליך זה מיושמים הסכמים קודמים להבטחת רצף טריטוריאלי מרבי, לרבות פעילות נוספת בתחום ההתנחלויות , בד בבד עם הקמתה של מדינה פלסטינית בעלת גבולות זמניים.
<i>Yediot Aharonot newspaper</i>	הקמת מדינה פלסטינית עצמאית עם גבולות זמניים תוך תהליך התדיינות בין ישראל לפלסטינים, שיפתח בוועידה הבינלאומית.

In this case there is little need to provide detailed glosses in English: in all translations the phrase “further action on settlements” remains as unspecified as the source text. The one exception was the version in *Yediot Aharonot*, which was perhaps even vaguer since the whole sentence was deleted (which should indeed count as an intervention).

In such cases of deceptively simple literalism, the translations should be seen as marking acts of relative non-intervention, at least to the extent that more clearly interventionist procedures are refused. The translators could have tried to spell out exactly what they understand “normalization” to entail, or what kinds of “future actions” are or

should be implied. The fact that they do not do this means they pass the task of interpretation downstream, to the future users of the text.

By the same token, the versions which remain exceptional here, either because they omit sections or because they opt for ideologically marked variants, should be seen as interventions, the qualities of which we shall review below.

Note that such cases of non-intervention, like those due to different languages and rhetorical conventions, need not invite any axiomatic belief in the translator's neutrality or transparency to the original text. As we have said, shifts are everywhere, always, and some degree of intervention is probably also everywhere, at least to the degree that every translation is always an attempt to improve the source text by extending its understandability (Pym, 2010: 167-174). What we are calling interventions here are minimally marked by something rather simpler and more specific: the clear refusal of an available alternative rendition. But that is only a point of departure.

2.2. Cases of intervention

2.2.1. Intervention in the slippage of articles

In this particular field, the most famous instances of non-obligatory alternatives involve definite articles. The trick here dates back at least to UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967, which demanded “[w]ithdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict” (Operative Paragraph 1), without specifying how many forces were involved and how much territory was involved. Resolution 242 is also considered binding in its French translation, which requires “[r]etraite des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés lors du récent conflit,” using the form “des” which at a push could be interpreted as either “all” (de + les) or “some” (des). This slippage between the language versions may have been operative in getting the text agreed to, but missing definite articles have been points of suspicion in Middle East peace proposals ever since.

The Roadmap is no exception in this regard. For instance, the English text clearly requires Israel to reopen the Palestinian Chamber of Commerce but remains vague about the *other* Palestinian institutions in Occupied East Jerusalem that Israel closed down following the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada. The Palestinians have called for the re-opening of *all* and not just *some* of these institutions, and this leaves a trace in the translations:

Example 5

<i>Roadmap</i>	GOI [Government of Israel] reopens Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and <i>other</i> closed Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem based on a commitment that these institutions operate strictly in accordance with prior agreements between the parties.
<i>Al-Quds newspaper</i>	و المؤسسات الأخرى المغلقة في القدس الشرقية And <i>the other</i> closed Palestinian institutions in Eastern Jerusalem.
<i>Gloss:</i>	
<i>Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>	و غيرها من المؤسسات الفلسطينية التي أغلقت في شرقي أورشليم القدس And <i>other</i> Palestinian institutions which were closed in East Yerushalim of Jerusalem.
<i>Gloss:</i>	
<i>Peace Now</i>	ومؤسسات فلسطينيين أخرى شنسغرو بمزرها يروشليم And <i>other</i> Palestinian institutions which were closed in East Jerusalem.
<i>Gloss:</i>	

The only intervention is in the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds*, where the definite article removes the ambiguity of the Roadmap and thus emphasizes that Israel should be required to reopen *all* and not *some* Palestinian institutions in Occupied East Jerusalem. The intervention is a morally based statement of position.

Not all examples are quite as one-sided. In another passage the Roadmap talks about the removal of Israeli “settlement outposts,” without specifying whether the reference is to all or just some of them. The translators into Arabic were not afraid to specify:

Example 6a

<i>Roadmap</i>	GOI [Government of Israel] <i>immediately dismantles settlement outposts</i> erected since March 2001.
<i>US Department of State</i>	تفكك إسرائيل على الفور المواقع الاستيطانية Dismantles Israel immediately <i>the settlement outposts</i> .
<i>Gloss:</i>	
<i>UN</i>	تقوم الحكومة الإسرائيلية على الفور بإزالة المواقع الاستيطانية المتوغلة
<i>Gloss:</i>	The Israeli government immediately removes <i>the settlement locations</i> which are advanced deep into in the land.

<i>CNN</i>	تفكك الحكومة الإسرائيلية فوراً جميع البؤر الاستيطانية
<i>Gloss:</i>	The Israeli government <i>immediately dismantles all the settlement outposts.</i>
<i>Al-mtym network</i>	تفكك الحكومة الإسرائيلية فوراً كل البؤر الاستيطانية
<i>Gloss:</i>	Dismantles the Israeli government <i>immediately all the settlement outposts</i>
<i>Al-Quds newspaper</i>	تقوم الحكومة الإسرائيلية بشكل فوري بتفكيك المواقع الاستيطانية
<i>Gloss:</i>	The Israeli government <i>immediately dismantles the settlement locations</i>
<i>Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>	تقوم حكومة إسرائيل على الفور بإخلاء النقاط الاستيطانية
<i>Gloss:</i>	Government of Israel <i>immediately evacuates the settlement points.</i>

The use of the definite article in all the Arabic translations should technically count as intervention, since the indefinite form is linguistically possible here. The addition of the determiner ‘جميع’ (“all”) and ‘كل’ (“all”) in the *CNN* and *Al-mtym* translations should be seen in the same light, as should the adjective ‘المتوغلة’ (literally “advanced deep into the land”) in the UN translation. Further shifts in this same direction should be seen the change of the verb “dismantle” into “evacuate” and “remove.”

The Hebrew translations of the same passage are rather more intriguing:

Example 6b

<i>Roadmap</i>	GOI <i>immediately dismantles settlement outposts</i> erected since March 2001.
<i>Peace Now</i>	ממשלת ישראל מפרקת מיידית את המאחזים שהוקמו מאז מארס 2001
<i>Gloss:</i>	Government of Israel <i>dismantles immediately the settlement outposts</i> erected since March 2001.
<i>Ha'aretz newspaper</i>	ממשלת ישראל תפרק מיידית את ההתנחלויות שהוקמו מחודש מארס 2001
<i>Gloss:</i>	Government of Israel <i>dismantles immediately the settlements</i> erected since March 2001.
<i>Knesset</i>	ממשלת ישראל מפרקת לאלתר מאחזים שהוקמו מאז מארס 2001
<i>Gloss:</i>	Government of Israel <i>dismantles immediately settlement outposts</i>

erected since March 2001.

Yediot Aharonot ממשלת ישראל **תפרק את המאחזים** שהוקמו מאז מרס 2001

Gloss: Government of Israel *dismantles the settlement outposts* erected since March 2001.

In Hebrew, as in Arabic and English, both the definite and indefinite articles are possible here, so some choices can be seen in terms of interventions. Not surprisingly, the translation authorized by the Israeli Knesset opts for the indefinite form, since they are presumably happy enough to see the dismantling of just one or two outposts as being quite sufficient. The right-wing Israeli *Yediot Aharonot* newspaper follows suit, although the clear intervention here is the removal of the inconvenient adjective “immediately,” so one or two outposts could perhaps be dismantled in 100 years’ time. Surprisingly, though, the definite article was added in all the other translations into Hebrew, suggesting that the interventions were in this case designed to strengthen the case for removing all the settlements. Indeed, the left-of-centre *Ha’aretz* newspaper not only adds the article but also turns the “outposts” into “settlements.”

In this case, our tentative definition of intervention forces us into the peculiar position of declaring the Knesset translation to be the only one *without* translator intervention at this point: their indefinite article functions in the same way as the indefinite article in English. All the other translations are prepared to run the risk of stating what could be seen as a moral case, an active intervention in the negotiation process itself, as a proposition made to their real and implied readerships. The interventions thus mark out positions, which may be more or less coherent throughout each translation.

2.2.2. Intervention in the semantics of what side you’re on

When you give things a name, you indicate where you are located with respect to those things. A certain peak is called “Qomolangma,” “Sagarmāthā,” “Chajamlungma,” “Zhūmùlǎngmǎ” or “Chomolungma,” depending on which side you are looking at it from, and probably “Everest” if you are not looking at it. In the case of the Roadmap, a similar naming problem occurs with “IDF,” the acronym for “Israel Defense Forces” (in Hebrew צבא ההגנה - צה"ל, לישראל), mentioned three times in the text.

Example 7

<i>Roadmap</i>	As comprehensive security performance moves forward, <i>IDF</i> withdraws progressively from areas occupied since September 28, 2000.
<i>The US Department of State</i>	الجيش الإسرائيلي the Israeli army
<i>Gloss</i>	
<i>The United Nations</i>	قوات الدفاع الإسرائيلية
<i>Gloss</i>	the Israeli defense forces
<i>Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>	جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي the Israeli defense army
<i>Gloss</i>	
<i>Peace Now</i>	צה"ל
<i>Gloss</i>	Israel defense forces

In all the translations into Arabic, except those published by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations, the acronym is consistently rendered as ‘ الجيش الإسرائيلي ’ (*al-jaysh al-esraeli*) (lit. “the Israeli army”). The intervention in this case is omission of the term “defense.” All the Hebrew translations, on the other hand, render the acronym literally, retaining the implicit claim that the Israeli forces only defend, never attack. It would seem fairly clear who is on what side.

As for a much smaller peak on the horizon, here is what happens to the Palestinian forces:

Example 8

<i>Roadmap</i>	Restructured/retrained Palestinian security forces and IDF counterparts progressively resume security cooperation and other undertakings in implementation of the Tenet work plan, including regular senior-level meetings, with the participation of U.S. security officials.
<i>Al-Quds newspaper</i>	يستأنف نظراء من الأجهزة الأمنية الفلسطينية المتبقية/المعاد هيكلتها ومن الجيش الإسرائيلي في التنسيق الأمني
<i>Gloss:</i>	Resume counterparts from <i>the remaining</i> Palestinian security apparatuses/which are restructured and from the Israeli army, the security

coordination.

The Palestinian Authority, according to the Roadmap, is required to resume security cooperation and fight “terror” organizations. In order to do so, they need efficient security forces. However, during the second Palestinian intifada the Israeli army destroyed most of the infrastructure for those forces. The intervention, in Example 8, is seen in the addition of the adjective ‘المتبقية’ (*al-motabaqeyah*) (literally “the remaining ones”). Describing the forces in this way implicitly blames Israel for destroying something that has to be rebuilt.

A further example is in the name one chooses for Israel’s actions and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories:

Example 9

Roadmap Israel takes measures to improve the humanitarian situation. Israel and Palestinians implement in full all recommendations of the Bertini report to improve humanitarian conditions, lifting *curfews* and easing restrictions on movement of persons and goods, and allowing full, safe, and unfettered access of international and humanitarian personnel

US Department of State وترفع منع التجول
and it lifts *curfew*

Gloss:

Al-Quds newspaper ورفع الحصار
and it lifts *siege*

Gloss:

Peace Now מסירים סגרים
lifts *closures*

Ha'aretz newspaper הסרת עוצר
lifts *curfew*

Gloss:

Here we have two cases of intervention because of refused alternatives. The first is the shift from “curfews” to “siege” in the translation published by *Al-Quds*. Their term *al-hesar* (literally “the siege”) is used by the Palestinian people frequently to describe their harsh

living conditions under Israeli military occupation, where they feel trapped and persecuted on a daily basis. The same term is used nowadays to describe the tragic situation in the Gaza Strip which has been under Israeli blockade or siege since 2007. The shift could be justified as simply adopting the local name for the thing referring to, but local names are by no means neutral.

The second case of intervention is found in the shift from “curfews” to “closures” in the translation circulated by the Israeli organization Peace Now. In Hebrew usage, a “curfew” is usually imposed only on a town or city, whereas “closure” is usually imposed on the entire West Bank, particularly during Jewish religious festivities. In this case, the choice of the name is a statement about what the revoked activity should be.

Just one final case of names-for-things: In the Roadmap, the problem to be resolved is described six times as “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” All Arabic and Hebrew translations keep the same word order when rendering this phrase, with the one exception of *Al-Quds*, which manifests its position:

Example 10

<i>Roadmap</i>	The settlement will resolve <i>the Israel-Palestinian conflict</i> , and end the occupation that began in 1967.
<i>Al-Quds newspaper</i>	هذه التسوية ستحل النزاع الفلسطيني-الإسرائيلي
<i>Gloss:</i>	This settlement will resolve <i>the Palestinian-Israeli conflict</i> .

Same thing, from the other side.

2.2.3. Intervention in the use of loaded terms

We observe that the translations into Hebrew all opt for the local established name in the case of the “Israeli Defense Forces” but not when it comes to “curfews” or “normal relations.” In all cultures, some names are so well established that they oblige through convention, while others are in dispute and can thus carry a heavy ideological charge. A translation may concede political defeat on the former (“let them pretend to be defensive if they want to”) yet mark active engagement with respect to the latter (“this is the idea to be changed”).

Here we briefly return to the renditions of “full normal relations” (Example 3 above). As we saw, most translations washed their hands of the problem: let “normal” be whatever

the reader wants it to be. The Knesset and CNN translations, however, opted for the term “normalization” rather than just “normal relations.” To many outside eyes, the difference between these terms would not seem worth arguing about, since any “normalization” should logically lead to “normal relations.” The shift would appear innocuous. The term “normalization” nevertheless has very different connotations in Hebrew, Arabic and English. While it is considered neutral in English, it is positive in Hebrew and negative in Arabic. In particular, the Arabic equivalent ‘تطبيع’ (*tatbi*) is equated with submission and domestication (Cohen, 2001: 74). Arab states (at least in public) resist Israel’s calls for normalization; they argue that Israel’s strong military and economy would control the region. On the other hand, Israel takes “normalization” to be the ultimate test for “true” peace. In Hebrew, as Cohen (2001: 73) points out, *normalizatzia* entered as a loan word from English, so users had some leeway in elaborating its conceptual content. The Hebrew “normalization” of relations, unlike the alternative term “normal relations,” thus now entails full diplomatic and economic relations, as well as cooperation in the areas of culture, security, transportation and communication. In this context, the choice of “normalization” rather than “full normal relations” signals a strong ideological *parti pris*, and should count as intervention.

3. Defining translator intervention

In light of these examples, are we able to give a more exact definition of “translator intervention?” There seems to be little problem in defining an intervention as a shift where a) there is clear evidence of at least one alternative rendition, and b) there would seem to be a clear reason for refusing at least one of those alternative renditions. Those basic criteria nevertheless run into at least three problems: causation, coherence and agency.

3.1. Attributing causation

It should escape no one’s attention that here we have only looked at a few of the most political or politicized examples from this corpus. Indeed, our instinctive focus has been on cases where we would expect two sides to translate in two different ways. For instance, we would expect the Palestinian translations to talk about “*the* settlement outposts” and the Israeli translations just to mention “settlement outposts” (Example 6a/b above). What this means is that we use the label “intervention” in such cases because there is some evidence, located in other texts or in the history of actions, which suggests these choices are motivated.

There is an identifiable reason for them. When we talk about “translator intervention,” we are assuming such a reason, and thus a particular kind of human causation.

3.2. Discounting incoherence

Such attribution can be difficult. As we noted in passing, some Hebrew translations opt for the same interventions as the Palestinian translations: for instance, Peace Now and *Ha'aretz* both opt for the definitive article with respect to the settlement outposts. This is understandable enough in the case of Peace Now, whose ideological motivation is far from hidden. What are we to say, though, in the case of *Ha'aretz*, which not only adds the article but also transforms the reference from “settlement outposts” to potentially all “settlements?” If we had reason to think the newspaper were totally against the Roadmap, we would perhaps want to see this as upping the ante: the translation would be overstating the demands of the Roadmap so as to turn its readers against the plan. Alternatively, if the paper were considered of the alternative opinion, its option here would have to be considered more radical than that of Peace Now: let all the settlements really be dismantled, not just the outposts. So which is it to be?

Before attempting to locate the deep and true motives of all social actors, at least one further alternative could be considered: perhaps the translator simply skipped the difficult term “outpost,” or put it on hold then never came back to it. As we have noted, almost all these translations came out within one day of the Roadmap details being released; they were put together in a hurry, as current events tend to be. In these circumstances, a one-off choice should not be considered enough to constitute a translator intervention. We should require evidence that the shift at least does not radically contradict other shifts in the translation. More idealistically, we would hope that a pattern of such shifts can be detected, and that those patterns make sense in terms of extra-textual evidence of motivation. Sometimes that happens: the shifts all go in the same direction, attribution of motivation is non-problematic (as would generally be the case in the Knesset and *Al-Quds* translations in our corpus), and the term “translator intervention” has a strong meaning. In many cases, though, the patterns are incomplete or contradictory, social agents are only precariously pinned to univocal positions, and talk about “translator intervention” must remain overtly hypothetical.

3.3. Recognizing collective agency

Attentive readers might have noticed that at one point we found the CNN and Knesset translations coinciding on the very loaded term “full normalization.” That could be enough for some analysts to declare the coincidence is non-accidental: the two versions were in collusion, and CNN is just a front for the Knesset anyway (or vice versa). There is a point at which the term “intervention” blends into “conspiracy.”

On the other hand, the world of rapid web-based translations is marked by the multifarious recycling of translation pairs—we pick up whatever our search engine catches, or increasingly whatever has been fed into online MT databases. There is some evidence of this happening in our corpus, where specific renditions appear to migrate, permute and be re-translated in a tangled web that no one has the time to unravel. There is no guarantee that a particular translation solution originated in just one institution, or even in just one language.

Similarly, within the institutions producing these translations, it is highly unlikely that there was just one translator working on each translation. These organizations operate through revisers, guidelines, editorial committees and back-and-forth power play memos that tend to override, unevenly and imperfectly, at least some of the key decisions made by a translating intellect. In such situations, one cannot assume that there is a single coherent mind at work behind all the choices made in a translation. The level of relative coherence is more likely to be near the *end* of the process, in the instance that *authorizes* the translation as such and presents it to the world.

To talk about “*translator* intervention” is thus perhaps a misnomer. It would be more accurate to refer to “collective intervention by all social actors contributing to, enacting, modifying and especially authorizing a translation.” And that is what we should mean when we say “translator intervention.”

3.4. Translator intervention defined

To sum up, we propose that the term “translator intervention” should refer to shifts that are relatively patterned throughout a translation, can be attributed to a conscious aim for which there is external evidence, and may be the result of collective agency.

Although derived from a particular case study, would hope that this definition will prove useful in other cases as well.

4. Suggestions for further research

The analysis of translations of this kind raises numerous questions of a linguistic, ethical and political nature; it can lead off in many different directions. In closing, we would like to suggest two avenues for future research.

The first would be risk analysis. It seems fairly clear that, in the case studied here, each intervention runs a certain risk of being found out but chooses to run that risk because there is some greater risk to be avoided. For instance, when the *Yediot Aharonot* translation leaves out the sentence referring to “future actions on settlements,” it might be attempting to *reduce* the risk of upsetting those of its readers who want to retain the existing illegal settlements, but at the same time it *runs* the alternative risk of having its own credibility undermined, since anyone can compare the various translations available, note the omission, and question the motivations behind the omission. The decision can thus be understood as a trade-off between the potential benefits of those two alternative risks, which are in fact modes of engagement with two potential kinds of readerships. Analyzing the exact nature of those risks, and the implicit rationality of the translation decisions, is a huge task that we leave for another day.

The second line of inquiry would be ethics, which actually follows on from the question of readerships. Most traditional ethics would condemn translator intervention out of hand: translators should say what is in the text, and that is that. In this case, however, there are serious grounds for justifying significant degrees of intervention. The Roadmap itself uses deliberately vague and ambiguous language, maybe because its drafters “saw no hope in bridging the huge gap between the two sides” (Klein, 2007: 180-181), but perhaps also because the text demands and requires completion in future action. These two possibilities open two possible avenues for ethical thought.

For an ethics of resistance, the Roadmap was never designed to provide a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but was rather part of managing the conflict while preparing for the war on Iraq. This is why ambiguity is a characteristic feature of the text and all problematic issues are constantly deferred to the future. On this view, the various translator interventions correspond to the needs of different readerships to resist the illusion thus promoted, and fundamentally to advance their own claims. Intervention would constitute tactical non-compliance, or ethical resistance to the will of the other.

For an ethics of cooperation, on the other hand, the Roadmap would be a legitimate attempt to solve a political problem through the application of neo-classical negotiation

theory. From this perspective, the translations could constitute extensions of that basic action; they could be part of a bridging function. Why should translators risk credibility in order to keep their readerships on side? Because, on this view, the promotion of involvement is one of the prime ethical functions of translations in this context. Some of the translations are for internal purposes, to make sure that actors within the organization understand and agree on what is proposed (e.g., the UN, the Knesset), and they can be judged on the basis of degrees of agreement. However, other translations (the US Department of State, *Ha'aretz*, *Yediot Aharonot*, *Al-Quds* and CNN) are intended for distribution to readerships without full access to the English text and without direct engagement in the negotiation process, and those are precisely the translations in which most interventions occur. Translator interventions might thus be designed to keep those readerships involved in the process. That aim would certainly contradict not only traditional text-based translation ethics, but also any ethics of resistance that sees the other as a monolithic culture that can only be changed by being opposed. It risks naivety in seeking people-based cooperation between cultures.

The authors of this paper disagree with each other about which of those two ethical paths should be followed. Our own roadmap might well be translated as a map of roads.

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