

Disruption, Resilience, and Adaptation in an Age of Crisis

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Abstract:

My study investigates how legal and peacebuilding language is translated from Arabic into English in post-2003 Iraq, a context marked by political transition, post-conflict reconstruction, and evolving legal institutions. In such contexts, language functions not only as a legal tool but also as an instrument of power, negotiation, and reconciliation. The paper examines how key legal and peace-related terms such as السلام (peace), المصالحة (reconciliation), and العدالة (justice) are translated and framed in bilingual legislative texts and NGO peacebuilding documents, and how these translation choices influence meaning, legal clarity, and perceptions of social justice.

A self-compiled Parallel Corpus of Iraqi Legislative and Peacebuilding Texts (PCILPT) was developed containing 40 Iraqi laws and bilingual NGO reports. The dataset comprises approximately 98,109 Arabic tokens and 132,834 English tokens, segmented, aligned manually, and analysed using Sketch Engine. Employing a mixed-method corpus linguistic and translation studies approach, the study identifies translation strategies, examines lexical, semantic and syntactic shifts, and evaluates how institutional and socio-legal concepts are mediated across languages. Preliminary findings reveal systematic additions, paraphrasing, and lexical expansion in English translations, often used to clarify culturally embedded or legally dense concepts (Bostanji, 2010:189). However, some translation choices introduce ideological shifts or conceptual ambiguity, potentially affecting the interpretation of legal rights, peace narratives, and public trust. (El-Farahaty, 2023:103). The paper highlights challenges related to legal equivalence, multilingual legal reform, and the representation of peace discourse in translation. By combining linguistics, translation studies, and peace research, this study contributes both to academic knowledge and to the practical improvement of legal translation practices in post-conflict contexts.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, legal language, peacebuilding, translation

