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The Reciprocal Relations between Political Domination and Translation
in The Globalization Era.

Submitted to: The Institute of Applied Linguistics and Translation
for obtaining the Degree of Master of Arts.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Zeinab. M. Raafat for her valuable guidance, which encouraged me to attain the ultimate vision of my goals.

Grateful acknowledgement is also due to Dr. Hassan Taman for his precious assistance in extending new horizons, hence, motivating me to rise to the challenge.

Special thanks go to my mother for her love, tenderness, consideration and sustainable support. I would like also to express my sincere gratitude to my brother and sister for motivating me to work so efficiently always pushing me forward.

One can find no better words than the quoted one saying, 'We are told never to cross a bridge until we come to it, but this world is owned by men who have 'crossed bridges' in their imagination far ahead of the crowd.' That is why I am most indebted to all of them for helping me cross the bridge- always getting me to know that there are further heights to reach and soar above.

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Preface

This study is an attempt to investigate the inextricable interdependent relationships between political sovereignty and the translation process. Hence, this research seeks to display the dimensions that examine the bond between the aspects of political dominance presented in language hegemony, cultural imperialism, ideology and mass media on one hand and the sophisticated realm of translation on the other. The first dimension, the direct traditional bond, aims at revealing some aspects of political dominance; it demonstrates how translation could be utilized for the sake of banning or imposing ideas ultimately for achieving political motives. It also elucidates the main aim of translation in a world of "posts": postmodernism, post structuralism, post feminism, and post colonialism i.e., in a world of contradicting power. Moreover, it explains the significant facts behind the exceeding numbers of exchanged translated books from English into other languages and vice versa. The second dimension, the indirect bond, handles two crucial aspects of political dominance in terms of translation: language hegemony and culture imperialism focusing on critical issues such as: war of terminologies, CSIs 'Cultural Specific Items', shifts of translation, translation as a catalyst for cultural transformation and social change and finally the deliberate manipulation within the process of translation raising a crucial question: translating culture or cultural translation?!. The third dimension, translation, ideology, and mass media, addresses the theme of interpreting cultures, false images, ideologies, notions, beliefs and lifestyles through language supremacy, mass media and network (a new dimension of translation) in order to undermine the sense of nationalism fostering the 'supreme' Imperial Western global thought instead. This dimension brings to the fore topics such as: propagating U.S ideology in terms of the proliferation of U.S TV and The Role of translation and mass media in shaping and directing both ideologies and notions. This leads to the fourth dimension which is globalization or Americanization. It tackles how translation and globalization serve the policy of unipolar world and sovereignty seeking the shelter of the Internet slogan "the world is a small village".

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Chapter One “The direct Bond Between Translation and Political Domination”:

- Background.
- Aspects of Political Domination.
- Translation process as an effective medium applied for asserting aspects of political dominance.
- Translation, Poststructuralism, and power.
- Utilizing translation for the sake of banning or imposing ideas.
- The significant facts behind the number of exchanged translated-books from English into other languages and vice versa.

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This introductory chapter deals with the core of the entire study: translation process as a medium applied for achieving aspects of political dominance. It is necessary to display, in an explicit background, the history of the translation domain, its movement and its substantial role as a preliminary phase before examining the main entity of the subject "translation process as an effective medium used for asserting political dominance and hegemony". -L. G. Kelly states, "Without translation, there is no history of the world," (cited in 'Translators Throughout History, Jean Delisle and Judith Woods Worth, 1995).

Studying the history of translation helps those who are interested in translation, literature, and cultural studies to better understand the contribution of translation to civilization and to the development of all cultural and intellectual life. Translation is closely related to progress in that all the awakening periods in the history of nations have started with translations. Translation introduces nations to various perspectives on their paths to modernization and intellectual advancement.

In order to justify translation as an independent discipline, it is necessary to construct first a history of translation. By doing so, it is brought to light how the cultural and intellectual interactions between people and civilizations took place throughout epochs. Regarding this, French theorist Antoine Berman wrote: "The construction of a history of translation is the first task of a modern theory of translation." (Jean Delisle 1995).

The ancient Greek word for translator-interpreter is **Hermêneus**, directly related to the name of the god *Hermes*. The verb **Hermêneuo** means to *interpret foreign tongues, translate, explain, expound, put into words, express, describe, write about*. The many further meanings of the Greek word for translator-interpreter (*mediator, go-between, deal-broker, and marriage-broker*) suggest that interpreters almost certainly had to exist during prehistory - the period before writing was even invented.

In ancient times, ideas and insights used to be transferred from culture to culture primarily through travelers and tradesmen. Gradually, translation began to play a key role in the development of world culture. For example, translation has played a major part in the movement of knowledge from Ancient Greece to Persia, from India to Arab nations, and from Europe to China and Japan.

There have been two great historical examples of how translation introduced one culture to another. One is the translation of the Buddhist scriptures from various Indian languages into Chinese. The second is the translation of Greek philosophical and scientific works from Greek and Syriac into Arabic, thereby introducing them to the Islamic world.

A history of world culture from the perspective of translation reveals a constant movement of ideas and forms; cultures constantly absorbing new influences because of the work of translators. It dispels the assumption that everything starts in the West and undermines the idea of rigid boundaries between East and West.

"Translators have invented alphabets, helped build languages and written dictionaries. They have contributed to the emergence of national literatures, the dissemination of knowledge, and the spread of religions. Importers of foreign cultural values and key players at some of the great moments of history, translators and interpreters have played a determining role in the development of their societies and have been fundamental to the unfolding of intellectual history itself." (Delisle and Woodsworth 1995).

Major periods in the history of translation tend to coincide with eras when a major differential or inequality exists, or is perceived to exist between two cultures or two peoples speaking different languages. One of these peoples perceives the need to absorb greater or higher knowledge from another, whether this knowledge is conceived in political, religious, or scientific terms.

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Throughout history, the task accomplished by translators has acquired an extraordinary importance in the development and transmission of the cultural heritage of humankind. European culture, with its great wealth of knowledge, could not have been possible without the significant translation efforts of just a handful of countries: China, Greece, Iran, India, Iraq, Spain, and Ireland. The following national translation movements are considered by historians to have played a major role in the developmental path of world culture:

- Prehistory: predominance of *interpreting* and *mediating* (marriage-brokers, dealmakers, peace-seekers, etc.)
- Sumerians, Akadians, Assyrians: the need to make laws, creation tales and other scriptures, and economic norms known among peoples using different languages
- Egyptians: the need to communicate with the Hittites and peoples in Southern Egypt
- Greeks: the need to understand Egyptian civilization
- Romans: the need to understand Greek civilization
- Chinese (Seventh Century AD): the need to understand Indian civilization, especially Sanskrit and Pali scriptures
- Arab and Persian World: (Jundishapur and Baghdad, Eighth to Tenth Centuries): the need to absorb and integrate Sanskrit, Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek knowledge into Persian and Arabic cultures
- Irish (Eighth Century AD): the need for a decisive mediator between late antiquity and the Western Middle Ages, after the conquest of Spain by the Muslims resulted in the decline of Latin influence in Europe
- Japanese (Ninth to Tenth Centuries): the need to understand and absorb Chinese culture, with Korea as an important intermediary
- Western Middle Ages: the need to reabsorb and integrate Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek knowledge into medieval Europe
- Renaissance: reintegration of Ancient Greek culture in the West
- Conquest and colonization: the need to understand American, African, and Asian languages and dialects

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- Age of Enlightenment and Nineteenth Century: decline of Latin, emergence of modern national languages as the measure of human knowledge
- Modern Times: many competing major and minor national languages.

The earliest historical records show sporadic translation activities in China in the eleventh century BC. Documents from that time indicate that translation was carried out by government clerks, who were concerned primarily with the transmission of ideologies. In a written document from the late Zhou dynasty, Jia Gongyan, an imperial scholar, wrote: "Translation is to replace one written language with another without changing the meaning for mutual understanding."

This definition of translation, although primitive, proves the existence of translation theory in ancient China. Serious discussions on translation, however, did not begin until the introduction of Buddhism into the country during the Six Dynasties (222-589 AD), when Buddhist monks began translating classics of Buddhism into Chinese.

Before coming to China, Buddhism, which is of Indian origin, had already undergone several centuries of development. The translation of Buddhist literature from *Pali* and *Sanskrit* into Chinese proved to be a great undertaking and Buddhism became one of China's major religions. It was not only Buddhism, however, that had penetrated into China. Sankhya, tantra sastras, and other Hindu beliefs were also introduced into the thought of that country. The combined impact upon the world was profound, not only helping to reshape man's outlook and way of life, but also adding a written script, unique art, literature, and philosophy to the common wealth of mankind.

By the end of the fourth century, translation was officially organized on a large scale in China. A State School of Translation was founded for this purpose and Dao An, an imperial officer, was appointed its director. In 379, Dao An was abducted to Chang'an (Xi'an), where he started the famous **Chang'an School**. It was at this time that monks from Kashmir began to enter China in large numbers, bringing with them

many texts from their homeland, which they translated into Chinese, and making the school one of the most important translation centers of the time.

Three of the most accomplished translators of the Chang'an school each adopted different theories regarding translation. Dao An insisted on a strict literal translation, i.e., that the source text should be translated word by word. The Indian scholar Kumarajiva, on the other hand, took up an opposite view and advocated a completely free translation method for the sake of elegance and intelligibility in the target language.

In his own translation practice, Chinese Buddhist scholar Xuan Zang combined the advantages of both Dao An's respect for the form of the source text, and Kumarajiva's free style of translation. Xuan Zang aimed to achieve an intelligibility of the translation for the target language readers, and developed his criteria that translation "must be truthful and intelligible to the populace." It might be during this period of time that there was the first discussion on literal translation vs. free translation - a core issue of translation theory.

Eventually, the translation of sutras lost importance in China and rulers directed their attention westward. Arabs began to settle in China, with some even becoming mandarins or merchants. Having learned the Chinese language, some of these erudite high officials began translating scientific works from Arabic or European languages. By the eighth century, conversion to Islam had already started in Central Asia.

During the Greco-Roman era, the intellectual leadership shifted from Athens to Alexandria. Alexander the Great's dream of unifying the world sparked the idea of constructing a great library, which would gather the cultures and civilizations of the whole world. The location of this great library was Alexandria, Egypt, at the crossroads of the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. In this historical moment, the ***Bibliotheca Alexandrina*** was built on a site near the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Demetrius of Phaleron, a student of Aristotle, was the first recorded librarian at Alexandria between 290 - 282 BC. According to

Aristeas, writing 100 years after the library's inception, Ptolemy I delegated Demetrius the job of gathering books and scrolls, and of supervising a massive effort to translate works from other cultures into Greek. Because there was a large Jewish community living in Alexandria at the time, Demetrius made his first job the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek (the '*Septuagint*') for which the Library hired 72 rabbis.

Entirely new disciplines such as grammar, manuscript preservation, and trigonometry were established. This fortuitous collection of documents in an Egyptian city later allowed the transmission and translation of vital classical texts into Arabic and Hebrew, where they would be preserved long after copies were lost during the Middle Ages in Europe.

After all, it was the Arabs who brought with them into Spain the Arabic versions of the Greek works, from which translations were made into Latin and spread throughout Europe during its dark ages. This Greek body of knowledge brought Europe out of the Dark Ages and into the Renaissance, or rebirth. The question remains, however: by whom, where, and when was the Greek body of knowledge transmitted to the Arabs themselves?

The Arabs acquired Greek science from two sources:

- Directly from the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire.
- From Syriac-speaking Nestorian Christians of Eastern Persia.

By the third century AD, Syriac had already replaced Greek as the literary language of Western Asia. In Jundishapur, the Syriac texts were translated into Arabic.

According to tradition, the **Academy of Jundishapur** in Persia (modern-day Iran) began with the founding of the city by King Shapur I in the third century AD. This cosmopolitan city continued to develop as a center of learning and culture for several centuries.

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Among the scholars at the center were Greek philosophers and teachers who had fled the closed Plato's Academy at Athens. The works they brought with them were Euclid's work in mathematics, the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, works by Ptolemy and others. Along with Nestorian scholar-refugees, they held discussions with the king, wrote, taught and translated. These Syriac translators thought it was essential to get as close to the original meaning of the Greek as possible. But, this method led to a style of translation that was virtually word-for-word, doing great injustice to Syriac word order, and later also to Arabic word order when the same technique was used for the first translations into Arabic. (Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge Through Cultures and Times, Scott Montgomery 2000).

When the city of Jundishapur surrendered to Muslim military leaders in 636 AD, the Academy was left undisturbed. After the establishment of the great House of Wisdom at Baghdad, the importance of Jundishapur was overshadowed and it gradually disappeared.

It was in Baghdad that the Muslims founded their great school of translation known as the **House of Wisdom**. Their formidable ambition was to translate as much as they could find of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, ethics, geography, mechanics, music, medicine, physics, philosophy, and the construction of scientific instruments - whatever remained of Classical Greek knowledge.

The first Arabic translations used the same literal style of the Syriac translators. Syriac had evolved as a written language through translations of the New Testament, where it was thought to be essential to get as close to the original meaning of the Greek as possible. This led to a style that was virtually word-for-word translation. The Arabs later abandoned the tradition of literal translation and concentrated on making the sense of the Greek writers comprehensible to the reader. They went back to the original Greek texts and translated them directly into Arabic, revising earlier translations into Syriac and Aramaic.

The House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) was started by Caliph al-Mamun in 830 AD. It was the center of Islamic learning, where great translation projects took place to convert the great works of different

cultures into Arabic, which went on to become the language of knowledge and learning for many centuries.

During Baghdad's golden age there was no censorship or religious bigotry and the Arab elite welcomed influences equally from Indians, Chinese, Christians, Jews and Pagans. The Baghdad school employed a diverse team of Christian and Muslim translators to help translate books from around the world.

One of the House of Wisdom's most famous scholars was Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who eventually translated the entire canon of Greek medical works into Arabic, including the *Hippocratic oath*. Later becoming the director of the school, Hunayn also wrote at least twenty-nine original treatises of his own on medical topics. One of these was the first known medical work to include anatomical drawings. The book was translated into Latin and for centuries was the authoritative treatment of the subject in both Western and Eastern universities.

Some translators were paid an equal weight of gold to their translated manuscripts. It meant sometimes traveling as far as India to look for original manuscripts and study the mathematics and philosophy of those who had written in classical Sanskrit centuries earlier. The first great advance on the inherited mathematical tradition was the introduction of 'Arabic numerals', which actually originated in India and which simplified calculation of all sorts and made possible the development of algebra.

This translation of knowledge is considered to be one of the main events of the Middle Ages. The House of Wisdom's main concern was foreign knowledge, and around it the Baghdad School evolved. Great libraries and schools thrived on the works that the translators contributed. The House of Wisdom restored the continuity of human knowledge by learning and translating from the older cultures. Without the ancient knowledge that was preserved and translated through the dark ages of medieval Europe, the Renaissance would not have been possible.