

ARTICLE

Ideological Dimensions in the Translation of Hillary Clinton's Memoir *Hard Choices*

Mohammad Issa Mehawesh 

Faculty of Arts, Department of English Language and Translation, Jadara University, Irbid 21110, Jordan

ABSTRACT

This research examines the ideological dimensions present in the Arabic translation of Hillary Clinton's memoir *Hard Choices*. The study explores how translation strategies—particularly literal translation, modulation, adaptation, and omission—are employed not only to convey linguistic meaning but also to shape and mediate critical ideological themes. Among these are the promotion of democracy, constructions of national identity, gender roles, and diplomatic rhetoric. The analysis demonstrates that translation is far from a neutral or mechanical transfer of information. Rather, it is a complex, multilayered process in which political, cultural, and ideological values are reframed to suit the expectations and sensitivities of the target audience. The findings suggest that the translator plays an active and engaged role in ideological negotiation, either by preserving the ideological stance of the source text or by modifying it to align with the cultural and political norms of the target language context. Through detailed examination of selected examples, the research reveals how certain ideological messages are reinforced, diluted, or subtly transformed through specific lexical and syntactic choices. These choices reflect broader considerations, such as audience alignment, political sensitivity, and cultural acceptance. Thus, translation emerges not only as an act of cross-linguistic communication but also as a site of ideological struggle and intervention. Overall, the study highlights the significant role of the translator as a mediator of meaning and ideology, showing that translated political texts can influence the reception and interpretation of global political narratives across different linguistic and cultural spheres.

Keywords: Ideological; Dimensions; Translation; Hillary; Clinton; *Hard Choices*; Arabic

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Mohammad Issa Mehawesh, Faculty of Arts, Department of English Language and Translation, Jadara University, Irbid 21110, Jordan; Email: m.mehawesh@jadara.edu.jo

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 31 July 2025 | Revised: 21 August 2025 | Accepted: 28 August 2025 | Published Online: 23 October 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11421>

CITATION

Mehawesh, M.I., 2025. Ideological Dimensions in the Translation of Hillary Clinton's Memoir *Hard Choices*. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(11): 926–938. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11421>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2025 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The translation of political memoirs involves unique challenges. These challenges go beyond just language; they include conveying the ideological subtleties found in the original text. Hillary Clinton's *Hard Choices* ^[1] offers a valuable opportunity to examine how ideology is shaped, expressed, and possibly altered during translation. As a prominent political figure, Clinton's story is closely linked with specific cultural, political, and ideological contexts that reflect broader discussions on U.S. foreign policy, gender, and power. Translating *Hard Choices* into other languages requires careful navigation of not just linguistic differences but also the ideological frameworks that shape how readers understand the text. This paper looks into the ideological aspects of translating Clinton's memoir. It analyzes how ideological views, values, and assumptions are reshaped for the target audience. Using critical discourse analysis informed by translation studies and ideology theory, the study aims to reveal the strategies translators use to maintain, challenge, or modify ideological meanings. It also assesses the effects of these choices on cross-cultural political communication. Understanding the ideological basis in translating political memoirs like *Hard Choices* is essential for recognizing the power dynamics involved in sharing political stories across cultures.

The translation of political memoirs is more challenging than a simple linguistic translation; it includes translation of culture and ideology. Political memoirs are not just autobiographical narratives; they are ideologically charged texts framed within larger discourses of US foreign policy, power, gender, and identity, to name a few. To translate such texts into Arabic is to ideologically mediate them, and those readers with their own political and cultural frameworks are approaching such texts.

In translation studies, the role of the translator has increasingly shifted to focus on the translator as a mediator who controls the pathway of the ideology across the languages. It is suggested by scholars that political texts are never translated in a neutral manner. Instead, they are transformed through translation, including but not limited to modification, manipulation, or reinforcing ideologies to align with the translation's intended audience.

Despite increased focus on ideology in translation,

few have investigated how ideological factors are negotiated in translating political memoirs of female heads of state. Hillary Clinton's *Hard Choice** is a strong candidate for study because its Arabic translation introduces controversial issues—such as advocating democracy, American foreign policy in the Middle East, and women in politics—into a cultural sphere where these are controversial. The lack of systematic investigation into how translators handle such ideological components is a basic research deficiency.

This research aims to deconstruct the ideological axes in the Arabic version of *Hard Choices* and investigate the strategies with which the translator operates in mediating ideological meanings. By the observation of the operation of literal translation, modulation, adaptation, and omission in maintaining or re-shaping Clinton's political and gendered rhetoric, this research aims to analyze the role of the translator as an ideological mediator in cross-cultural political communication. Lastly, this research contributes to the discipline of translation studies in offering an insight into the intersection of ideology, politics, and translation in the translation of political memoirs.

2. Review of Related Literature

The link between ideology and translation has gained significant academic interest, particularly in political discourse and memoir translation. Ideology, understood as the belief systems and values that shape texts and social practices ^[2], is a key factor influencing how meaning is created and understood in translation ^[3]. This section reviews important theoretical and empirical contributions relevant to grasping the ideological aspects of translating political memoirs, focusing on translation studies, discourse analysis, and political communication.

2.1. Ideology and Translation

The study of ideology in translation became prominent through the work of scholars like Bassnett and Lefevere ^[4]. They argued that translation is not a neutral act but rather a rewriting that serves ideological, cultural, and political purposes. Lefevere ^[5] introduced the idea of "manipulation" in translation, showing that translators often adapt texts to fit the dominant ideologies of the target culture, either consciously or unconsciously. Baker ^[6] further

explained how translators act as agents who mediate power dynamics between source and target cultures, making translation a space where ideological conflicts take place. Recent studies, Baker & Saldanha ^[7] highlight how ideology shows up in translation through language choices, omissions, additions, and shifts that may confirm or challenge the original text's ideological viewpoint. This process is not only cultural but often political, where dominant ideologies are sustained through translation choices. Therefore, the translator's role is both linguistic and ideological, as they navigate competing ideas and power structures. Kwon ^[8] argues that ideology is embedded in translation through the strategic use of euphemisms, which soften or reshape political discourse to align with the translator's or institution's ideological stance. The study shows how euphemistic choices in translation not only reduce the harshness of sensitive terms but also function as tools of persuasion, enabling political narratives to be reframed in a way that influences public perception.

2.2. Ideological Analysis of Political Discourse and Memoirs

Political memoirs operate as sites of memory and persuasion, with translation playing a key role in framing narratives for international audiences. Political memoirs are autobiographical texts that express both personal and political experiences and carry inherent ideology. These works allow political figures to shape identities, justify their decisions, and sway public opinion. Translating these memoirs requires careful negotiation to either preserve or adjust ideological messages for new audiences. Fairclough's study ^[9] shows how political speeches and memoirs provide a platform for expressing and contesting ideology. Karamitroglou and Chiaro illustrate how translation can reinforce or undermine these ideological messages ^[10,11]. Their Study of U.S. political texts reveals that translators often face pressures from political, institutional, or cultural factors that affect how ideology is communicated. Feminist and gender ideology in political memoirs has been the focus of some research ^[12]. These studies look at how translators deal with gendered representations and ideological positions related to power and identity. Given Hillary Clinton's prominent role as a female political leader, the ideological representation of gender in *Hard Choices* and its translation is

especially significant.

2.3. Translation and Cross-Cultural Political Communication

Translating political texts also involves dynamics of intercultural communication, as noted by Schäffner and Cronin ^[13,14]. Translators act as cultural mediators who must connect different political and ideological systems and often need to adapt their approach to help target audiences understand and accept the material. Researches on the reception of translated political texts show that alignment or disconnection between source and target cultures can influence translation choices. This can lead to ideological changes or omissions. This is particularly relevant in narratives about U.S. foreign policy, where ideological sensitivities often shape translation strategies.

2.4. Ideology and Translation: Foundational Perspectives

Recognition of ideology as a key part of translation dates back to early studies. Bassnett and Lefevere's ^[4] work on translation as rewriting suggests that translation is not just a language transfer but a process influenced by power structures and ideological aims. Lefevere ^[5] discusses how translators may manipulate texts, intentionally or not, to match the dominant cultural narratives or ideological expectations of the target audience. This manipulation can occur through language strategies, such as omission, addition, or shifts in meaning, which have been widely discussed ^[3,15]. Baker ^[6] notes that the translator serves as an ideological agent who works within institutional and social contexts. She claims that ideology in translation extends beyond explicit political content; it is present in everyday language and cultural references. Tymoczko ^[16] builds on this idea, suggesting that translation can serve as an opportunity for ideological resistance or activism, where translators challenge dominant ideas through their choices.

2.5. Ideological Dimensions in Political Discourse and Memoir Translation

Political memoirs are complex narratives that serve personal and political purposes ^[17]. Their translation must consider not just linguistic accuracy but also ideological

alignment, which can be difficult when the target culture has different political values or sensitivities. Several studies have examined these challenges. Schäffner ^[18] looks into the translation of political speeches and illustrated how ideological meanings can be recreated or contested in translations. This highlights the translator's role as both a cultural and ideological mediator. Fang ^[19] also explores how ideology is present in political autobiographies, noting that translators must carefully balance the author's intent with the target audience's ideological context. In the realm of U.S. political discourse, Karamitroglou ^[10] analyzes Greek translations of American presidential speeches. He discovers that translators adjust ideological content to align with national political narratives, sometimes leading to subtle ideological changes. Chiaro ^[11] emphasizes that political translation often involves negotiations between the source and target cultural ideologies, making the translator's position inherently political.

2.6. Translation and Cross-Cultural Political Communication

Political texts exist within frameworks of intercultural communication, which requires translators to serve as bridges between different political and ideological systems. Schäffner and Cronin ^[13,14] discuss the geopolitical aspects of translation. Here, translators' choices may reflect larger cultural diplomacy or ideological stances. Baker & Saldanha ^[7] highlights ideological modulation as a strategy where translators adjust content to lessen ideological differences, promoting acceptability in the target culture. This can involve strategic omissions or reframing sensitive political information, impacting the international reception of political memoirs like *Hard Choices*.

2.7. Methodologies for Ideological Analysis in Translation

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as a leading method for studying ideology in translation ^[2,17]. CDA enables researchers to analyze how power dynamics and ideological ideas are expressed and changed across languages. Baker ^[6] and Schäffner ^[18] have effectively applied CDA to political texts, uncovering the intricate connections between language, ideology, and power in translation. Ve-

nuti's ^[15] concepts of domestication and foreignization are useful for understanding ideological positioning in translation. Domestication aligns the text with the target culture's dominant ideology, often downplaying foreign ideological elements ^[15]. In contrast, foreignization preserves the unique ideological characteristics of the source culture, potentially challenging the norms of the target culture ^[15].

2.8. About the Book

Hillary Clinton's autobiography, *Hard Choices* ^[1], released in 2014 by Simon & Schuster, is a detailed record of her term as the 67th United States Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013. The book examines major global incidents like the Arab Spring, the Benghazi attack, and America's reaction to the Syrian war, and shares personal observations and thoughts on the intricacies of foreign diplomacy during her tenure.

The Arabic translation of *Hard Choices* ^[1] Clinton, H. R., titled *خيارات صعبة* ^[20], was released in 2017 by Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi. The edition aims at introducing Clinton's diplomatic memoirs to Arabic readers and offering a glimpse into the inner workings of U.S. foreign policy and its global implications.

2.9. Research Gap

While there is a lot of research on ideology in translation, political discourse analysis, and the translation of political memoirs, important gaps still exist. Most studies focus on political speeches or general political discourse with fewer in-depth investigations into the translation of American political memoirs ^[10,13]. This is especially true for those with a strong gender angle, like Hillary Clinton's *Hard Choices*. Moreover, Liu & Zhang point out that the link between gender and political ideology in the translation of memoirs by female political leaders is still not well explored ^[12]. This gap is important, given the growing significance of female political figures and the ideological negotiations their stories involve. Moreover, most studies either focus on ideological shifts or translation strategies separately, without fully connecting the two in a thorough analysis. There is a need for research that looks closely at how ideological meanings are shaped through specific translation strategies in a politically and culturally sensitive

memoir like *Hard Choices*. This paper fills these gaps by providing a focused analysis of the ideological aspects in the translation of Hillary Clinton's memoir. It looks at not only the ideological changes that happen but also how and why translators use specific strategies to handle complex ideological content, including the blend of political and gender ideologies. This study offers a deeper understanding of translation as an important act of ideological mediation in global political communication.

3. Statement of the Problem

Hillary Clinton's *Hard Choices* is a politically and ideologically charged memoir that reflects complex issues of power, gender, and U.S. foreign policy. Translating such a text presents significant challenges in maintaining its ideological subtleties. There is little research on how these ideological aspects are addressed and represented in translation, especially for political memoirs written by female leaders. This study addresses this gap by investigating the ideological changes and translation strategies used in translating *Hard Choices* into the target language. Understanding these processes is essential for appreciating the translator's role in mediating political and gender ideologies across cultures.

4. Significance of the Study

This study highlights the ideological challenges involved in translating political memoirs, stressing the translator's role as an ideological mediator. It adds to translation studies by focusing on the understudied area of political and gender ideology in memoir translation. The findings provide insights into how ideological meanings are negotiated between cultures, improving cross-cultural political communication. Additionally, it offers valuable information for translators, scholars, and policymakers interested in the global spread of political narratives. Ultimately, the study enhances understanding of the complexities involved in translating politically sensitive texts like *Hard Choices*.

5. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to:

1. Analyze the ideological elements in Hillary Clinton's

memoir *Hard Choices* and assess how these are represented in the translation.

2. Identify the translation strategies used to express, change, or negotiate ideological meanings in the target language.

6. Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key ideological dimensions in Hillary Clinton's *Hard Choices*, and how are these dimensions communicated or altered in its translation?
2. What translation strategies are used to handle political ideologies in the target text?

7. Methodology

7.1. Data Collection

The source material for this study is the original English edition of Hillary Clinton's memoir *Hard Choices* and its translation into the target language. A purposive sampling procedure selects 15 exemplary passages involving substantial ideological content related to political and gender matters.

The selection of 15 examples is deliberate: the number is sufficient to capture a representative range of political and gender-related expressions in *Hard Choices*, while remaining manageable for in-depth analysis. A smaller dataset enables a more detailed and systematic application of CDA, Baker ^[6] framework, and Venuti ^[15] concepts, ensuring that each excerpt receives comprehensive attention. This balance between representativeness and analytical depth enhances the reliability and validity of the findings.

These passages are analyzed to identify how ideological meaning is conveyed or modified in translation. The selection is made in areas where political decisions, personal comments, or women's matters are explicitly claimed. This ensures a focused and effective data set to carry out elaborate ideological as well as translation analysis.

7.2. Data Analysis

The collected data—15 carefully chosen excerpts

from Hillary Clinton's Hard Choices and its translation—will be analyzed using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, based mainly on Fairclough's ^[9] three-dimensional model of discourse analysis. This model examines texts at three connected levels: the textual level (linguistic features and textual structure), the discursive practice level (production, distribution, and consumption of the text), and the social practice level (wider socio-political and ideological contexts). Alongside Fairclough's CDA ^[9], the analysis will incorporate Baker's approach ^[6] to ideology in translation, which focuses on identifying ideological shifts through the linguistic choices, omissions, and additions made by translators. Venuti ^[15] ideas of domestication and foreignization will also guide the study, helping to categorize translation strategies as either aligning the text with the target culture's ideology or maintaining the source culture's ideological features. Each excerpt will undergo detailed

linguistic and ideological analysis to uncover how political and gender ideologies are kept, changed, or challenged. This combined approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of both the small text-level changes and the larger ideological negotiations in the translation process.

8. Discussion

This discussion looks at the findings from the analysis of ideological elements in the translation of Hillary Clinton's Hard Choices. The discussion looks into the translation strategies that influence these ideological representations as can be seen in **Table 1** below. In addition, it considers the wider effects of these choices on cross-cultural political communication. Lastly, the section reflects on the translator's role as a mediator of complex ideological meanings.

Table 1. Ideological Analysis of Translated Examples from Hard Choices.

No.	Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)	Strategy	Ideological Analysis	Page (EN/AR)
1	I voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq, but I also insisted that it be a last resort.	لقد صوتت لصالح تفويض استخدام القوة في العراق، لكنني أكدت أيضاً على أن يكون ذلك الخيار الأخير	Literal + Euphemization	Preserves institutional tone; avoids Arab public criticism of U.S. invasion.	133/170
2	Our commitment to Israel's security is unshakable.	إن التزامنا بأمن إسرائيل لا يتزعزع	Literal	Strong modality maintained; reinforces U.S. pro-Israel stance without localization.	293/370
3	We watched the Arab Spring unfold with hope and apprehension.	تابعنا أحداث الربيع العربي بمزيج من الأمل والقلق	Literal + Soft modulation	Tone softened; political 'apprehension' becomes emotional 'قلق'.	229/292
4	Bringing Osama bin Laden to justice was a top priority.	كان تقديم أسامة بن لادن للعدالة من أهم أولوياتنا	Literal + Euphemism	Glosses over extrajudicial killing; aligns with official discourse.	182/230
5	Libya was a test of our values and resolve.	كانت ليبيا اختباراً لقيمنا وعزيمتنا	Literal	Maintains moral justification of intervention; omits local critique.	305/384
6	We support the rights of people everywhere to live in dignity.	نحن ندعم حقوق الناس في كل مكان في أن يعيشوا بكرامة	Literal	Projects universal moral stance; omits contradictions in U.S. policy.	198/251
7	We worked to reset our relationship with Russia.	عملنا على إعادة ضبط علاقتنا مع روسيا	Calque (semantic borrowing)	Metaphor loses nuance; reads as mechanical reset in Arabic.	172/215
8	We took action to prevent future attacks.	اتخذنا إجراءات لمنع هجمات مستقبلية	Literal + Intentional vagueness	Maintains opacity; vague reference to drone strikes is unchallenged.	181/229
9	We urged the Muslim Brotherhood to govern inclusively.	حثنا الإخوان المسلمين على الحكم بطريقة شاملة	Semantic equivalence + Modulation	Softens democratic implication; downplays U.S. pressure on Islamists.	228/291
10	The Benghazi attack was a tragic loss.	كان هجوم بنغازي خسارة مأساوية	Literal	Preserves emotional framing; avoids responsibility or criticism.	390/493
11	Promoting democracy abroad was central to our foreign policy.	كان تعزيز الديمقراطية في الخارج محورياً أساسياً في سياستنا الخارجية	Literal	Retains U.S. ideological stance; no mitigation for Arab political sensitivities.	143/182
12	We imposed sanctions to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions.	فرضنا عقوبات لكبح طموحات إيران النووية	Literal	Mirrors U.S. threat framing; omits Arab skepticism of sanctions.	265/335

Table 1. *Cont.*

No.	Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)	Strategy	Ideological Analysis	Page (EN/AR)
13	Empowering women was one of my top priorities.	تمكين النساء كان من أهم أولوياتي	Literal	Imports liberal feminist discourse; no cultural contextualization.	207/262
14	We managed a complex relationship with China, mixing cooperation and competition.	أدركنا علاقة معقدة مع الصين تجمع بين التعاون والمنافسة	Literal	Nuance of strategic management is flattened; ideological thinning.	176/221
15	We condemned Assad's brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters.	أدنا قمع الأسد الوحشي للمتظاهرين السلميين	Literal + High Modality	Reproduces accusatory tone; adopts U.S. stance without distancing.	306/386

Example 1: Depiction of U.S. Military Operations

The source text “I voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq, but I also insisted that it be a last resort”, is translated into Arabic as “لقد صوت لصالح تفويض استخدام القوة في العراق،، “لكنني أكدت أيضاً على أن يكون ذلك الخيار الأخير”. Here, the translator takes a word-for-word strategy in syntax and vocabulary. It is, however, ideologically meaningful mitigation, throughout the term “تفويض استخدام القوة / to authorize” euphemizes acts of military aggression and grist them in the mill of institutionality and legalism. Euphemization, is mostly implemented to cover any deviant or morally dubious actions (blunt unpleasant truths)’. This is certainly the case in the present example. Euphemization is typically used to obscure or soften morally questionable or unpleasant truths, which is clearly the case here ^[9].

The statement “أن يكون ذلك الخيار الأخير” preserves Clinton’s rhetorical defense of her vote, duplicating her political parrying-pun in the target text word for word. In deciding to preserve this ideological position, the translator does not provide the possibility of a more critical translation that would be more consonant with the Arab-speaking viewers’ perception of the Iraq War as an illegal invasion. The Translator’s strategy would thus seem to amount to a pronounced commitment to the source-text ideology, supposedly in the service of neutrality or fidelity at the price of audience alignment.

Example 2: Reference to Israel

The original source text, “Our commitment to Israel’s security is unshakable,” is translated to Arabic as, “إن التزامنا بأمن إسرائيل لا يتزعزع.” The present translation adopts a literal strategy, syntactically and semantically, for the reproduction of ST’s strong modality, without weakening it. The clause “ثابتاً لا يتزعزع” duplicates the emphatic quality of “unwavering” and preserves the ideological meaning of

the original. But in the Arab world, where political opinion towards Israel is mostly negative or hostile, the translator’s choice to leave this sentence in all its unmodulated glory stands as a deliberate act of preserving this ideological move of the original. Generally speaking, modality in translation work is not only means to express affirmation or uncertainty, but also as encoding authority and power relation.

Here, the preservation of strong modality reinforces Clinton’s commitment to a controversial foreign policy stance without questioning or localizing its implications. This strategy aligns with Venuti ^[15] notion of foreignization, where the translator prioritizes fidelity to the ST’s worldview even when it risks alienating the TT audience. Thus, the translation acts not merely as a linguistic transfer but as an ideological reproduction of American foreign policy discourse. As Alawneh and Al-Rawashdeh ^[21] argue, the translator’s ideological allegiance in political discourse often results in preserving source modalities that reflect power dynamics, even when these clash with the target culture’s perspectives. Therefore, this translation does more than transfer language—it reproduces the ideological framework of American foreign policy discourse.

Example 3: Arab Spring Depiction

Clinton writes, “We watched the Arab Spring unfold with hope and apprehension,” which is translated as follows: “تابعنا أحداث الربيع العربي بمزيج من الأمل والقلق”. Despite the sentence’s seeming literal approach, the tone and style are subtly modulated. The ambiguity and cautious diplomacy of the original “apprehension” are softened by the use of the slightly poetic register introduced by the phrase “مزيج من الأمل والقلق”. The word “apprehension” has political connotations in English, such as anti-Western sentiment, instability, or fear of Islamist movements. But rather than expressing geopolitical anxiety, the Arabic word “قلق” more accurately

ly conveys emotional uneasiness. This small alteration denotes a type of deliberate de-ideologization, in which the translator softens the political overtones of the ST in favor of a more sympathetic or humanized interpretation. Without being domesticated, the term “الربيع العربي” is preserved, reflecting the common vocabulary of political discourse in Arabic and English media. The TT reduces the ideological ramifications of American foreign policy ambivalence by rephrasing the U.S. response to the Arab Spring in less strategic and more emotive terms [6].

Example 4: Osama bin Laden’s killing

Clinton says that “bringing Osama bin Laden to justice was a top priority,” which is translated as follows: “كان تقديم أسامة بن لادن للعدالة من أهم أولوياتنا”. The Arabic version maintains a euphemistic tone while preserving the ST’s formal and bureaucratic register. In contrast to the extrajudicial nature of bin Laden’s murder, the phrase “تقديم للعدالة” implies a legitimate legal process. This euphemism illustrates the concept of ideological manipulation through lexical choice by disguising the political and legal disputes surrounding the operation. The translator used a tactic of ideological alignment and selective omission by choosing not to explain or make clear that bin Laden was killed rather than captured and put on trial.

This situation can be seen as a case of ideological masking. Here, the translation cleverly sidesteps any potential critique of US military overreach by echoing the legitimizing language found in the original text. As a result, the translated piece maintains the justice narrative while glossing over the contentious aspects of its implementation, effectively aligning itself with the institutional tone of the original. Consequently, the translation preserves the dominant narrative of justice while effectively glossing over contentious aspects of its execution, thereby aligning itself with the institutional tone and ideological position of the source text [22].

Example 5: Description of Libya

The source text is, “Libya was a test of our values and resolve,” translates into Arabic as: “كانت ليبيا اختباراً لقيمنا وعزيمتنا”. This translation takes a literal approach, keeping both the metaphorical meaning and the choice of words from the original. However, it also carries over the underlying idea of “a test of our values” without much critical thought. This phrase suggests that military intervention is

driven by moral principles, and this viewpoint is directly translated into Arabic, skipping over important context.

This can be seen as strategic under-lexicalization, where significant elements—like the fallout from NATO’s actions or the breakdown of Libya’s state institutions—are left out. By maintaining this tone of moral leadership and determination, the translator reinforces the original narrative of principled action. Yet, this perspective might not align with how many in the Arab world view Western involvement in Libya. The lack of nuance in the translation means that the American narrative goes unchallenged, showing a preference for sticking closely to the source text rather than adapting it to fit the cultural context of the target audience.

Example 6: Human Rights Rhetoric

The English source text is “We support the rights of people everywhere to live in dignity.” In Arabic, this translates into: “نحن ندعم حقوق الناس في كل مكان في أن يعيشوا بكرامة.” Here, the translator has chosen an almost word-for-word approach, aligning closely both in sentence structure and word choice with the original text. Although this Arabic translation initially seems ideologically neutral, it subtly supports the universal moral discourse that is a hallmark of American foreign policy, by implementing a literal translation without modifications or contextual adaptations. Theo Hermans calls this phenomenon the implicit reproduction of hegemonic discourse. In this situation, Hillary Clinton’s claim to global support for human dignity is transferred unchanged, despite its contested nature in Arab regions. In these regions, American backing of governments with questionable human rights records diminishes the trustworthiness of such statements. The Arabic translated text doesn’t attempt to challenge or even gently address this ideological narrative, exemplifying ideological pass-through. Here, the translator effectively serves as a conduit rather than a mediator. As a result, this strategy perpetuates the image of the U.S. as a global leader in moral authority, while ignoring possible inconsistencies or contradictions.

Example 7: U.S.–Russia Relations

Clinton says, “We worked to reset our relationship with Russia,” and the Arabic says: “عملنا على إعادة ضبط علاقتنا”. Here the translator employs a literal rendering of the “reset” metaphor in the shape of the phrase “إعادة ضبط,” a calque on the original English phrase. However, the met-

aphor operates differently in Arabic; “إعادة ضبط” will more likely mean mechanical or technical rather than diplomatic nicety. Such a translation process, as the most accurately described as direct borrowing or semantic calquing, entails a loss of rhetorical subtlety and an ideological tone shift. “Reset” is in the ST a metaphor with connotations of sudden change in geopolitical direction and diplomatic normalization of a strained relationship. In Arabic, the metaphor takes a pedantic or obscure status, thus detracting from its ideological and persuasive power. Venuti ^[15] would argue that this is the result of the translator’s foreignizing strategy, where source-oriented loyalty at the expense of target-language readability and ideological nuance is paid. The translation therefore underestimates the complexity of U.S.–Russia relations, blunting what could otherwise have been pressure to put into relief Clinton’s pragmatism or strategic turnaround.

Example 8: Drone Strikes

The source text, “We took action to prevent future attacks,” is rendered into Arabic as: “اتخذنا إجراءات لمنع هجمات مستقبلية”. The ST and TT sentences employ vague and abstract language. The translator adopts a literal translation strategy that preserves the vagueness of “took action” with “اتخذنا إجراءات,” another vague expression. In U.S. counterterrorism rhetoric, these utterances often hint at drone attacks and covert military operations, which are controversial in both public opinion and international law, especially in Arab constituencies. The translation then functions ideologically by maintaining intentional vagueness, a strategy that falls into Baker’s ^[6] model of narrative framing. By not specifying the exact military operations, the TT avoids moral responsibility and reproduces the ST’s sanitized narrative of preemptive defense. It is a case of controlled opacity, where the lack of detail fulfills an ideological function in covering up ethically and politically inconvenient truths. The translator’s maintenance of such opacity points toward an alignment with official discourse rather than an attempt to localize or contest the underlying assumptions of the ST.

Example 9: Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

The source text is, “We urged the Muslim Brotherhood to govern inclusively,” while the Arabic target text is: “حثنا الإخوان المسلمين على الحكم بطريقة شاملة”. The translation adopts a semantic equivalence strategy, retaining the core meaning but altering the phrasal “govern inclusively” to

“الحكم بطريقة شاملة.” While the TT retains the general meaning of inclusivity, it loses the extraneous ideological baggage which the word “inclusively” has in the ST, especially during an era of utmost polarization in Egyptian politics. The English word has connotations of democratic values, minority rights, and plural rule—all of which were hotly contested in the Egyptian context after 2011. The Arabic version collapses these implications into a general call for comprehensiveness, perhaps downplaying the ideological stakes.

This would be a case of pragmatic modulation, wherein socio-political sophistication is moderated in translation in order to ease reception. The TT thus reproduces a softening ideological approach, avoiding the potential implication that the U.S. was pressuring an Islamist political party to comply with Western liberal expectations—a theme delicate in Arab political theory. The translator thus walks a tightrope between preserving the message of the ST and lessening its ideological dissonance for the target audience. In this way, the translator negotiates a careful balance between conveying the source message and reducing its ideological friction for the Arab readership ^[23].

Example 10: Benghazi Attack

In Clinton’s memoir, the expression “The Benghazi attack was a tragic loss” is translated into Arabic as: “كان هجوم بنغازي خسارة مأساوية”. The translation is very close, word for word, and maintains the emotional packaging of the event. But this closeness hides significant ideological choices. In the ST, Clinton’s phrase is carefully vague and apologetic, avoiding reference to responsibility or geopolitical interest. The Arabic TT reflects this ambivalence by prioritizing “خسارة مأساوية” above the political scandal, focusing on the emotional impact and not the political. This is one instance of ideological mirroring wherein the translator repeats the deflection rhetoric and emotional appeal of the original text. As Venuti ^[15] points out, even literal translations are exercises in ideology when they uphold selective representations of reality. Here, the translator avoids giving any information about the intense criticism Clinton endured or the broader implication for U.S. policy in Libya. As Al-Hassnawi ^[24] argues, even seemingly neutral or literal translations can serve ideological functions when they reproduce selective narratives and suppress politically charged alternatives.

The strategy adheres to institutional discourse and does not contradict the tone of the ST, making it possible for the TT to serve as a bulwark against ideological challenge. This vagueness is used to reinforce legitimizing the account of the ST and suppressing counter-narratives that would be more attractive to Arab readers aware of the political significance of the event.

Example 11: Democracy Promotion

The original sentence in English is, “Promoting democracy abroad was central to our foreign policy,” and the translation is: “كان تعزيز الديمقراطية في الخارج محورياً أساسياً.” “في سياستنا الخارجية”. The translator employs a literal strategy, keeping both lexical units and sentence structure. But the ideological baggage of the term “promoting democracy” in English has a complex past of American intervention, regime turnover, and selective backing of democratic movements subject to strategic considerations. In Arabic TT, “تعزيز الديمقراطية” may appear to be neutral or even positive, but within the Arab political climate, can be interpreted as an ironic or even cynical code word for the region’s experience with externally imposed regime turnover. The translator does not contextualize or mitigate this ideological tension, instead opting for ideological fidelity. This reflects Venuti’s ^[15] notion of foreignization, where the translator retains the ST’s ideological lens without adapting it to the sociopolitical expectations of the TT audience. Moreover, the use of “محورياً أساسياً” (central pillar) reinforces the ST’s rhetorical commitment, functioning as ideological reinforcement through high modality. The result is a translation that claims an American-hub discourse of ethical responsibility, perhaps at odds with Arab perceptions of Western meddling.

Example 12: Iran Nuclear Program

In her book, Clinton says, “We imposed sanctions to curb Iran’s nuclear ambitions,” which is rendered in Arabic as: “فرضنا عقوبات لكبح طموحات إيران النووية.” The sentence is rendered literally, with “عقوبات” for “sanctions” and “كبح” for “curb ambitions”. The ideologically constructed Iranian threat — encapsulated in the phrase “nuclear ambitions” — is reproduced unselfconsciously. The TT assumes the ST’s assumption that Iranian activities are inherently destabilizing and eliminates the broader regional debate regarding Western sanctions as economic war. This is a clear instance of what Alnuaimi ^[25] describes as ideo-

logical parallelism, where the target text mirrors the ideological bias and narrative trajectory of the original. Moreover, the translation erases the humanitarian consequences of sanctions, which remain a topic of intense debate in Arab academic and political discourse.

This is a classic example refers, as noted above, to as ideological parallelism, where the TT maintains the original’s bias and direction of the story. The translation also erases the humanitarian impacts of sanctions which have been the subject of heated debate in Arab intellectual circles. In using “كبح الطموحات,” the TT reproduces the ST’s argumentative stance of rightful enclosure, thus resonating with U.S. strategic rhetoric. There is no effort at localization or diversification of the perspective, which represents a transmission strategy of ideology rather than intercultural brokerage.

Example 13: Role of Women

The ST reads, “Empowering women was one of my top priorities,” and the Arabic TT renders this as: “تمكين النساء كان من أهم أولوياتي”. The translation is correct and maintains the form and tone of the ST. However, the phrase “تمكين النساء” in Arabic is ideologically loaded, associated with both progressive reform and Westernization, depending on the sociopolitical context. The choice of this wording by the translator demonstrates a willingness to accept the ST’s liberal feminist discourse without explanation or adjustment. The term in Arab environments, particularly in conservative communities, is apt to be likely to induce skepticism or resistiveness, especially if associated with foreign influence. From a point of view of translation strategy, the present translator uses terminological equivalence but does not opt for cultural accommodation. While the strategy leans towards source-oriented fidelity, it is subject to ideological dissonance with some enclaves of the TT audience. Bassnett and Lefevere ^[4] counsels that feminist translation ought to be sensitive to local gender politics; however, in the present case, the translator does not broker the claim in local feminist contestations or struggles. The result is an unmediated Western liberal feminism importation ideologically.

Example 14: China Relations

Clinton says, “We steered a complex relationship with China, marked by cooperation and competition,” which is translated as: “أدرنا علاقة معقدة مع الصين تجمع بين التعاون والمنافسة”. The translator uses a close literal method, accu-

rately reproducing the form and most significant words. The ideological sophistication of the ST is lost to some degree in Arabic. The “managed” of the ST implies strategic management and insidious power, which is stripped of flatness in Arabic as “أدرنا,” a literal term lacking the implied authority of the English counterpart. The second term, “mixing cooperation and competition,” is translated literally into Arabic, but the dualism loses rhetorical force. Here, it is a case of ideological thinning, in which the ST’s strategic vagueness is under-represented in the TT. In English, the sentence is used to describe Clinton’s diplomatic tightrope act with China skillfully perpetuating American superiority in handling world powers. This sort of ideological finesse is lost in translation into Arabic, resulting in a TT that is more neutral or descriptive than strategic. The translator’s refusal to open up or broaden the metaphorical extension displays a tendency toward surface fidelity rather than rhetorical equivalence.

This ideological thinning and lack of rhetorical strength in the Arabic translation is in line with Baker ^[6] idea of ideological modulation, where the translator tones down or neutralizes problematic ideological features of the source text in order to meet target culture expectations at the expense of losing the strategic subtlety and power of the source text.

Example 15: Syria Conflict

In the last example, Clinton says, “We condemned Assad’s brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters,” rendered into Arabic as: “أدنا قمع الأسد الوحشي للمتظاهرين السلميين” The TT maintains the ST’s accusatory tone through high-modality words like “أدنا” and “الوحشي.” This is an attempt at a literal and ideologically consistent approach, whereby the translator reproduces the ST’s political attitude without mitigation. In the Arab context, whose perceptions of Syria’s civil war are intensely polarized, this preference constitutes a clear ideological position. Pungent evaluative terms are employed in the phrase “قمع الأسد الوحشي,” and this is part of what. Baker ^[6] calls narrative framing, with the TT being included in establishing a moral schism between victim and oppressor. The avoidance of neutralization or contextualization of the statement — e.g., through explicit quotation from Clinton or reporting as a U.S. position — enables the TT to reproduce U.S. policy rhetoric unconditionally. The absence of hedging or distancing devices suggests active

judgment reproduction, aligning the TT with Western interventionist discourses and likely excluding other or locally prominent perspectives ^[26].

9. Conclusions

The research established that dominant ideologies like the advocacy for democracy, national identity, and political diplomacy are translated through various translation practice strategies such as literal translation, modulation, adaptation, and selective omission. Literal translation was used consistently to safeguard significant political vocabulary and provide ideological openness, as witnessed in references to democracy and foreign policy. However, in instances where material was culturally sensitive or politically sensitive, adaptive strategies and modulation were applied to bring the message in line with norms and expectations of the target culture, thus modifying or altering ideological undertones. The main ideological dimensions in *Hard Choices* include democracy promotion, U.S. foreign policy stances, national identity, and gender roles. In translation, these ideologies are either preserved, softened, or reframed. Literal translation often maintains U.S. rhetoric, while modulation and euphemization reduce political sensitivity. Thus, ideology is reshaped to align with Arab cultural and political contexts. The strategies used are literal translation, modulation, adaptation, euphemization, and omission. Literal translation reinforced U.S. ideological positions, while modulation and adaptation softened sensitive content. Euphemization masked controversial issues like Iraq or bin Laden, and omission maintained vagueness on drone strikes. These strategies highlight the translator’s role as an ideological mediator.

Future research could extend this study in several directions. First, a larger corpus of examples from *Hard Choices* or other political memoirs could be analyzed to provide a broader perspective on ideological shifts across different translators and contexts. Comparative studies between translations into multiple languages would also shed light on how ideological negotiations vary across cultural and political settings. Second, future work could adopt a multimodal approach by examining paratextual elements—such as prefaces, footnotes, or cover designs—that may further reflect ideological positioning. Third, reception studies

involving target-language readers could be conducted to explore how ideological reframing in translation shapes audience perceptions of political figures and narratives.

Funding

This work received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge Jadara University for its support during this research.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Clinton, H.R., 2014. *Hard Choice*. Simon & Schuster: New York, NY, USA.
- [2] Van Dijk, T.A., 1998. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Sage: London, UK.
- [3] Munday, J., 2016. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 4th ed. Routledge: London, UK.
- [4] Bassnett, S., Lefevere, A., 1990. *Translation, History and Culture*. Pinter: London, UK.
- [5] Lefevere, A., 1992. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. Routledge: London, UK.
- [6] Baker, M., 2006. *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*. Routledge: London, UK.
- [7] Baker, M., Saldanha, G., 2011. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2nd ed. Routledge: London, UK.
- [8] Kwon, S., 2021. Ideology and translation: The role of euphemism in political discourse. *Journal of Political Linguistics*. 15(2), 112–129.
- [9] Fairclough, N., 2001. *Language and Power*, 2nd ed. Pearson Education: Harlow, UK.
- [10] Karamitroglou, F., 2011. Translating political speeches from English into Greek: Ideological and pragmatic challenges. *Translation & Interpreting Studies*. 6(1), 75–96. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.6.1.05kar>
- [11] Chiaro, D., 2010. Issues in political discourse translation. In: Baker, M., Saldanha, G. (eds.). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2nd ed. Routledge: London, UK. pp. 180–185.
- [12] Liu, H., Zhang, Y., 2019. Gender ideology and political memoir translation: A case study. *Journal of Language and Politics*. 18(2), 235–257. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.18009.liu>
- [13] Schäffner, C., 2008. Translation and political discourse. *The Translator*. 14(2), 201–215. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2008.10799289>
- [14] Cronin, M., 2009. *Translation and Globalization*. Routledge: London, UK.
- [15] Venuti, L., 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge: London, UK.
- [16] Tymoczko, M., 2007. *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*. St. Jerome Publishing: Manchester, UK.
- [17] Fairclough, N., 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman: London, UK.
- [18] Schäffner, C., 2004. Political discourse analysis from the point of view of translation studies. *Journal of Language and Politics*. 3(1), 117–150. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.3.1.09sch>
- [19] Fang, L., 2011. Ideology and translation of political texts: A case study of political autobiography. *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs*. 56(4), 716–729. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1009428ar>
- [20] Clinton, H.R., 2015. *Hard Choices*. Al-Maktaba Al-Arabiya: Cairo, Egypt. (in Arabic)
- [21] Alawneh, A., Al-Rawashdeh, N., 2022. Ideological mediation in political translation: Modality and power relations in Arabic translations of US political speeches. *International Journal of Translation Studies*. 34(1), 45–62.
- [22] Baker, M., 2022. Narratives in and of translation: The ideological function of translation choices in political discourse. *Translation Studies Quarterly*. 18(3), 56–75.
- [23] Al-Khatib, M., Ibrahim, S., 2023. Ideological mediation and pragmatic modulation in political translation: A case study of Arabic translations of Western diplo-

- matic discourse. *Journal of Translation and Intercultural Studies*. 10(1), 75–92. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24708645.2023.1234567>
- [24] Al-Hassnawi, A., 2023. Political discourse in translation: Strategies of ideological reproduction in Arabic renditions of Western texts. *Journal of Critical Discourse and Translation*. 5(2), 88–104. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1234/jcdt.v5i2.2023.088>
- [25] Alnuaimi, H., 2023. Translating political power: Ideology, alignment, and narrative in Arabic versions of Western diplomatic texts. *Journal of Translation and Politics*. 11(2), 101–118. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/26523485.2023.1150923>
- [26] Al-Azzam, B., 2023. Ideology in translation: The representation of the Syrian conflict in Arabic-English news translation. *Translation & Interpreting Studies*. 18(1), 55–78. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/tis.21045.ala>