Language, Translation and Identity in the Age of the Internet, Satellite Television and Directed Media
Arabic with English abstracts
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Publisher: Writescope Pty Ltd, Melbourne
ISBN 0-957-751-141, 445 pp
Publication date: 15 April 2005

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In *Reporting the Orient*, Alan Knight (2000) asserts: "Journalists inhabit a culture of ideas which shape the way they report, select, edit and prioritise news. These ideas reproduce and reinforce themselves in the news making process, re-creating apparently flexible ways for imagining the world outside the newsroom." (21).

For Arabic media today, these flexible ways are reshaping and re-creating the world in the minds of the Arabs in the Arab region and beyond, not only in news making but also in current affairs programs, political debates and pop culture (Darwish, 2005). According to the author of the present book, "as Arabic satellite television gains ever-increasing prominence in the Arab region and internationally, its role as a controversial catalyst in the process of democratization and influential agent of social, cultural and political change in the region becomes all the more important in a rapidly changing world of democracy, globalization and shifting allegiances. Relying primarily on translation of news and other program contents from English and conducting program production in English and or French, Arabic satellite television stations are causing a cataclysmic change in Arabic language patterns and cultural representation" (442).

Language, Translation and Identity in the Age of the Internet, Satellite Television and Directed Media examines this process in the Arabic media, in both the Internet and television. It explores issues of language, translation and identity as re-created by Arabic satellite television. Consisting of fifteen articles, this book makes a compelling case for translation as a major factor in redefining language, culture and identity. The articles are organized around eight themes: (1) language, translation, and identity, (2) cultural and intellectual alienation, (3) cultural mismemes, (4) linguistic alienation, (5) Intellectual appropriation, (6) translation of war propaganda, (7) language and technology, (8) aspects of change in modern Arabic. Each of these themes is explored from different perspectives and supported by real examples that are analyzed with wit and unparalleled penetration into the works of uninformed translators and journalists.

Appropriately, the book begins by setting the scene for the rest of the articles in the book. The introduction *Language, Translation, Identity and the Media*, the author paints an Arab world that is being gradually, cumulatively and surreptitiously alienated from its own culture through translation-mediated knowledge transfer. As the author points out in

the English section, the introduction "places the phenomenon of language and cultural alienation in the context of translation in the Arabic media. It touches upon important linguistic and sociocultural aspects of this phenomenon and seeks to explain the reasons for the strong tendency to imitate foreign linguistic patterns. The article [introduction] examines the role of Arabic satellite television and the Internet in reinforcing specific usages and in accelerating the process of change, linguistically, culturally and socially, critiques the disgraceful practices of some publishers and translation agencies, and highlights the endemic problem of intellectual appropriation and plagiarism in the Arab world"(441).

This book is preceded by the author's reputation for sharp and honest analysis and criticism of the standards and practices of journalists in the Arabic media, his profound knowledge of both Arabic and English and ability to juxtapose these two languages that vary on a continuum of approximation and relativity. In a series of poignantly satirical articles published in various online and traditional journals in 2004, the author has built a reputation for being a leading expert and scholar in translation and cross-cultural communication with a particular interest in media studies.

The author explains his motivations for writing the book. In the English introduction, he says: "The book has grown out of a serious interest in examining a curious phenomenon that is today sweeping the Arab world, where mass media is once again playing a critical role not only in reporting the news but also in shaping events and influencing public opinion, and where reporting and news manipulation sometimes overlap" (442).

Language, Translation and Identity in the Age of the Internet, Satellite Television and Directed Media is an authoritative treatise that covers a huge area of intricate language structures and translation idiosyncrasies in the media. It is a highly quotable and eloquent book that pursues its goals passionately and tenaciously throughout. The author's unique, powerful and captivating eloquent style is unmatched in contemporary Arabic writing. It blends scientific findings with penetrating argumentation and sharp polemic that does what many other traditional books on language, translation and identity in the Arabic media fail to do. His clear and crisp style of writing is matched by the power of logic and supported arguments that the author presents.

In many respects, the book has evolved from articles and research papers that have been compiled into this beautifully designed volume. However, the articles are far from being a hodgepodge of disconnected thoughts. They carry one consistent theme that is reinforced across the book. These interconnected articles explore the crisis of language, translation and identity in the Arabic language media in both the Internet and Satellite television within a coherent framework that uses framing theory and contrastive analysis to analyze a large corpus of linguistic data and translation artifacts derived from the internet and satellite television broadcasts.

What makes this book remarkable, in addition to the wealth of material presented, is that this is not a book about the media in the traditional sense. It is rather a scathing criticism and poignant commentary on the state of affairs in the Arab world vis-à-vis the impact of

translation-driven satellite television on the character and identity of both the Arabic language and Arab culture. The book's rigour and depth does not cause it to lose breadth.

This is a daring multidisciplinary study of the new phenomenon of Arabic satellite television that pulls no punches and spares no one. It uses framing theory as its framework for analysis of the information content and discourses of Arabic media to examine the intricate relationship of language, translation and identity.

The book has served me well as a principal reference in my doctoral research in this area that suffers from a dearth of publications on the role of translation in the media. Finding sources on the topic is almost impossible. Most books and references dealing with this phenomenon barely scratch the surface. I am sure this in-depth study will undoubtedly influence the practices of translators and journalists and will hopefully stimulate changes in their approaches to information presentation, as it does seem to have influenced leading Arabic satellite television outfits already.

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