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Evaluating evaluation: System networks and corpus-assisted analysis of attitude and graduation of translated political discourse

Awni Etaywe

aetaywe@qu.edu.qa

Qatar University

Shrouq Almaghlouth

Saudi Electronic University

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Abstract

This article contributes to discursive pragmatics by examining translated political texts, proposing system networks, grounded in the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005), as a tool for assessing faithfulness and discursive-pragmatic adjustment in evaluative language across Arabic-English political translations. Focusing on attitude and graduation (rhetorical force) in speeches following the Israeli aggression on Gaza since 7 October 2023, the study tracks how evaluative language conveying the source texts' call for peace and civilian protection is preserved or altered across Arabic STs and English human- and machine-translated TTs. Machine translation shows greater faithfulness overall; human translations show more nuanced deviation, including additions, omissions, and scaling adjustments. These adjustments follow a directional pattern: graduation is most often intensified around calls to action and humanitarian appeal, while explicit judgement of the occupation is periodically softened or omitted – shifting the human translations' discursive-pragmatic function toward affiliative, consensus-building appeal rather than sustaining the source texts' full force of political condemnation. A show-how corpus-assisted layer using Voyant Tools – an exploratory contribution to corpus pragmatics (Landert et al., 2023) – independently corroborates this pattern through word-frequency and collocation data, though this addition is exploratory rather than a generalisability claim. The findings underscore the translator's active, consequential mediation of interpersonal meaning in politically charged discourse.

Keywords: discursive pragmatics, corpus pragmatics, system network approach, evaluative language, rhetorical force, translation fidelity, political translation, corpus-assisted translation studies, LLM-mediated translation, machine translation

1. Introduction

Following the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack, Israel launched a large-scale military campaign in the Gaza Strip – under blockade since 2007 – involving a total siege and sustained airstrikes and ground operations, which led to thousands of Palestinian casualties, widespread infrastructure destruction and a severe humanitarian crisis. Consequently, an extraordinary summit in Riyadh was held on 11 November 2023 to demand immediate ceasefire and international intervention. A number of Arabic political speeches were delivered and English-translated in that summit as well as following similar events. This article explores the discourse semantic implications of these Arabic-English political translations through the lens of the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) and system network modelling. Using system networks (outlined in section 2) as analytical tools, this study aims to evaluate human-translation fidelity of evaluative language by tracking how attitudinal meanings (affect, judgment and appreciation) as well as their rhetorical

force (graduation) are maintained, adjusted or omitted in English target texts (TTs). In doing so, it compares between machine and human translation; thus, allowing the analysis to distinguish between 'unmotivated' and 'motivated' shifts (explained in Section 2.4). By revealing when human-translators exercise agency despite having available equivalent options, this study assesses how such choices align with – or deviate from – the Arabic source texts' (STs) intended rhetorical functions in calling for peace and civilian protection. As a complementary, show-how extension of this discourse-analytic method, the study also incorporates an exploratory corpus-assisted analysis of the same texts using Voyant Tools, triangulating the manually coded findings against word-frequency and collocation patterning (Section 4.1 and Section 4.6).

Drawing on systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (e.g. Halliday, 1973; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), it contributes to the growing body of research on evaluative language in translation (Munday, 2012a, 2012b, 2015, 2018), with a focus on the under-explored context of Arabic-English political translation. Political discourse is not merely informational but deeply interpersonal and rhetorical, aiming to influence public sentiment and international opinion (Partington & Taylor, 2017). Translators work within sociocultural settings where linguistic choices are shaped by the communicative goals and audience expectations of the translated text (Espindola & Vasconcellos, 2006; Nida, 2015). Even minor shifts in attitudinal meaning or rhetorical force (e.g., intensification, softening) carry significant ideological and persuasive weight. Preserving evaluative meanings is essential for ethical bonding and urging systemic compassion for those enduring military occupation and what the International Court of Justice has described as a "plausible" case of genocide in Gaza (International Court of Justice, 2024). This study accordingly positions its contribution at the intersection of two fields: discursive pragmatics (Zienkowski, Östman & Verschueren, 2011; White, 2011), through its system-network analysis of evaluative meaning in translated political discourse, and corpus pragmatics (Landert et al., 2023), through the exploratory corpus-assisted layer introduced in Section 4.1.

2. Literature review

2.1 'System network' approach and its relevance to mapping faithfulness in translation

Halliday's (1973; 2003 [1977]) view of language as a resource for meaning-making underpins the system network approach – a key concept in SFL that models language as choice rather than rule. System networks graphically represent the paradigmatic axis of language, thus enabling researchers to map meaning potentials rather than isolated linguistic instances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). As an analytical tool, the system network allows analysts to trace both what was said and what could have been said, revealing the semantic potential behind each translation choice. This approach is effective for evaluating faithfulness, as it enables systematic comparison between the semantic options of ST and TS. Such analysis reveals congruence or deviation in interpersonal meanings, including attitude, modality, and graduation. Comprehensive overviews of the descriptive and typological reach of SFL, including its cross-linguistic and applied extensions, are provided by Mwinlaaru and Xuan (2016), Matthiessen, Wang, Ma and Mwinlaaru (2022), and Matthiessen and Teruya (2023);

such typological breadth (see also Kashyap, 2019) underlies SFL's suitability for comparing typologically distant languages such as Arabic and English.

Arús-Hita, Matthiessen and Xuan (2024) have applied system networks in second-language education to diagnose learner errors. This diagnostic capacity also benefits translation research – particularly in politically sensitive genres, where minor appraisal shifts can significantly affect rhetorical alignment and ideological positioning. To track shifts in translation, this study focuses on the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION systems within the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005). The ATTITUDE system comprises three semantic regions: AFFECT (emotion), JUDGEMENT (ethics), and APPRECIATION (aesthetics). These resources are crucial in political translation, where evaluative meanings encode ideological stances that must be preserved or strategically modulated. For instance, *affect* registers emotional reactions and feelings (e.g., *grief*), *judgement* evaluates behaviour (e.g., *cruelty*), and *appreciation* assesses phenomena or things (e.g., *brutal war*). These values can be further modulated through *graduation*, which enables fine-tuned evaluation by scaling intensity and extent.

As Etaywe (2024a) explains, the Appraisal framework presents a discourse semantic approach to evaluative language and bonding. This bonding function is central to how evaluative language performs affiliative work in ideologically charged discourse, aligning audiences with – or against – a given stance (Etaywe, 2024a). This is consistent with White's (2011) account of Appraisal as a resource for analysing how speakers and writers activate positive and negative positioning and thereby align or dis-align themselves with the value positions of their audience – a formulation particularly apt for the present study given its concern with the discursive-pragmatic, bonding function of evaluative language in politically consequential speech. There are three interacting systems making up the appraisal system (Martin & White, 2005): ATTITUDE (positive/negative stances), GRADUATION (scaling of evaluations), and ENGAGEMENT (alignment with other voices). In system networks (exemplified in Figure 1), square brackets represent 'or' choices (e.g., affect/judgement/appreciation), while braces indicate simultaneous choices ('and' relations). The ATTITUDE system incorporates three dimensions: type (affect/judgement/appreciation), explicitness (inscribed/invoked), and polarity (positive/negative). Each attitudinal choice represents a nuanced evaluative position.

- Affect: emotional responses, subcategorised into (un)happiness, (in)security, (dis)satisfaction, and (dis)inclination.
- Judgement: behavioural assessments involving social esteem (normality, capacity, tenacity) and social sanction (veracity, propriety).
- Appreciation: aesthetic evaluations concerning reaction (impact, quality), composition (harmony, order), and valuation.

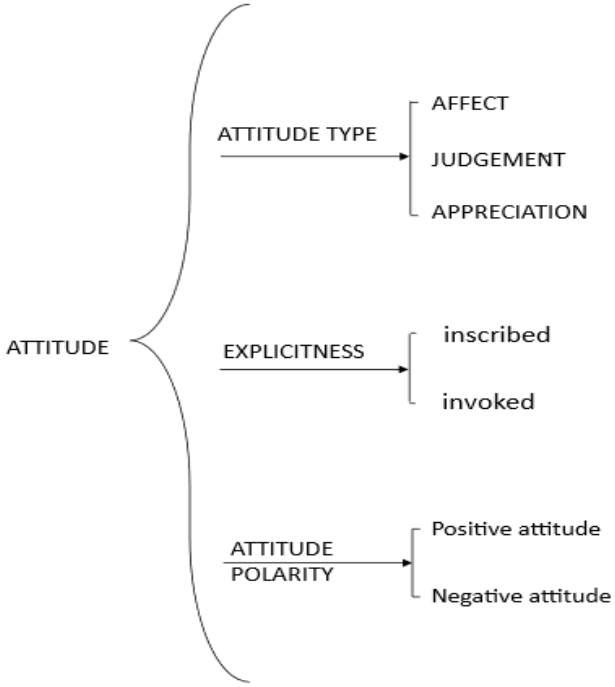


Figure 1: The ATTITUDE system (Adapted from Martin and White 2005)

This study also investigates the GRADUATION system, focusing on the sub-system of *Force* (Martin & White, 2005), which scales meaning by intensity (Figure 2) or amount. Graduation by *Force* operates across gradable categories – such as attitudes, qualities, processes, and modality – allowing speakers and writers to amplify or diminish meanings. According to Martin and White (2005), *intensification* adjusts strength or impact. Graduation also includes quantification (Figure 3) – scaling extent, number, and mass. Quantification may be realised through modifiers or metaphorical collocations. Shifts in these interpersonal meaning making resources in translated texts would impact the text's function.

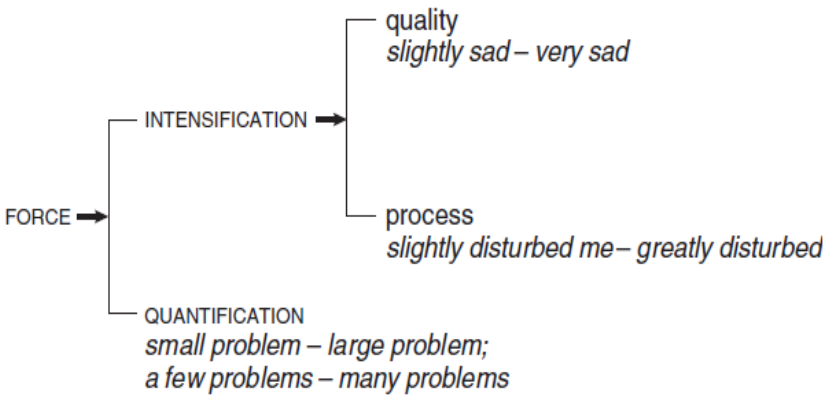


Figure 2: Force intensification through process and quality – of influence on rhetorical force (Martin & White, 2005, p. 141)

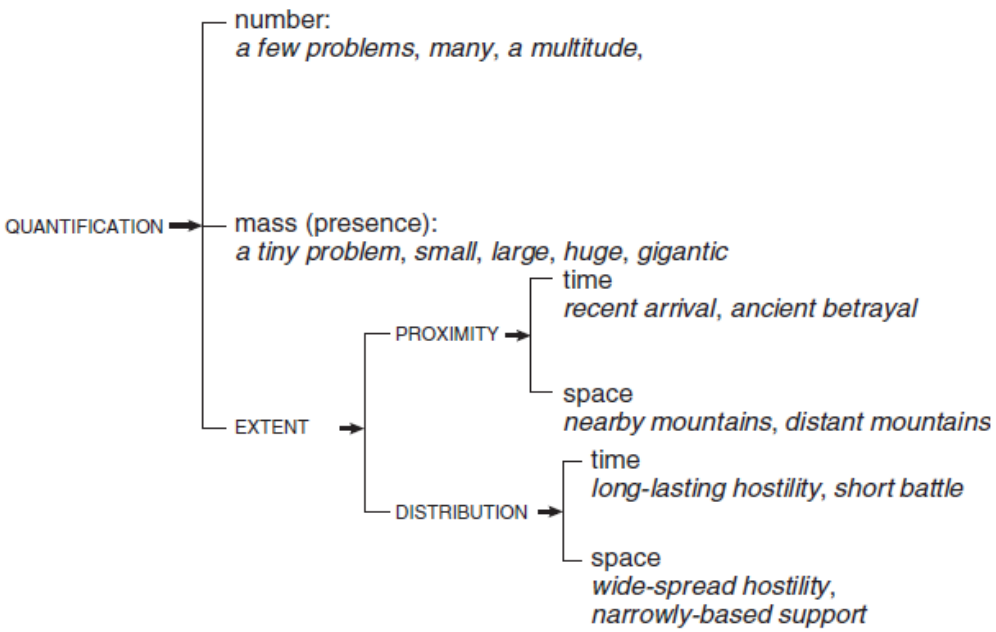


Figure 3: Force quantification through features of number, mass, and extent – of influence on rhetorical force (Martin & White, 2005, p. 151)

2.2 Meaning, function, and the role of evaluation in translation: Translating evaluation in political discourse

Recent literature on translation studies often reveals an evolving discourse on equivalence and faithfulness as both central yet not mutually exclusive concepts. On one hand, equivalence has traditionally explored the somehow 'sameness' relationship between ST and TT (Panou, 2013, p. 2). Such sameness has been conceptualised differently in relevant literature which resulted in some re-revaluation in response to evolving translation practices and technologies (Agsebat & Elarafi, 2024). Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) investigated equivalence in light of the procedures involved in literal and free translations while highlighting the rather utopian role of bilingual dictionaries in achieving full equivalence. A more structural take has been offered by Jakobson (1959); however, the impact of the work of Nida and Taber's (1969) has been more influential. According to the latter, there is formal translation with the TT resembling the ST heavily in terms of form and content; while in dynamic translation the main focus is on transferring the message as naturally as possible. Later on, Baker (1992) distinguished between word-level as well as above-the-world level equivalence while Pym (2010) stressed the inevitable fact that perfect equivalence between languages does not exist. The more research is conducted in this field, the more dynamic and contextualised equivalence is perceived to be, a trajectory also traced in general overviews of the discipline (Munday, Pinto & Blakesley, 2022).

On the other hand, faithfulness has been operationalised as a virtue in translation studies; targeting fidelity to the ST while still adapting it to the target audience. Such delicate balance has posed a recurrent dilemma to translation experts (Maxim, 2025), especially in accordance with contemporary shifts in translation studies toward more flexible and context-specific approaches (Frashëri & Kastrati, 2013). Given the equivalence definition above, it intricately has strong affiliation with faithfulness. Also, approaching faithfulness should take into consideration the genre in question. In literary, figurative or proverb translation, where most of the Arabic-English research centres, maintaining faithfulness in culturally loaded contexts can be quite challenging (Mahmood & Jamal, 2024). In translation of Arabic political discourse, however, there seems to be a research gap. Qaddoumi (2008) reports that while literal translation has been utilised predominately in political speeches, certain intentional departures from ST have been identified on ideological grounds. Keeping in mind the sensitivity and authority of political discourse, constraints prioritising accountability over naturalness in translation emerge; thus, depicting the equivalence-faithfulness tension in light of power dynamics and translator ideology.

Translation studies have long prioritised the transmission of meaning over strict formal equivalence (Nida, 2015), foregrounding how translated texts operate within sociocultural and communicative contexts. This perspective emphasises how lexicogrammatical choices shape psychological, social, and ideological meanings (Schleiermacher, 2021). Evaluative language is particularly significant in political discourse, where persuasion and ideological positioning are central. As Hatim (1990) notes, the translator's role extends beyond linguistic equivalence, especially in ideologically charged texts. Translation becomes a negotiated act where meaning is constructed or transformed in ways that reflect or resist dominant ideologies. Viewed this way, translated texts operate as a rhetoric of meaning, actively constructing rather than merely relaying evaluative stance (Davila-Montes, 2017). In this light, political translation is inherently non-neutral – it involves the reconfiguration of values, stances, and alignments that affect reception and interpretation.

The translation of evaluative language in political texts is a high-stakes, ideologically sensitive process. Political discourse is inherently argumentative, value-laden, and emotionally charged. Translation here is not mere linguistic substitution but can be viewed as being the re-enactment of ideological stance, engagement strategies, and power relations. As Hajmohammadi (2005, p. 215) notes, evaluation in political translation is "problematic" due to its entanglement with cultural and ideological values. This study adopts a culturally situated approach to how evaluative meanings in Arabic political discourse are recontextualised in English translation, focusing on appraisal values and shifts in interpersonal and ideological positioning. It builds on Munday's (2012b, 2015) view of translation as an inherently evaluative act and aligns with broader functionalist and discourse-analytic traditions.

2.3 Subjectivity and translator agency

Critical translation studies increasingly frame the translator as a subjective agent rather than a neutral conduit. This question of translator agency takes on renewed urgency with the growing use of large language models for political translation, where the absence of a human translator's subjective positioning raises open questions about whether – and how –

evaluative meaning is preserved, a concern this study begins to address by comparing human and machine output directly (Section 4). Translation is now widely recognised as a political act (Sadler, Baker & Engebretsen, 2024), where neutrality is often neither feasible nor desirable. Translators are seen as ideologically, ethically, and culturally embedded actors – a view echoed in international scholarship (e.g., Fernández, 2020; Gould & Tahmasebian, 2020). In Arabic-English contexts, Baker (2013, 2018, 2019) illustrates how translators mobilise linguistic choices to amplify marginalised voices. At the paratextual level, Dubbati and Abudayeh (2018) show how this agency surfaces in framing devices and introductory notes, revealing ideological positioning beyond the translated text. While not focused on activist translation per se, this study aligns with that paradigm by foregrounding translator subjectivity in shaping evaluative meaning within ideologically charged discourse.

Accordingly, exploring how translation choices have been motivated by such subjectivity remains a growing research interest since the 1990s. Discourse and translation has emerged as a hybrid branch of both discourse analysis and translation studies (Zhang et al 2015). With regards to Arabic-English translation contexts in particular, Abdalla (2018) examined a corpus of English translations of Arabic political speeches as published by Western media following the appraisal framework. She identified how evaluative language has been used to intentionally shape in-group and out-group categorisation in accordance with their underlying ideologies. Using the same framework, Risky and Firmonasari (2024) targeted Indonesian-English translation have been also able to identify that while the core ideas were preserved in the TTs, certain distinct preferences were made by the translators toward more intensification and explicate engagement meanings than in the STs and at the expense of its cultural nuances. This goes along the lines of Vîlceanu's (2018) where translation choices have been used to problematise certain supranational identities in the Romanian discourse of European Union membership. Meng's (2022) study of graduation and force in English-Chinese translation also documents parallel patterns, echoing Qian's (2009) earlier appraisal-based account of "unfaithful" translation in public notices, where shifts in evaluative meaning were similarly traced to the translator's positioning rather than to linguistic necessity. Even other discourse studies focusing on translation of other linguistic choices – e.g. metaphors in political translation (Aldanani, 2018) or diplomatic terminology (Alshyiab et al, 2023) – raise similar concerns.

2.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and translation: Motivated versus unmotivated shifts

This study adopts a Systemic Functional Linguistic approach, drawing on Matthiessen's (2014, p. 277) view of translation as realising meaning across three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The interpersonal metafunction – encompassing social roles, attitudes, and alignment – is central here, as it is where evaluative stance and ideological positioning are linguistically enacted. The ideational metafunction also matters in political discourse, where experiential meanings (e.g., *invasion*, *war crime*) often carry fused attitudinal values. Thus, translation becomes a process of ideologically charged reconstrual, shaped by sociopolitical and cultural forces. Munday (2015, 2018) applies Appraisal theory – particularly ATTITUDE and GRADUATION systems – to examine how translators manipulate interpersonal meanings. His analysis of Trump's inaugural speech and its Spanish translations reveals shifts in ideological tone and deictic positioning through

engagement and graduation resources. These findings affirm the value of SFL-based tools in tracing subtle cross-linguistic meaning shifts.

To analyse attitudinal shifts, this study draws on Matthiessen's (2014) distinction, positioning the translator as both linguistic mediator and ideological actor:

- Motivated shifts involve deliberate changes to interpersonal meanings despite the availability of equivalent evaluative resources in the target language – often ideologically or strategically driven.
- Unmotivated shifts stem from structural or semantic limitations in the target language, necessitating divergence from the source text.

A parallel methodological trajectory in pragmatics has sought to bridge close, manually coded discourse analysis with corpus-linguistic methods. Landert et al. (2023) distinguish *corpus-based discourse analysis* (CBDA), which relies primarily on quantified, reproducible patterns, from *corpus-assisted discourse studies* (CADS), which bring pre-existing theoretical categories to a combination of keyword, collocate, and concordance analysis before returning to close qualitative interpretation – precisely the sequence (frequency list, collocates, concordance, and then manual interpretation) later followed with Voyant Tools in Section 4.1. As Landert et al. (2023) note, this combination addresses a recognised gap between automatic, corpus-scale analysis and the human analyst's judgement, which remains indispensable for interpreting discourse. Importantly, they also observe that small, custom-compiled corpora – like the one used here – can still warrant a quantified, corpus-assisted approach, provided the analysis does not overreach the corpus's representativeness. This study follows that logic in an exploratory capacity, aligning with recent corpus-assisted work on interpersonal meaning in politically sensitive, translated discourse (Li, Chen & Zhang, 2025).

In summary, existing research underscores the value of Appraisal theory – especially the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION subsystems – in examining evaluative meaning in translation. While prior studies have identified attitudinal shifts across languages and genres, few employ system networks to model the paradigmatic and syntagmatic potential of both source and target systems. Fewer still focus on Arabic-English political translation, where evaluative and ideological transformations are especially consequential. This study addresses that gap by using SFL and Appraisal-based system networks to compare Arabic political texts and their English translations. It seeks not only to detect shifts but to explain them, contextualising translational choices and evaluating their rhetorical and ideological effects.

3. Method

This study combines two complementary analytical approaches. The primary analysis is a manual, close-reading application of system networks (Section 3.2–3.3), grounded in the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005), through which each clause in the Arabic source texts and their English human- and machine-translated target texts is coded for attitude and graduation. This manual coding constitutes the study's main analytical

contribution and is the basis for all findings reported in Section 4. To complement this close-reading approach, and to explore what a lightweight corpus-linguistic pass can and cannot reveal about the same texts, the same Arabic ST and English TT data were also processed using Voyant Tools (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016), a browser-based corpus-analysis environment (Section 3.4). This corpus-assisted layer is exploratory rather than confirmatory: it is used to generate word-frequency lists, collocates, concordance lines, and word clouds that are cross-checked against the manually coded attitude and graduation categories, both to triangulate the qualitative findings (Section 4.6) and to demonstrate, as a show-how exercise, one way corpus tools might be integrated with system-network analysis of appraisal resources in future, larger-scale research. Given the small size of the pooled corpora (4,418 Arabic tokens; 6,167 English tokens), this corpus-assisted component is not intended to support generalisable corpus-linguistic claims in its own right.

3.1 Dataset

The research selects a dataset of four Arabic speeches delivered following the Israeli aggression on Gaza. Three of these were delivered in the extraordinary summit in Riyadh and the fourth at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. All the speeches were produced in Arabic by Arab leaders and were selected since they are all publicly available with English translations in their official pages (Saudi Press Agency, King of Jordan's webpage and the International media office in Qatar). These speeches represent a pertinent case study for investigating the strategic selection and translation of appraisal resources across different linguistic systems. An overview of the selected texts is provided in Table 1. Prioritising analytical depth, contextual understanding and meaning-making over statistical generalisability, this study employed qualitative multi-dimensional analysis of the STs and both of their corresponding human and machine-translated TTs. As such, it offers an exploratory investigation to provide comprehensive and preliminary insight into the topic at hand. This take aligns with some qualitative research frameworks in which smaller samples offer nuanced and contextually-grounded interpretations in discourse and translation studies (see for instance Mattfeldt, 2024 and Machniewski, 2004).

Table 1: An overview of the dataset

Text	Speaker / Context	Source (Arabic ST)	Translation (English TT)	ST word count
Text 1	**His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, Saudi Crown Prince** *Address at the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit, Riyadh*	**Arabic (ST):** View source ↗	**English (TT):** View translation ↗	**2,014**
Text 2	**His Majesty King Abdullah II, King of Jordan** *Address at the Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit, Riyadh*	**Arabic (ST):** View source ↗	**English (TT):** View translation ↗	**303**

Text	Speaker / Context	Source (Arabic ST)	Translation (English TT)	ST word count
Text 3	**Final adopted resolution of the Summit** *Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit, Riyadh (11 November 2023)*	**Arabic (ST):** View source ↗	**English (TT):** View translation ↗	**414**
Text 4	**His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar** *Address at the 79th session of the UN General Assembly*	**Arabic (ST):** View source ↗	**English (TT):** View translation ↗	**1,611**

3.2 Analytical procedure

The STs along with their human-translated TTs were analysed and coded focusing on equivalence choices in the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION systems. In addition to evaluation conducted by the authors of this paper – both experienced Arabic-English translators and discourse analysts trained in the Appraisal framework – machine translations (produced using Google Translate) of the same STs were analysed comparatively. This step was to explore whether the human translations in the case study are more accurate and sensitive to the subtleties of interpersonal meaning, particularly the translation of ATTITUDE and GRADUATION resources. Google Translate was chosen as it offers easily accessible features, as well as time-efficient and cost-effective application (Handayani et al., 2022; Phuong et al., 2021; and Herlina et al., 2019), making it quite popular in machine translation. Despite recent studies on the efficiency of large language models (e.g. ChatGPT) in translation, LLMs fall beyond the scope of the present study. Additionally, this does not mean that machine translation adopted in this study is completely neutral or free of bias (Fitria, 2021), it simply means that it could potentially provide a reasonable baseline for comparison, given that several relevant studies followed similar approaches (e.g. Ramzan, 2025 and Maaytah, 2026).

Due to the politically charged nature of the topic, the current study acknowledges that certain challenges pertain when it comes to maintaining objectivity. Given that both researchers are Arabs and working on analysing Arabic-English translations of Arabic political discourse, their positionality could be seen both as an asset and a potential bias source. Having native cultural and linguistic insider knowledge enables the researchers to provide nuanced interpretation of the Arabic evaluative expressions examined originally in the ST as well as explicit reflexivity regarding their alignment. However, to mitigate researcher bias, several methodological safeguards were employed. First, adopting Martin and White's (2005) appraisal system offers an empirically grounded taxonomy which constrains subjective interpretations to a large extent. Second, machine translation was included within the methodological framework to offer a theoretically more objective baseline for comparison. Third, both researchers coded the texts independently, with

discrepancies resolved through revision and discussion. Fourth, it is of key significance to highlight that the analysis intended in this paper focuses on linguistic choices along with their theoretical effects instead of evaluating any political legitimacy. From such perspective, the analysis maintains analytical distance from ideological content.

3.3 Parameters of the Appraisal analysis

Evaluative expressions are systematically examined for their fidelity to, or deviation from, the choices within the ATTITUDE system – namely JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION and AFFECT – as well as their explicitness and polarity. In relation to rhetorical force, GRADUATION options are examined in terms of whether the translated texts maintain or flout degrees of quantification and intensification. These choices are assessed for their role in either amplifying or downplaying the attitudinal meaning and for their impact on rhetorical effect. The GRADUATION categories examined are summarised in Figure 4. Specifically, the following GRADUATION resources were tracked for evidence of being maintained or flouted:

- Degrees of quantification: this includes options of
    - number (e.g. *a few* enquiries).
    - mass (e.g. gigantic).
    - extent:
        - proximity (e.g. *recent* conflict).
        - distribution (e.g. *wide-spread* hostility).

- Degree of intensification: this includes options of
    - quality (e.g. *slightly* corrupt).
    - process (e.g. *greatly* disturb).

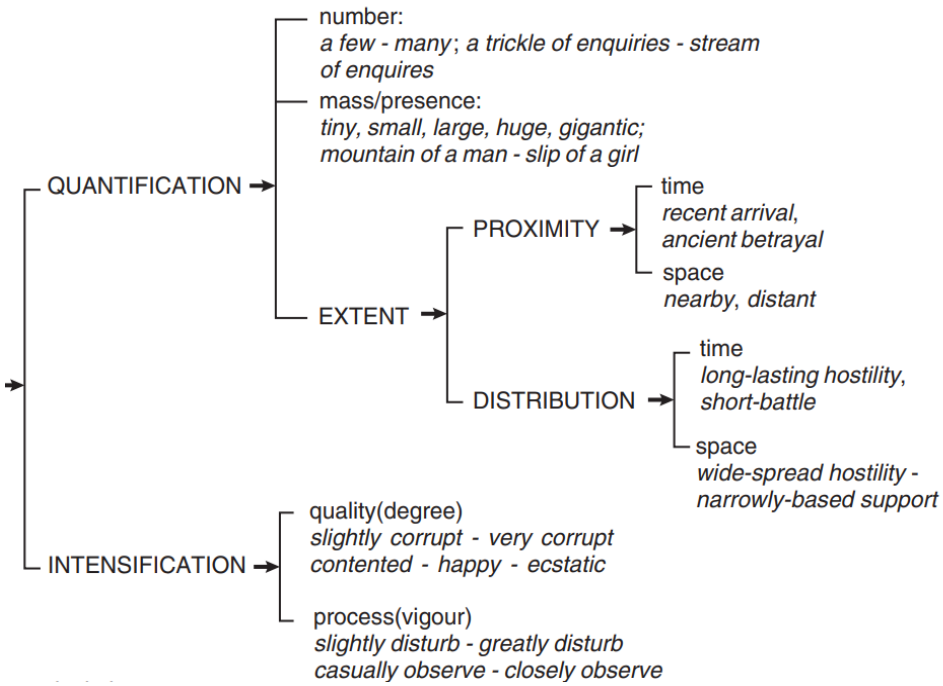


Figure 4: The categories used to track maintained or flouted options from the GRADUATION system (Adapted from Martin and White 2005, p. 154)

The following is the annotation code used in the analysis:

Italics = ATTITUDE
[J] = JUDGEMENT
[Ap] = APPRECIATION
[Af] = AFFECT
'+' = positive polarity
'-' = negative polarity
Underlined = GRADUATION: Force
Unhighlighted = faithful choices
Red-highlighted = unfaithful choices

3.4 Initial exploratory corpus analysis: A show-how integration of Voyant Tools

To complement the manual system-network coding described in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, this study incorporates a corpus-assisted layer using *Voyant Tools*. The Arabic ST corpus (4,418 tokens; 2,115 unique word forms) and the English TT corpus (6,167 tokens; 1,468 unique word forms) (Table 2), compiled by pooling the four speeches described in Section 3.1 into a single-text corpus per language, remain small, single-genre, and non-representative of

Arabic-English political translation as a whole. Accordingly, the corpus-assisted analysis is intended to serve three complementary purposes rather than to generalise beyond the dataset: (i) to provide a second, independently derived vantage point from which to triangulate the manually coded attitude and graduation findings reported in Section 4; (ii) to illustrate, for future larger-scale studies, one way in which corpus-linguistic tools can be paired with system-network analysis of appraisal resources; and (iii) to situate the present study within the corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) tradition (Landert et al., 2023), in which pre-existing theoretical categories – here, the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION systems – guide a combination of keyword, collocate, and concordance analysis that is then returned to close qualitative interpretation, aligning with a wider disciplinary move toward corpus-assisted approaches to interpersonal meaning in political discourse translation exemplified most recently by Li, Chen and Zhang's (2025) study of interpersonal commitment in Chinese-English political discourse translation.

Table 2: Corpus-level statistics for the pooled Arabic ST corpus and pooled English TT corpus (Voyant Tools)

Corpus-level measure	Arabic ST corpus	English TT corpus
Total tokens	4,418	6,167
Unique word forms (types)	2,115	1,468
Type-token ratio (vocabulary density)	0.479	0.238
Readability index	14.16	14.66
Average words per sentence	39.4	36.3

For each corpus, Voyant Tools was used to generate: (a) raw word- and type-counts, a type-token ratio (reported by Voyant as "vocabulary density"), and a standard readability index, to profile lexical variety and textual complexity; (b) ranked word-frequency lists, whose top items were manually cross-checked against the *attitude* and *graduation* annotation scheme set out above, to see whether the most frequent lexis in each corpus coincided with items independently coded as attitudinal or graduating in Section 4; and (c) a collocate profile for the node term 'Gaza'/'غزة', chosen because it anchors the shared experiential content across all four STs/TTs and because Section 4.1 identifies it as a locus of concentrated attitude and graduation resources. Word-frequency counts were generated using Voyant's default stop-word lists (English) and without stemming or lemmatisation (Arabic), so raw counts are read here as indicative of broad lexical patterning rather than as an exhaustive or normalised frequency profile; this is acknowledged as a limitation of the show-how approach and, together with the small corpus size, is a direction for lemmatised, larger-scale corpus work in future research (see Section 5).

4. Results and discussion

This section initially turns to a corpus-assisted perspective on the data (Section 4.1 and its sub-sections) before establishing the attitudinal and graduational profile of the STs and TTs through close, manual system-network coding (Sections 4.2–4.5). This sequence – moving from corpus-derived frequency and collocation patterns to close qualitative interpretation – follows the keyword-collocate-concordance workflow characteristic of corpus-assisted discourse studies (e.g. Love & Baker, 2015), as introduced methodologically in Section 3.4 and Section 4.1. Using Voyant Tools, the pooled Arabic ST corpus and pooled English TT corpus were processed to generate word-frequency lists, word clouds (cirrus), concordance lines, and collocates for the node term "Gaza"/ "غزة," and multi-word phrases carrying evaluative loading. These outputs are presented here, alongside the manual findings, both to show what an initial, automated pass over the data reveals about evaluative language independently of manual coding, and to triangulate – that is, to test through an independent method – the attitude and graduation patterns identified qualitatively.

4.1 A Voyant-based lens

Voyant's *Summary* and *Terms* tools rank each corpus's vocabulary by raw frequency. Table 3 lists the five most frequent words reported by Voyant for each corpus and marks, for each, whether it realises (or regularly collocates with) an *attitude* or *graduation* value under the coding scheme used in Section 4.2 onwards. Even at this preliminary level of analysis, the two corpora's top items are dominated by experiential participants (Gaza, occupation, people, Palestinian – Table 3) rather than by inscribed evaluative lexis – a first indication that frequency counts alone under-represent the appraisal patterning uncovered by manual coding, since evaluation in these texts is carried disproportionately by lower-frequency and multi-word items and by invoked rather than inscribed meanings.

Table 3: Five most frequent words per corpus (Voyant Summary) and their appraisal relevance

Rank	Arabic ST (gloss)	Count	Appraisal relevance (ST)	English TT	Count	Appraisal relevance (TT)
1	غزة (Gaza)	35	Experiential; evaluative node	Palestinian	60	Experiential participant
2	الاحتلال (occupation)	33	Invoked –judgement	International	54	Experiential (target of graduated calls)
3	الفلسطيني (Palestinian)	29	Experiential participant	People	43	Experiential participant
4	الشعب (people)	25	Experiential participant	Peace	40	Invoked +appreciation (target of calls)
5	الدولي (international)	25	Experiential (target of graduated calls)	Gaza	38	Experiential; evaluative node

As with Table 3, the word clouds ("Cirrus") of the top 50 terms – where item size reflects raw frequency – foreground experiential participants (*gaza/غزة, palestinian/الفلسطيني, people/الشعب*) over evaluative lexis. Figures 5 and 6 visually reinforce the case for close reading made throughout this section.



Figure 5: Top 50 terms in the Arabic STs



Figure 6: Top 50 terms in the English TTs

To shed light on high-frequency Terms carrying evaluative meaning, fuller ranked *Terms* lists (top 50 items per corpus, *n* = 50) were examined, identifying these Terms independently (Table 4). This cross-check shows that both corpora carry a comparable evaluative core, including technical terms that are attitudinally loaded – *occupation/الاحتلال*, *aggression/العدوان*, *crimes/الجرائم*, *condemn/إدانة* and *humanitarian/الإنسانية* recur in both languages – while also showing that Voyant's frequency counts cannot themselves distinguish, for example, whether an item is inscribed or invoked, positive or negative, or which subtype of graduation (force vs. focus; quantification vs. intensification) it realises. This distinction can only be made through the close, manual text analysis conducted in Section 4.2 onwards.

Table 4: Selected high-frequency evaluatively loaded Terms, Arabic ST and English TT

Arabic ST term	Gloss	Count	English TT term	Count
الاحتلال	occupation	33	occupation	31
العدوان	aggression	11	aggression	18
الإنسانية	humanitarian/humanity	15	humanitarian	25
إدانة	condemnation	7	condemn	11
جريمة	crime	6	crimes	18

الجرائم	the crimes	6	committed	9
قتل	killing	6	civilians	9
الشرعية	legitimacy	9	legitimate	10
السلام	peace	19	peace	40
الأمن	security	19	security	29
–	–	–	brutal	6
–	–	–	barbaric	5
–	–	–	genocide	3
–	–	–	catastrophe	3
–	–	–	inhumane	3

Akin to Bednarek and Taboada (2025) and Etaywe (2024b, 2024c), this article argues that in order to accurately capture the nuances of evaluative language in discourse as well as its functions, a close text analysis is key. For example, a purposive selection of concordance lines generated by Voyant for the node *Gaza/غزة*, would illustrate the range of evaluative co-text in which the node recurs (Table 5). Reading across these lines (e.g. Table 5 (a)) shows that *Gaza/غزة* is rarely evaluated directly; rather, it is the surrounding predicates and modifiers – *crime of war/جريمة حرب*, *savage massacres/المجازر الهمجية*, *humanitarian catastrophe/كارثة إنسانية* – that carry the negative judgement and appreciation, and the graduated force, that manual coding subsequently categorises by type, polarity, explicitness and subtype in Section 4.2 onwards. The same applies to the evaluation of 'Palestinian' in Table 5 (b). A concordancer can, thus, assist in locating these co-occurrences (Table 5); it cannot, on its own, classify them, which is precisely the gap the system-network analysis in this is designed to fill. This is also why the present study deliberately relies on frequency, collocation, and concordance data rather than automated sentiment or polarity scoring: as Bednarek and Taboada (2025) demonstrate, sentiment-analysis tools routinely misclassify attitude in ways that are opaque to the pragmatically complex concepts of stance and evaluation, making them unsuitable as a substitute for close reading.

Table 5: Selected concordance lines for 'Gaza'/'غزة' with evaluative co-text

(a) Arabic STs (the concordance lines are read from 'left context' first)

Left context	Node	Right context
الذي تشنه إسرائيل على قطاع	غزة	والذي يرتقي إلى جريمة حرب ،
إدانة العدوان الاسرائيلي على قطاع	غزة	وجرائم الحرب والمجازر الهمجية الوحشية
لم تتوقف الحرب الوحشية على	غزة	يجب أن تتوقف هذه الحرب .
العقلية ذاتها التي تريد تحويل	غزة	إلى مكان غير قابل للحياة
السكوت على ما يواجهه قطاع	غزة	من أوضاع كارثية تخنق الحياة
والدواء والمياه والكهرباء عن أهل	غزة	فهذا السلوك هو جريمة حرب ،

(b) English TTs

Left context	Node	Right context
brutal Israeli aggression against the	palestinian	people in the Gaza Strip

the killing and targeting of	palestinian	civilians, in a way that
occupation authorities against thousands of	palestinian	prisoners
terrorist settlers to kill the	palestinian	people and destroy their homes
committed by Israel against the	palestinian	people in all the occupied
deportation, or exile of the	palestinian	people whether within the Gaza

Taking 'Gaza'/'غزة' collocates as an example, Table 6 lists the strongest statistical collocates of the node in each corpus. In both languages the node collocates most strongly with a term for the conflict itself (*war/الحرب* in Arabic; *strip* in English, reflecting the frequent noun-phrase 'Gaza Strip') and, at lower frequencies, with explicitly evaluative items (*aggression/العدوان*, *brutal/الوحشية*, *crime/جريمة*, *crimes*, *brutal*, *humanitarian/إنسانية*) that align closely with the negative-judgement and calls-to-action patterns identified qualitatively in Sections 4.2–4.3. A further focus on evaluative words, beyond collocates, is attainable through Voyant's Phrases tool, which offers a lens on evaluatively loaded multi-word units (Table 7).

Table 6: Top collocates of 'Gaza'/'غزة', Arabic ST and English TT

Arabic collocate	Gloss	Count	English collocate	Count
الحرب	war	6	strip	17
الفلسطيني	Palestinian	5	people	7
العدوان	aggression	5	war	6
الغربية	Western/West	4	palestinian	6
الشعب	people	4	aggression	5
جريمة	crime	3	west	4
الفلسطينية	Palestinian (fem.)	3	israeli	4
الإسرائيلية	Israeli (fem.)	3	stop	3

Table 7 presents selected multi-word units from Voyant's *Phrases* tool that carry evaluative loading beyond the single-word level – the level at which graduation by intensification and quantification (Section 2.1) most often operates. Phrases such as '*العدوان الإسرائيلي الغاشم على*' ('the vicious/brutal Israeli aggression against') and '*stop the aggression on gaza*' recur as fixed rhetorical units across the speeches, again suggesting graduated force and negative judgement that only close reading, rather than frequency counts alone, can fully characterise (see Section 4.4–4.5).

Table 7: Selected evaluatively loaded phrases (multi-word units), Arabic STs and English TTs

(a) Arabic STs

Phrase	Gloss
العدوان الإسرائيلي الغاشم على	the vicious/brutal Israeli aggression against
جريمة حرب وفق	a war crime according to
ضد الشعب الفلسطيني في قطاع غزة	against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip

الاسرائيلية اللاشرعية التي تكرس الاحتلال	the illegitimate Israeli (measures) that entrench the occupation
أمام كارثة إنسانية	facing a humanitarian catastrophe

(b) English TT

Phrase
crimes committed by the colonial occupation authorities against
stop the aggression on gaza
the killing and targeting of
failure to resolve the palestinian issue
the release of prisoners and detainees

Since the article is concerned with accuracy and faithfulness to ST's choices, a corpus-assisted analysis of terms in both STs and TTs yields an indicative faithfulness signal which is worth further close text examination as demonstrated in Sub-sections 4.2–4.6. That is a finer-grained reading of the frequency data (as in Table 8 below) reveals that individual evaluative items in STs versus TTs show a systematic split. Items realising appreciation and calls to action – *peace/ السلام*, *humanitarian/ الإنسانية*, *aggression/ العدوان*, *condemn/ إدانة*, *security/ الأمن* – are consistently over-represented in the TTs, indicating that translators amplify mobilising and appeal-oriented lexis beyond what proportional translation alone would produce. By contrast, items realising explicit negative judgement of the occupying power's legal standing – *occupation/ الاحتلال*, *catastrophe/ كارثة*, *genocide/ إبادة* and *legitimacy/ الشرعية* – are systematically under-represented. This is not a uniform pattern of over- or under-translation but a directional one: legally and politically charged judgement lexis targeting the occupation's legitimacy is proportionally attenuated, even as humanitarian-appreciation and security-related graduation is proportionally heightened. This corpus-level asymmetry converges with, and lends quantitative support to, the qualitative findings in Sub-section 4.5, where omissions and softened replacements were most frequently observed for terms of legal condemnation (e.g. *occupation*, *colonial*), while additions and upscaling were more often observed for calls to peace, security, and humanitarian relief.

Table 8: Proportional scaling of evaluative lexis, Arabic ST vs. English TT

Item (ST/TT)	**ST count**	**Actual TT count**
peace / السلام	19	40
humanitarian / الإنسانية	15	25
aggression / العدوان	11	18
condemn / إدانة	7	11
security / الأمن	19	29

Item (ST/TT)	ST count	Actual TT count
جريمة+الجرائم / crime(s)	12	18
القانون / law	13	17
الوحشية / brutal	5	6
الشرعية / legitimacy	9	10
إبادة / genocide	3	3
كارثة / catastrophe	3	3
الاحتلال / occupation	33	31

Source: Voyant Tools word-frequency lists (Terms) for the pooled Arabic ST corpus and pooled English TT corpus.

To sum up this section, Section 4.1 constitutes an initial, exploratory corpus pass across both corpora. Word- and phrase-frequency lists, concordance lines, collocates, and word clouds all converge on a shared evaluative core (occupation, aggression, crimes, condemnation, humanitarian appeals) that is broadly stable across the Arabic STs and English TTs. However, none of these automated outputs can, on their own, determine *attitude* type (affect, judgement or appreciation), *polarity* (positive or negative), *explicitness* (inscribed or invoked), or *graduation* subtype (force vs. focus; quantification vs. intensification) – nor can they detect the additions, omissions, and scaling shifts between ST and TT that are the primary object of this study. This is precisely the gap that motivates the close, manual system-network analysis of attitude and graduation conducted in the remaining Sub-sections 4.2–4.5, to which the corpus-assisted patterns identified here are returned, and against which they are triangulated, in Sub-section 4.6.

In the remaining part of Section 4, the article argues that the TTs generally show a reproduction of the STs' judgmental language towards events, actions, and political entities involved in the Israeli aggression on Gaza, shaping both narrative and stance. This section presents and discusses findings on the TTs' overall attitudinal profile (Sub-section 4.2) compared to the STs, followed by the accuracy and shifts in translating lexical indicators of attitude (Sub-section 4.3). Sub-section 4.4 covers the graduation profile, and Sub-section 4.5 examines accuracy and adjustments in translating indicators of rhetorical force (i.e. GRADUATION).

4.2 Overall attitudinal profile

The TTs closely mirror the STs' use of evaluatively loaded language, consistent with Munday (2018). These lexical choices predominantly express negative polarity, particularly in references to the situation in Gaza and Israeli violations, while positive polarity appears mostly in greetings, conclusions, or supportive stances (e.g. 'condemning' aggression, 'supporting' UNRWA). Lexical choices are categorised under JUDGEMENT (Example 1), APPRECIATION (Example 2), and AFFECT (Example 3). For instance, like ST1, TT1 includes 164

attitudinal expressions, primarily JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION invoking JUDGEMENT. Most appear once (e.g. *heinous, discriminatory, legitimate*), but some recur frequently as they align with the discursive functions of the speeches: *condemn (25), call on (21), emphasise (20), support (6), illegal (6), reject (5), stress (5), aggressive (5), brutal (3), barbaric (3), inhumane (3), denounce (2), warn (2)*.

> (1) ... We express our joint stance in **condemning** [+J] the brutal Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people
>
> (2) We affirm the **necessity** [+Ap] of supporting the United Nations Relief
>
> (3) We stress that the continuation of the Israeli occupation is a **threat** [-Af] to the security and stability of the region

Repetition of such attitudinal expressions in TT1 serves rhetorical functions central to the summit context: emphasis, reinforcement, clarity, emotional appeal, and mobilisation. Strong evaluative language like *brutal, illegal,* and *barbaric* underscores the seriousness of the situation. Repetition reinforces the conveners' stance and commitment, solidifying their message (e.g. Example 4) and rejecting opposing narratives (Example 5). It also clarifies grievances, leaving no ambiguity about their position.

> (4) their **legitimate** [+Ap invoking +J] struggle to liberate all their occupied territories…
>
> (5) … **Reject** [+J invoking -Ap] describing this retaliatory war as self-defence or justifying it under any pretext.

In addition to the repeated expressions, the repetition of semantic choices from the ATTITUDE system also operates to appeal to the international players and audience ethics and emotions and galvanise support for the conveners' position. For example, by employing words like 'inhumane,' and 'disastrous,' the conveners appeal to the emotions of their audience, eliciting feelings of outrage, empathy, and urgency for compassionate actions based on humanity ethics. Repetition of evaluative words and expressions serve to emphasise the core purpose of the summit, which is to rally support from other international community, stakeholders and participants at the summit to meet the 'immediate' needs, including the need for launching a serious peace process to establish the two-state solution (Example 6). By maintaining these evaluative choices in the TTs, translators sustain the rhetorical functions of alignment and bonding with the intended audience, reinforcing shared moral stances and affective solidarity. The repetition of attitudinal choices serves to amplify the conveners' message, reinforce their convictions, and mobilise support for their cause (e.g. finding a comprehensive solution), hence making it a crucial rhetorical strategy in diplomatic discourse. Maintaining evaluative consistency in the

TTs preserves rhetorical functions of alignment and solidarity, amplifying the message and enhancing its persuasive impact (see 4.4 for more on amplification).

> (6) *Emphasise* the *immediate need* for the international community to launch a serious peace process to establish a two-state solution

TT2 also reflects the Saudi Crown Prince's ST, which includes 30 attitudinally charged expressions, though with lower frequency due to the ST's brevity. These include JUDGEMENT (*rejection x3, condemnation x2, violations x1, failure x1*), APPRECIATION (*humanitarian x5, guarantee x1*), and AFFECT (*painful x1, threatens x1*). They highlight the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza (Example 7), the Security Council's failure to hold Israel accountable (Example 8), and the need for humanitarian aid to alleviate Palestinian suffering (Example 9). The speech appeals to ethics and emotions, aligning with audiences through JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION-invoking-JUDGEMENT, and AFFECT (e.g. *painful, ruthless, our brothers*).

> (7) …. to bring **humanitarian** [+Ap] and relief aid and secure medical supplies for the sick and injured people in Gaza.
>
> (8) We are witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe that demonstrates the **failure** [-J] of the Security Council and the international community
>
> (9) This summit is held as we witness extraordinary and **painful** [-Af] circumstances. ……. rejection of the **ruthless** [-Af] war to which **our brothers** in Palestine are subjected.

TT3, translating King Abdullah II of Jordan's speech, includes 36 attitudinal expressions with wide lexical range across JUDGEMENT (*injustice x2, brutality x2, failure x1*), APPRECIATION (*ugly, fortress*), and AFFECT (*painful, terrible, catastrophic, tragedies*). The ST condemns Israel's repeated injustices (Example 10), describes Gaza's decline under Israel's fortress mentality (Example 11), and calls for action in the face of the catastrophic situation (Example 12). These evaluative choices emphasise urgency, reinforce the moral argument, and foster emotional engagement.

> (10) This **injustice**[-J] did not begin a month ago.
>
> (11) It is the same mentality that seeks to turn Gaza into an **unliveable** [-Ap invoking -Af] place.
>
> (12) We cannot be silent over the **catastrophic** [-Ap invoking -Af] situation in the Gaza Strip, which **suffocates** [-Af] life and prevents the delivery of medicines.

ST4 and TT4 include 142 attitudinal expressions each, primarily denoting JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION-invoking- JUDGEMENT and to a lesser degree AFFECT. Similar to TT1, most of these occur once or twice (e.g. brutal, condemnations, apartheid, genocide or catastrophe); yet certain expressions are repeated more to reinforce the conveyed message as explained in TT1. For instance, aggression (6), occupation (11), crime (4), support (6) brotherly (6) or just

(7) denote the recurrent emphasis on expressing APPRECIATION invoking JUDGEMENT as in 13-14 below. It serves to mobilise forces while still highlighting the strong connections with the Palestinian people, repeatedly expressing them through APPRECIATION invoking AFFECT as in 14.

> (13) This is what we have repeatedly warned against if the brutal [-Ap invoking -J] war on Gaza doesn't end.
>
> (14) The international community bears responsibility for the consequences of what is happening to the brotherly [+Ap invoking +Af] Palestinian people.

By being predominantly faithful to the STs' JUDGEMENT-, APPRECIATION-, and AFFECT-loaded expressions, the TTs respectively, successfully operate to stress the convenors' value judgements, condemnation, appreciation, and calls to action. That is, the TTs reflect the value judgements on various issues, condemning acts of violence, discrimination and aggression while affirming principles of justice, peace, and self-determination. These value judgments serve to position the convenors' message within a moral framework and establish a basis for its arguments and proposed actions. Furthermore, the TTs also reflect the STs' calls to action, urging the international community to intervene, condemn certain behaviours, and take concrete steps to address the crisis. These calls to action aim to mobilise support and cooperation in pursuing the objectives outlined in the text. Regarding condemnation and appreciation, the TTs also condemn "brutal Israeli aggression," and "heinous crimes" committed against the Palestinian people. These APPRECIATION (invoking JUDGEMENT) expressions of condemnation in the TTs successfully serve to underscore the severity and moral reprehensibility of the actions being criticised in the STs. Regarding the TTs reflection of the STs use of AFFECT-loaded expressions, TTs successfully serve to use equivalent expressions that evoke strong emotional responses and convey the gravity of the situation and consequences on security – evoking a sense of insecurity, "real danger," "humanitarian catastrophe," and its "disastrous repercussions" of certain actions. Ultimately, the TTs' successful alignment with the STs' evaluative language ensures the preservation of rhetorical impact, enabling the texts to function as instruments of diplomatic solidarity, emotional appeal, and collective moral positioning. The equivalent choice of attitudinal expressions also maintains the heightening of the sense of urgency and emphasise the dire consequences of inaction or failure to address the issues at hand.

The TTs' faithfulness to STs' JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION, and AFFECT ensures the transmission of value judgements, condemnation, and calls to action. These include criticism of violence, discrimination, and aggression, and affirmations of justice, peace, and self-determination. Condemnatory expressions like *brutal Israeli aggression* and *heinous crimes* (APPRECIATION invoking JUDGEMENT) underscore the moral reprehensibility of Israeli actions. AFFECT-laden language conveys urgency and consequences, e.g. *real danger, humanitarian catastrophe, disastrous repercussions*.

Ultimately, the TTs' alignment with STs' evaluative stance sustains rhetorical impact, functioning as instruments of diplomatic solidarity, emotional appeal, and collective moral positioning. The consistent use of attitudinal expressions enhances the urgency of the message and stresses the dire implications of inaction.

4.3 Accuracy and adjustment observed in the translation of lexical indicators of attitude

The findings accord with the general trend of adjustments identified in the literature (e.g. Munday 2012b, 2015, 2018). The analysis reveals four instances of addition, and several omissions and adjustments in the human translation, especially in ST1 and ST4. In terms of addition, unlike the machine translation, the human translation of ST1 includes the attitudinally loaded word *"rejecting"* and omits the conjunction *'or'* (Example 15). While this might reinforce the convenors' stance against discrimination, it compromises fidelity to the source text. The machine translation is more accurate in this case. Such additions serve as bonding resources, aligning the translation more strongly with the moral stance of the convenors – but at the cost of textual faithfulness. A similar situation occurs in TT4 in 16 in which the human translator adds the attitudinally loaded words in 'unfolding' and 'forcibly'. In 'unfolding genocidal war' in particular, this attitudinal option goes along with the intensive racial tone in reference to genocide as opposed to the more general term used by the machine 'extermination', which will be examined in more detail when analysing adjustment in this section.

(15)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
والتأكيد على ضرورة اتخاذ المجتمع الدولي خطوات فورية وسريعة لوقف قتل المدنيين الفلسطينيين واستهدافهم، وبما يؤكد أن لا فرق على الإطلاق بين حياة وحياة، أو تمييز على أساس الجنسية أو العرق أو الدين	and emphasize the immediate and swift steps the international community must take to cease the killing and targeting of Palestinian civilians, in a way that confirms the absolute equivalence of every single life, *rejecting* [addition] any discrimination based on nationality, race, or religion.	and emphasizing the need for the international community to take immediate and rapid steps to stop the killing and targeting of Palestinian civilians, in a way that confirms that there is absolutely no difference between life and life, or *discrimination* on the basis of nationality, or race or religion.

(16)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
يتحمل المجتمع الدولي تبعات ما يحدث للشعب الفلسطيني الشقيق الذي يتعرض لحرب إبادة ترتب عليها سقوط أكثر من 41 ألف شهيد حتى الآن عدا المفقودين تحت الأنقاض من بينهم 17 ألف طفل، و 11 ألف امرأة، ومائة ألف مصاب بينهم آلاف المصابين بإعاقة، وتشريد الملايين عدة مرات،	The international community bears responsibility for the consequences of what is happening to the brotherly Palestinian people who are subjected to *unfolding* (addition) genocidal war that has resulted, so far, in the death of more than 41 thousand martyrs, let alone the missing under the rubble, including seventeen thousand children, eleven thousand women and one hundred thousand wounded including thousands of disabled and millions of people who were *forcibly* (addition) displaced several times,	The international community bears responsibility for what is happening to the brotherly Palestinian people, who are being subjected to a war of extermination that has resulted in the death of more than 41,000 martyrs so far, in addition to those missing under the rubble, including 17,000 children and 11,000 women, and 100,000 injured, among them thousands with disabilities. Millions have been displaced multiple times,

In terms of omissions, they are more frequent. In ST1, the human TT deletes the evaluative word *'real'* from "in serious and *real* peace process," accurately retained in the machine translation (Example 17). This removal may downplay the emphasis on *real* actions needed to address aggression. In Text 2-TT, the omission of *'affirms'* from "The Kingdom affirms its categorical rejection…" (Example 18) weakens the force of Saudi Arabia's stance, shifting it from asserting a position to merely enacting it. The machine translation of this text tends to preserve both meaning and structure more faithfully.

(17)

التأكيد على ضرورة تحرك المجتمع الدولي فوريا لإطلاق عملية سلمية جادة وحقيقية لفرض السلام على اساس حل الدولتين الذي يلبي جميع الحقوق المشروعة للشعب الفلسطيني	Emphasize the immediate need for the international community to launch a *serious* peace process to establish a two-state solution that fulfils all legitimate rights of the Palestinian people…	Emphasizing the need for the international community to move immediately to launch a *serious and real* peace process to impose peace on the basis of a two-state solution that meets all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people…

(18)

أصحاب الجلالة والفخامة والسمو والدولة تؤكد المملكة *رفضها القاطع* لاستمرار العدوان والاحتلال والتهجير القسري لسكان غزة، كما تؤكد تحميل سلطات الاحتلال مسؤولية الجرائم المرتكبة بحق الشعب الفلسطيني ومقدراته.	Your Excellencies, The Kingdom [deletion] *categorically rejects* the continued *aggression*, *occupation* and *forced displacement* of the population of Gaza. It also firmly holds the *occupation* authorities *responsible* for the crimes committed against the Palestinian people and their infrastructure.	Your Majesties, Excellencies, Highnesses and State The Kingdom affirms its *categorical rejection* of the continued *aggression*, *occupation*, and *forced displacement* of the population of Gaza, and affirms that it holds the *occupation* authorities responsible for the crimes committed against the Palestinian people and their capabilities.

In Text 3, the human TT omits *'brothers'* in reference to Palestinians (Example 19), erasing a key affiliative term that invokes Arab and Muslim solidarity: "our Palestinian brothers." Example 20 further shows deletion of *"bias towards"*, erasing a positive JUDGEMENT about the UN General Assembly's stance on Palestinian rights. These omitted tokens are crucial for invoking moral obligation, shared ethics, and collective identity. Their absence reduces the affiliative impact of the discourse.

(19)

وسيواصل الأردن القيام بواجبه في إرسال *المساعدات* الإنسانية *للأشقاء* الفلسطينيين بكل الوسائل الممكنة.	Jordan will continue to undertake its duty in dispatching humanitarian *aid* to the Palestinians [deletion: brothers] through any means available.	Jordan will continue to carry out its duty to send humanitarian *aid* to our Palestinian *brothers* by all possible means.

(20)

الإخوة القادة، لقد كان قرار الجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة بشأن غزة *انتصارا* للقيم الإنسانية، *وانحيازا* للحق في الحياة والسلام، وإجماعا عالميا برفض الحرب، وهو قرار جاء بجهد عربي *مشترك*	My brothers, The United Nations General Assembly's decision on Gaza was a *victory* for humanitarian values and [deletion] for the right to life and peace. It was a worldwide rejection of the war, and a result of *joint* Arab action.	Brothers leaders, The United Nations General Assembly's resolution on Gaza was a *victory* for human values, *a bias towards* the right to life and peace, and a global consensus to reject war. It is a decision that came from a *joint* Arab effort.

As for adjustments in the human translator's TT, these appear through three main mechanisms:

1. Polarity shifts: In Example 21 (TT1), the translator replaces *'enforce'* in "to enforce peace" with the more neutral *'establish'* and omits *'peace'*. The machine translation preserves polarity more accurately with *'impose'*, aligning with the ST and the correct collocation *"peace enforcement."*

(21)

ST	Human Translation	Machine Translation
التأكيد على ضرورة تحرك المجتمع الدولي فوريا لإطلاق عملية سلمية جادة وحقيقية *لفرض* السلام على اساس حل الدولتين الذي يلبي جميع الحقوق المشروعة للشعب الفلسطيني	Emphasize the immediate need for the international community to launch a serious peace process to *establish* a two-state solution that fulfils all legitimate rights of the Palestinian people...	Emphasizing the need for the international community to move immediately to launch a serious and real peace process to *impose peace* on the basis of a two-state solution that meets all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people..

2. Replacement of loaded nominal groups: In Example 22 (TT1), *"the need for"* is replaced by *"must"*, maintaining intensity but altering the structure. Similarly, in Example 23, *'necessity'* is replaced by *'importance'*, a less precise equivalent. In Example 24, *'systematic'* becomes *'deliberate'*, softening the negative JUDGEMENT on Israel's policies. This also occurs in 25 (TT4), where 'indispensable' becomes 'irreplaceable.' These shifts subtly reshape evaluative stance and reader alignment.

Example 26, however, showcases this replacement but in a more attitudinally loaded tone in ‘circumventions’ compared with the more neutral ‘roundabout’ in machine translation.

(22)

إدانة قتل المدنيين واستهدافهم، موقفا مبدئيا منطلقا من قيمنا *الإنسانية ومنسجماً مع القانون الدولي والقانون الدولي الإنساني*، والتأكيد على *ضرورة* اتخاذ المجتمع الدولي خطوات *فورية وسريعة* لوقف قتل المدنيين الفلسطينيين واستهدافهم،	*Condemn* the killing and targeting of civilians, as a principled stance based on our *humanitarian* values and *in line with international law and humanitarian principles*, and emphasize the *immediate* and *swift* steps the international community *must take* to cease the killing and targeting of Palestinian civilians,	*Condemning* the killing and targeting of civilians, a principled position based on our *humanitarian* values and *consistent with international law and international humanitarian law*, and emphasizing the *need for* the international community to take *immediate* and *rapid* steps to stop the killing and targeting of Palestinian civilians,

(23)

ادانة الاعتداءات الاسرائيلية على المقدسات الاسلامية والمسيحية في القدس، واجراءات إسرائيل *اللاشرعية* التي تنتهك حرية العبادة، وتأكيد *ضرورة* احترام الوضع القانوني والتاريخي القائم في المقدسات،	*Condemn* the Israeli assaults on Jerusalem’s Islamic and Christian holy sites and the Israeli *illegitimate* measures which violate freedom of worship; emphasize the *importance* of respecting the existing legal and historic status quo in the holy sites…	*Condemning* the Israeli attacks on the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and Israel’s *illegal* measures that violate freedom of worship, and affirming the *necessity* of respecting the existing legal and historical status in the holy sites…

(24)

التشديد على أن عدم إيجاد حل للقضية الفلسطينية على مدار ما يزيد عن 75 عاماً، وعدم التصدي لجرائم *الاحتلال الاستعماري* الإسرائيلي وسياساته *الممنهجة* لتقويض حل الدوليتين	Emphasize that the failure to resolve the Palestinian cause over more than 75 years, the lack of response to the Israeli *colonial occupation*'s crimes, its *deliberate* policies undermining the two-state solution…	Emphasizing the failure to find a solution to the Palestinian issue for more than 75 years, and the failure to address the crimes of the Israeli *colonial occupation* and its *systematic* policies to undermine the two-state solution…

(25)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
ورفعنا أيضًا من مستوى دعمنا لوكالة الأونروا؛ هذه الوكالة الدولية التي لا يمكن الاستغناء عن خدماتها،	and increasing our support to UNRWA, an irreplaceable international agency whose services are indispensable	and increased our support for UNRWA; this indispensable international agency,

(26)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
إنه النهج الذي يريد تفصيل المنطقة كلها على قياس إسرائيل، ويبحث عن طرق *التفافية* لتجنب إنهاء الاحتلال وفرض حكم شعب على شعب آخر بالقوة	It is the approach that wants to tailor the entire region to fit Israel's size, while looking for *circumventions* to avoid ending the occupation and work on imposing the rule of one people over another by force.	It is the approach that seeks to mold the entire region to Israel's specifications and looks for *roundabout* ways to avoid ending the occupation and imposing the rule of one people over another by force.

3. Thematic re-structuring: Many loaded lexical items in theme position – *'supporting,' 'rejecting,' 'emphasising,' 'affirming,' 'condemning,' 'warning'* – are recast into *"We + process"* structures, transferring the attitudinal load into the verb rather than the foregrounded circumstance. For instance, in Example 27, *"Warning of the disastrous repercussions…"* becomes *"We warn of…"* only in the human TT. Such structural changes reduce the immediate moral orientation foregrounded in the original text.

(27)

وإذ نحذر من التداعيات الكارثية للعدوان الانتقامي الذي تشنه إسرائيل على قطاع غزة، والذي يرتقي إلى جريمة حرب جماعية، نقرر	We *warn* of the disastrous repercussions of the retaliatory aggression by Israel against the Gaza Strip, which amounts to a war crime… We decide…	*Warning* of the *disastrous* repercussions of the *retaliatory* aggression launched by Israel against the Gaza Strip, which amounts to a mass war crime… We decide…

This section has illustrated that additions, omissions, and replacements in human translations influence evaluative alignment. While these often align with the ST's stance against aggression in Gaza, the absence or presence of attitudinal lexis and thematic foregrounding significantly affects how the TT constructs shared values, invites moral alignment, and builds solidarity. Overall, the strategic deployment – and modification – of JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION, and AFFECT-loaded expressions continually shapes perception, emotional engagement, and support for the convenors' position. By preserving moral framing and appealing to shared values, the TTs aim to elicit compassion, condemn injustice, and mobilise collective action.

4.4 Overall GRADUATION profile

The analysis reveals frequent use of explicit *force* (a GRADUATION feature) to intensify speakers' statements – both positive and negative (e.g. "*the only way* to achieve security, peace and stability is by ending the occupation…"; "*barbaric* crimes") – aligning with previous findings (e.g. Munday 2015). The translation of ST1 (the longest text) contains 38 such expressions, while ST2 and ST3 each contain 22. Interestingly, the second longest text-ST4- contains the most cases of force expressions with 59 examples of both positive and negative polarity; yet all of which aligning with the messages conveyed with the other STs.

Across the texts, expressions of *quantification* and *intensification* are prevalent:

(i) Degrees of quantification:
   a. Number (e.g. "crimes…committed…against thousands of Palestinian prisoners")
   b. Mass (e.g. "a major conflict")
   c. Extent:

i. extent of proximity (e.g. “occupied since 1967”; “failure…over more than 75 years”)
ii. extent of distribution (e.g. “…consequences will affect the whole world”)

(ii) Degrees of intensification:
a. Quality (e.g. “heinous crimes”)
b. Process (e.g. “categorically rejects the continued aggression”)
c. Distribution (e.g. “comprehensive destruction”; “…threatens global security and stability”)

Table 9 presents further examples from each ST/TT, illustrating how quantification and intensification emphasise severity and urgency. The TTs largely preserve these GRADUATION features, replicating the rhetorical impact and reinforcing a shared emotional and ideological stance with the target audience. By largely maintaining the STs’ rhetorical force, the TTs convey equivalent intensity and stance. However, some adjustments are observed. The next section explores these in detail.

Table 9: The rhetorical force features (underlined) and example expressions identified in the STs/TTs

Features	TT1	TT2	TT3	TT4
Quantification of number	...constitute a sole geographical unit	thousands of unarmed civilians	over seven decades	Millions of people
Quantification of mass	Disastrous repercussions; serious threat; collective punishment; humanitarian catastrophe	extraordinary and painful circumstances	a major conflict	a major scandal
Quantification of extent: proximity	...occupied since 1967	Continued aggression; unremitting efforts	...whose consequences will affect the entire world; a continuation of over seven decades	since the beginning of the crisis
Quantification of extent: distribution	nearly one and a half million Palestinians	threatens global security	the majority of whose victims are innocent civilians; the world will pay the price of failure; worldwide rejection of the war	global challenges
Intensification of quality	inhumane and brutal massacres; heinous crimes	flagrant Israeli violations; "ruthless war"	terrible destruction	blatant aggression
Intensification of process	perpetuate the occupation; complete and absolute rejection (nominalised processes)	continuously consulted and coordinated	must stop immediately; cannot be silent; the world must condemn	This systematic destructive war must stop

4.5 Accuracy and adjustment observed in the translation of rhetorical force choices

The analysis shows that the translations of rhetorical GRADUATION features – specifically quantification and intensification – are largely accurate and maintain the persuasive and emotive force of the original source texts (STs). Adjustments, however, were also identified. Section 4.5.1 presents the accuracy and maintained rhetorical effects, while Section 4.5.2 addresses identified adjustments.

4.5.1 Accuracy in the translation of GRADUATION features, and maintained rhetorical functions

The translators consistently reproduced the STs' rhetorical strategies involving degrees of quantification and intensification, preserving their persuasive impact, emotional appeal, and clarity. This faithful rendering helps sustain the texts' ideological position and mobilises the reader toward empathetic and moral engagement.

In TT1, quantification of number is preserved through phrases like *"over seven decades"* and *"since 1967,"* stressing the duration and continuity of injustice. Extent is similarly conveyed through expressions like *"a sole geographical unit"* and *"nearly one and a half million Palestinians,"* reinforcing the scale of the issues. Intensification of quality (e.g. *"inhumane and brutal massacres," "heinous crimes"*) and process (e.g. *"complete and absolute rejection"*) sharpens the moral condemnation and emotional urgency. TT2 likewise maintains quantification of number via phrases such as *"thousands of unarmed civilians,"* highlighting mass suffering. Quantification of extent (e.g. *"continued aggression,"*) underscores both regional severity and global implications. Quality-based intensifiers such as *"ruthless war"* and *"flagrant Israeli violations"* heighten moral criticism, while intensification of process (e.g. *"continuously consulted and coordinated"*) underscores the strategic gravity and urgency of political responses.

All four TTs accurately retain quantification of mass, as in *"disastrous repercussions," "serious threat,"* and *"extraordinary and painful circumstances."* These lexical choices amplify the scale and emotional gravity of the situation. References to *"collective punishment"* reinforce a shared moral duty to recognise and act on violations of International Humanitarian Law. The framing of issues through terms like *"a major conflict"* constructs the discourse as globally significant and urgent.

Faithful translation of GRADUATION resources across the TTs helps achieve critical rhetorical functions. TT3 exemplifies these across five key areas:

- Maintaining emphasis and intensity: e.g. *"painful humanitarian tragedy," "terrible destruction"* accentuate suffering and draw moral attention.
- Maintaining rhetorical effectiveness: e.g. *"over seven decades"* emphasises historical continuity and entrenched injustice.
- Maintaining moral and ethical appeal: e.g. *"just and legitimate cause," "victory for humanitarian values"* frame the discourse in universal ethical terms.
- Maintaining the call for action: e.g. *"must stop immediately," "cannot be silent"* function as urgent imperatives.
- Maintaining responsibility and accountability: e.g. *"war crimes," "condemn," "hold accountable"* frame the discourse in legal and moral terms, demanding justice and compliance with international norms.

Despite this overall fidelity, some adjustments in the TTs are observed and will be discussed in the following sub-section.

4.5.2 Adjustments observed in the translation of the rhetorical force choices

The main adjustments observed in the TTs involved the addition, omission, strengthening, weakening, and replacement of scaling. Replacement (6), omission (5) and addition (5) were the most frequent adjustments which aligns with Meng's (2022) identified forms of force adjustment. Such changes alter the original rhetorical force of evaluative statements and were most prevalent in TT1, with eight instances, followed by TT4 with six instances while TT2 and TT3 have two and three instances respectively.

4.5.2.1 Addition of scaling

Addition of scaling refers to instances where the translator introduces upscaling, downscaling, or maximising that is not present in the source text (ST). For example, unlike the accurate machine translation, the translator in TT1 adds the word "sole" to the phrase "the exclusive *sole* legitimate authority" in 28. Adding "sole" after "exclusive" enhances the rhetorical force by emphasising the exclusivity and singular authority of the Jordanian Awqaf and the Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department in managing and regulating access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The inclusion of "sole" reinforces the idea that no other legitimate authority exists apart from the mentioned entities. It highlights their unique and unparalleled role in overseeing the affairs of the mosque, thereby strengthening the argument against any interference or encroachment by other parties. By emphasising exclusivity through the term "sole," the statement becomes more assertive and authoritative, leaving no room for ambiguity or alternative interpretations. It underscores the importance of upholding the established authority and custodianship, thereby increasing the overall rhetorical force of the sentence – albeit unfaithfully to the ST. Similarly, TT4 reveals four instances of addition of scaling including example 29 below. In this particular instance, the human translator adds 'firmly' to intensify consolidate in a way increasing the rhetorical force of this concluding sentences of the TT4. This is not the case with the machine translation, which proved to be more faithful.

(28)

وأن إدارة أوقاف القدس وشؤون المسجد الأقصى المبارك الأردنية هي الجهة *الشرعية الحصرية* صاحبة الاختصاص بإدارة المسجد الأقصى المبارك وصيانته وتنظيم الدخول إليه	...with the Jordanian Awqaf and the Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department being *the exclusive sole legitimate* authority responsible for managing, maintaining, and regulating access to Al Aqsa Mosque...	The Jordanian Department of Jerusalem Endowments and the Affairs of the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque is the *exclusive legal authority* with jurisdiction to manage the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, maintain it, and regulate access to it...

(29)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
وختامًا نؤكد أن دولة قطر لن تدخر وسعًا في العمل مع شركائها الدوليين ومنظمة الأمم المتحدة لتوطيد أركان السلم والأمن والتنمية المستدامة وحقوق الإنسان وسيادة القانون على جميع المستويات والتصدي للتحديات العالمية من أجل تحقيق مستقبل أفضل للجميع.	Finally, we affirm that the State of Qatar will spare no effort in working with its international partners and the United Nations to firmly consolidate the pillars of peace, security, sustainable development, human rights and the rule of law at all levels and to address global challenges in order to achieve a better future for all.	In conclusion, we affirm that the State of Qatar will spare no effort in working with its international partners and the United Nations to *strengthen* the foundations of peace, security, sustainable development, human rights, and the rule of law at all levels, and to address global challenges in order to achieve a better future for all.

4.5.2.2 Omission of scaling

Omission of scaling refers to cases where a translator decides to exclude an instance of upscaling, downscaling, or maximising that was present in the source text (ST). For example, unlike the accurate machine translation, the translator in TT1 deletes the word “mass” from the phrase “retaliatory aggression launched by Israel against the Gaza Strip, which amounts to a *mass* war crime” (Example 30). Deleting “mass” alters the rhetorical force by reducing the emphasis on the scale or magnitude of the war crime. Without “mass,” the focus shifts slightly from the extensive nature of the war crime to the fact that it remains a war crime, albeit without highlighting its scale. The term “mass” conveys a sense of enormity and widespread impact, implying that the war crime affects a large number of people or has significant consequences. Its removal diminishes the emphasis on the sheer scale of the crime, potentially making the statement appear less forceful or urgent. Overall, the omission of scaling – as exemplified by the removal of “mass” – reduces the rhetorical force by downplaying the portrayal of the war crime as a large-scale, impactful event, which may affect how the audience perceives the severity of the situation.

(30)

وإذ نحذر من التداعيات الكارثية للعدوان الانتقامي الذي تشنه إسرائيل على قطاع غزة، والذي يرتقي إلى جريمة حرب جماعية، وما ترتكبه خلاله من جرائم همجية أيضا في الضفة الغربية والقدس الشريف،	We *warn* of the *disastrous* repercussions of the *retaliatory* aggression by Israel against the Gaza Strip, which amounts to a war crime, and the *barbaric crimes* committed also in the West Bank and Al-Quds Al-Sharif…	*Warning* of the *disastrous* repercussions of the *retaliatory* aggression launched by Israel against the Gaza Strip, which amounts to a mass war crime, and the *barbaric crimes* it also commits during it in the West Bank and Holy Jerusalem…

A similar impact of omission of scaling appears in TT2, where the translator, unlike the machine translation, deletes the word "categorical" from the phrase "we affirm our condemnation and *categorical* rejection" (Example 31). This omission removes the ST's emphasis on the rejection and condemnation of the barbaric war against Palestine. It eliminates a marker of an absolute and unequivocal stance that could leave no room for doubt or ambiguity among the TT's audience regarding the position taken towards the war. That is, without "categorical," the rejection and condemnation may still be clear, but the statement loses some of the forcefulness and assertiveness conveyed in the ST. It may appear slightly less definitive and decisive, potentially weakening the overall impact of the message.

(31)

يأتي انعقاد هذه القمة في ظروف استثنائية ومؤلمة، ونؤكد في هذا الصدد إدانتنا ورفضنا القاطع لهذه الحرب الشعواء	This summit is held as we witness *extraordinary* and *painful* circumstances. In this regard, we affirm our *condemnation* and *rejection* of the *ruthless* war…	The holding of this summit comes in *exceptional* and *painful* circumstances, and in this regard we affirm our *condemnation* and *categorical rejection* of this *barbaric* war…

Another notable omission in TT2 is the deletion of the word "collective" from the phrase "Therefore, it requires a coordinated *collective* effort" (Example 32). Removing "collective" from the statement weakens the emphasis on collaborative action and shared responsibility in addressing the humanitarian catastrophe. The term "collective" implies that action must be undertaken jointly by multiple parties, highlighting the need for cooperation and unity among various entities or individuals. It underscores the notion that resolving the situation requires a concerted effort from all concerned. By omitting "collective," the statement loses this emphasis on shared responsibility and collaboration. It may suggest a more individualistic approach or imply that action can be taken by a single entity or group alone, thereby weakening the sense of urgency and mutual obligation conveyed in the original statement.

(32)

ولذلك فإن الأمر يتطلب منا جميعاً جهداً جماعياً منسقاً للقيام بتحرك فعّال لمواجهة هذا الوضع *المؤسف*،	Therefore, we are required to exert *coordinated* effort and take effective action to confront this *unfortunate* situation.	Therefore, it requires a *coordinated collective* effort from all of us to take effective action to confront... This is an *unfortunate* situation.

Another interesting instance of omission appears in TT3, where the translator deletes the word "consensus" from the phrase "a global [or a worldwide] *consensus* to reject war" (Example 33). Faithfully retaining the word "consensus" implies a widespread extent of agreement or unity among nations or entities worldwide in opposing war. It suggests that the rejection of war is a shared belief or principle upheld by the majority of countries or stakeholders across the globe. Conversely, omitting "consensus" reduces the statement to merely indicating that the rejection of war is happening on a global scale, without necessarily implying a unified agreement among nations or entities. Maintaining the ST's lexical choice would preserve the sense of a more coordinated and collective global stance.

(33)

الإخوة القادة، لقد كان قرار الجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة بشأن غزة *انتصارا* للقيم الإنسانية، *وانحيازا للحق* في الحياة والسلام، وإجماعا عالميا برفض الحرب، وهو قرار جاء بجهد عربي *مشترك*	My brothers, The United Nations General Assembly's decision on Gaza was a *victory* for humanitarian values and for the right to life and peace. It was a worldwide rejection of the war, and a result of *joint* Arab action.	Brothers leaders, The United Nations General Assembly's resolution on Gaza was a *victory* for human values, *a bias towards* the right to life and peace, and a global consensus to reject war. It is a decision that came from a *joint* Arab effort.

4.5.2.3 Strengthened scaling

Strengthened scaling occurs when a translator enhances or amplifies the degree of scaling compared to what was originally presented in the source text. For example, in TT1, the translator strengthens the connotations of exclusivity and uniqueness by using the word "sole" instead of "single" in the phrase "their occupied territories since 1967, which constitute *a single* geographical unit" (Example 34). In this context, "a single geographical unit" emphasises that all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are considered one unified geographical entity. This phrase suggests that, despite being geographically separate, these territories are interconnected and interdependent, particularly in terms of their political, social, and economic dynamics. It implies that the various regions under Israeli

occupation are treated as a unified whole, sharing common experiences, challenges, and aspirations – an idea emphasised in both the source text and the machine-translated version. By using "sole geographical unit," the statement carries a stronger connotation of exclusivity and uniqueness compared to "single." The word "sole" suggests that there is only one geographical unit comprising the territories occupied since 1967. It implies that these territories are indivisible and should be treated as a singular entity in discussions and resolutions related to the Palestinian cause.

(34)

وجرائم الاحتلال الإسرائيلي وحق الشعب الفلسطيني *بالحرية والاستقلال* في جميع أراضيه *المحتلة* منذ العام 1967، والتي تشكل وحدة جغرافية واحدة،	...the *crimes* of the Israeli *occupation* and the right of the Palestinian people to *freedom* and *independence* in all its territories, which have been *occupied* since 1967 and constitute a sole geographical unit.	...the *crimes* of the Israeli *occupation*, and the right of the Palestinian people to *freedom* and *independence* in all of their *occupied* territories since 1967, which constitute a single geographical unit,

4.5.2.4 Weakened scaling

Weakened scaling refers to instances where a translator reduces or diminishes the degree of scaling compared to what was originally presented in the ST. In TT1, the translator uses "joint" instead of "unified" in the phrase "joint stance in condemning" (Example 35). In this instance, there is arguably weakened scaling by choosing "joint stance" instead of "unified stance." On the one hand, "unified stance" implies a stronger, more cohesive agreement or position among the leaders, indicating a high level of solidarity and consensus. On the other hand, "joint stance" suggests collaboration or cooperation but may not convey the same degree of unity and solidarity as "unified stance." Therefore, the use of "joint" instead of "unified" weakens the scaling of the leaders' position in condemning the Israeli aggression as communicated in the ST. A similar move is identified in TT4 (36) in which the human translator weakens 'in an instant' in the ST to 'simultaneously' while the machine maintains its fidelity. To illustrate, in an instant maintains the same sense of urgency and immediacy while simultaneously weakens this force to a rather coordinated actions happening at the same time while not prioritising speed.

(35)

وتعبيرا عن موقفنا الواحد في *إدانة العدوان* الإسرائيلي *الغاشم* على الشعب الفلسطيني في قطاع غزة وفي الضفة الغربية بما فيها القدس الشريف،	We express our joint stance in *condemning* the *brutal* Israeli *aggression* against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif…	We…have decided…as an expression of our unified position in *condemning* the *brutal* Israeli aggression against The Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif…

(36)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
السيد الرئيس، وفيما عدا ارتكاب جريمة كبرى بتفخيخ وسائل اتصال لاسلكية وتفجيرها بآلاف الناس في لحظة واحدة دون أخذ هويتهم أو مكان تواجدهم بالاعتبار، تشن إسرائيل حاليًا حربًا على لبنان ولا أحد يعلم إلى أي حد يمكن أن تتدهور هذه الحرب.	Mr. President, Apart from committing a major crime by rigging wireless communication devices and exploding them simultaneously across thousands of people with total disregard for their identity or location, Israel is currently waging a war on Lebanon and no one knows to what extent this war could escalate.	Mr. President, Aside from committing a major crime by booby-trapping and detonating wireless communication devices, killing thousands of people in an instant without regard for their identity or location, Israel is currently waging war on Lebanon, and no one knows how far this war will escalate.

4.5.2.4 Replaced scaling

Replaced scaling occurs when a translator substitutes the scaling used in the source text (ST) with a different form of scaling in the target text (TT). For example, in TT1, the translator substitutes “systematic” with “deliberate” in the phrase “the Israeli colonial occupation and its *systematic* policies” (Example 37). In the original statement, “systematic policies” implies that the actions of the Israeli colonial occupation are part of a structured and organised approach aimed at undermining the two-state solution. This word choice suggests that these actions are not random but part of a deliberate strategy. By replacing “systematic” with “deliberate,” the translator emphasises that the policies undertaken by the Israeli colonial occupation are intentionally aimed at undermining the two-state solution, putting more emphasis on the conscious decision-making behind these actions rather than just their methodical implementation. Therefore, replacing “systematic” with “deliberate” has a rhetorical impact on the force of the statement by strengthening the implication of intent and purpose behind the actions of the Israeli colonial occupation. It highlights the deliberate nature of these actions and underscores the responsibility of those involved, but it does not convey the structural and organised nature of the policies. In another example from TT4

(example 38), ‘advanced’ is replaced with ‘sophisticated’ in the human translation while still maintained the same in the machine translation. This replacement serves to intensify the complex and perhaps the rather dramatic evaluation of these weapons as used against besieged people. This can add another layer of evaluative form over the rhetorical force of the statement in question.

(37)

التشديد على أن عدم *إيجاد حل* للقضية الفلسطينية على مدار ما يزيد عن 75 عاماً، وعدم التصدي لجرائم *الاحتلال الاستعماري* الإسرائيلي وسياساته *الممنهجة* لتقويض حل الدوليتين من خلال بناء وتوسيع المستوطنات الاستعمارية،	Emphasize that the *failure to resolve* the Palestinian cause over more than 75 years, the lack of response to the Israeli *colonial occupation*'s crimes, its *deliberate* policies undermining the two-state solution through settlement building and expansion…	Emphasizing the *failure to find a solution* to the Palestinian issue for more than 75 years, and the failure to address the crimes of the Israeli *colonial* occupation and its *systematic* policies to undermine the two-state solution through building and expanding colonial settlements…

(38)

ST (Arabic)	Human Translation	Machine Translation
ليست هذه حربًا بمفهوم الحرب المعروف والمتداول في العلاقات الدولية، بل هي جريمة إبادة بأحدث الأسلحة لشعب محاصر في معسكر اعتقال لا مهرب فيه من وابل القنابل الذي تلقيه الطائرات.	This is not a war within the international relations’ well-known and common concept of war, but rather a crime of genocide by means of using the most sophisticated weapons against a people besieged in a detention camp where there is no escape from the barrage of aerial bombing.	This is not a war in the commonly understood sense of the word in international relations, but rather a crime of genocide perpetrated with the most advanced weapons against a besieged population trapped in a concentration camp with no escape from the barrage of bombs dropped by aircraft

This section has shown various adjustments observed in the translation of rhetorical force choices. These adjustments include addition, omission, strengthening, and weakening of scaling, with omission and replaced scaling being particularly notable. The examples provided illustrate how these adjustments alter the original rhetorical force of evaluative statements in the translated texts.

4.6 Corpus-assisted triangulation of attitude and graduation profiles

Three corpus-level statistics and patterns generated for the pooled ST and TT corpora are relevant to the qualitative findings reported in Sections 4.2–4.5. First, the English TTs are, in aggregate, around 40% longer in raw token count than the Arabic STs (6,167 versus 4,418 tokens) despite translating the same four speeches. This is consistent with the well-documented tendency toward translational expansion between a morphologically synthetic language such as Arabic and a more analytic language such as English, but it is also compatible with the additions of scaling and loaded lexis documented qualitatively in Sections 4.3 and 4.5.2.1, where human translators were shown to introduce evaluative material (e.g. 'sole', 'firmly') not present in the ST.

Second, vocabulary density (type-token ratio) drops from 0.479 in the Arabic ST corpus to 0.238 in the English TT corpus. A lower ratio indicates proportionally more repetition of the same word forms relative to corpus size. This corroborates, from an independent quantitative angle, the qualitative observation in Section 4.2 that repetition of attitudinal lexis – items such as *condemn*, *call on*, *emphasise* and *support* – is a deliberate rhetorical strategy for reinforcement, solidarity, and mobilisation in the English TTs. The relative stability of the readability index across the two corpora (14.16 for the ST versus 14.66 for the TT, on a scale where the two values are directly comparable) suggests that overall textual complexity is largely maintained in translation, lending corpus-level support to the general fidelity to source register reported qualitatively across Sections 4.1 and 4.4.1.

Third, cross-checking the ranked word-frequency lists against the appraisal coding scheme shows close alignment between the two corpora's dominant semantic fields. In the Arabic ST corpus, the most frequent content words are غزة *(Gaza)* (35), الاحتلال *(occupation)* (33), الفلسطيني *(Palestinian)* (29), الشعب *(people)* (25) and الدولي *(international)* (25), followed closely by إسرائيل *(Israel)* (22), الحرب *(war)* (21) and السلام *(peace)* (19). The English TT corpus mirrors this profile almost item for item: *palestinian* (60), *international* (54), *people* (43), *peace* (40), *gaza* (38), *war* (31), *occupation* (31) and *security* (29). All of these items were independently coded, in the manual analysis, as either realising or collocating with attitude or graduation resources (e.g. *occupation* and *aggression* as invoked negative judgement; *humanitarian* as inscribed positive appreciation; *peace* and *international* as recurring targets of graduated calls to action). This item-level correspondence between an inductive, frequency-driven method and a deductive, category-driven method offers convergent evidence for the attitudinal and graduational profile described qualitatively in Sections 4.2 and 4.4.

The collocate profile for 'Gaza' in the English TT corpus reinforces this picture at a more local, phraseological level. Its strongest collocates are *strip* (17), *people* (7), *war* (6), *palestinian* (6) and *aggression* (5), with further, lower-frequency collocates including *crimes*, *destruction*, *brutal*, *humanitarian* and *ceasefire*. That the node most frequently co-occurs with lexis carrying negative judgement and appreciation (*aggression*, *crimes*, *brutal*, *destruction*) alongside calls to action (*ceasefire*, *humanitarian*) corroborates, from a corpus-driven rather than a researcher-driven starting point, the discourse-semantic reading offered in Sections 4.2–4.3: that Gaza functions in these texts as the semantic and evaluative centre

around which the negative judgement of Israeli actions and the positive appreciation of humanitarian and peace-oriented responses are organised.

In sum, these corpus-assisted observations do not constitute an independent or generalisable finding in their own right – the corpus is small and closely tied to the four speeches already analysed qualitatively, for that. Rather, they show one concrete way in which a lightweight, freely available corpus tool such as Voyant can be integrated alongside system-network analysis of appraisal resources to triangulate, and lend additional convergent support to, findings arrived at through close manual coding. We return to the implications of this show-how integration, and to the case for larger-scale corpus-assisted appraisal research, in Section 5.

5. Conclusion

This study offers a focused contribution to the discourse-oriented translation paradigm by examining the discursive-pragmatic choices and functions of translated evaluative language in Arabic political discourse rendered into English, using the system network approach modelled on the Appraisal framework to analyse four political STs and their human- and machine-translated TTs. By foregrounding the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION systems, the analysis sheds light on how attitudinal stance and rhetorical force are preserved, adjusted, or diluted in translation. Findings indicate a general fidelity to the negative attitudinal positioning of the source texts, with translations largely maintaining the moral framing and emotional intensity of the originals. However, notable shifts – such as intensified or weakened scaling and occasional omissions or additions – reveal a degree of translator intervention that reshapes rhetorical force. While some of these shifts can be read as strategic adaptations to audience expectations or genre norms, others suggest unmotivated infidelities, particularly in ST1 and ST4, where more congruent lexical equivalents were available. These findings echo prior scholarship on the challenges of preserving interpersonal meaning in translation (e.g., Munday, 2018; Meng, 2022).

Overall, this study advances SFL approaches to translation by examining how system networks can actively operationalise translation as choice-making across meaning systems. Translation emerges not merely as a process of lexical substitution but as a navigation of meaning potential – a perspective deeply rooted in SFL that has been underutilised in translation studies. Two key contributions follow. First, to discursive pragmatics: the analysis enables a nuanced distinction between motivated and unmotivated shifts (Matthiessen, 2014), showing that while machine translation adheres closely to the ST, human translators exhibit more agency in meaning-making as they reconfigure interpersonal positioning – conceptualising translation as a socially situated practice in which rhetorical strategy and ideological positioning interact with linguistic choice. Our analysis extends Kim's (2009) framework for assessing translation accuracy by showing that interpersonal metafunction is as crucial to fidelity as the ideational one, challenging traditional equivalence paradigms that often prioritise experiential meaning. Second, to corpus pragmatics: methodologically, system networks can serve both as a source of empirical, descriptive accuracy for translators and as an evaluative tool for translation assessment, aligning with SFL's broader commitment to frameworks applicable to real-world discursive practice.

Crucially, this study demonstrates the analytical value of system networks in identifying translation shifts that may otherwise be overlooked. The method allows for a systematic profiling of rhetorical features, offering insights into how evaluative meanings are reconstructed across languages. This has pedagogical relevance for translation curricula and translator training, where attention to attitudinal and rhetorical fidelity remains underemphasised.

The show-how integration of Voyant Tools reported in Section 4.1 and 4.6 adds a further, complementary dimension to this contribution. By cross-checking manually coded attitude and graduation values against independently generated word-frequency, vocabulary-density, and collocation measures, the study illustrates a concrete route by which corpus-assisted methods can be paired with system-network analysis of appraisal resources in translation research – aligning with a broader recent turn toward corpus-assisted approaches to interpersonal meaning in political discourse translation (Li, Chen & Zhang, 2025). We stress that this corpus layer is offered as a proof-of-concept demonstration on a small, single-genre corpus rather than as a generalisable corpus-linguistic finding in its own right; its value lies in showing how such triangulation can be done, and in the convergence it revealed with the qualitative findings, rather than in the statistical power of the corpus itself.

Nonetheless, several limitations mark this study as exploratory. The data set – including the small, single-genre corpus underlying the show-how corpus-assisted analysis – and the study's exclusive focus on interpersonal meaning limit the generalisability of its findings. The proportional-scaling comparison in Section 4.6, benchmarking each evaluative item's TT frequency against its expected count at the corpus-wide expansion rate, is a descriptive heuristic drawn directly from Voyant's raw frequency counts, not a statistical significance test; Voyant does not itself report confidence intervals, effect sizes, or log-likelihood statistics for cross-corpus frequency comparisons, and with item counts this small (particularly *catastrophe*/كارثة and *genocide*/إبادة, each at n = 3 in the ST), a single-token difference produces large swings in the reported percentage. The pattern reported should therefore be read as indicative of a directional tendency rather than a confirmed, statistically robust effect. Similarly, the finding that machine translation achieves greater attitudinal and rhetorical fidelity than human translation should not be generalised beyond the specific MT system tested here at this point in time: machine translation output, and particularly LLM-based translation, changes rapidly as models are retrained and updated, and different engines are likely to show different fidelity profiles for evaluative language.

Future research could pursue two directions in response to these limitations. First, re-running the corpus-assisted comparison on larger, lemmatised Arabic–English parallel corpora using dedicated corpus-linguistic software capable of keyness statistics (e.g., log-likelihood or Bayesian factor analysis), which Voyant, as a lightweight show-how tool, is not designed to provide. Second, extending the comparative fidelity analysis across multiple machine translation engines and large language models, to establish whether the attitudinal and graduational fidelity patterns identified here for a single MT system hold across different architectures and, over time, as these systems continue to evolve – a question of growing importance as LLM-mediated translation becomes more widely used in exactly the high-stakes political contexts this study examines. Finally, future work could also extend this

system-network approach to the ENGAGEMENT system (White, 2011), examining how translators adjust the dialogic positioning of political speeches – for instance, whether attributed or distanced claims in the ST (e.g. international bodies' assessments) are proclaimed, entertained, or otherwise reframed in translation – a dimension of interpersonal meaning this study did not address.

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