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Translating Political Discourse in Arabic News Subtitles: Ideology and Framing

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Abstract

This study examines how two transnational Arabic news outlets translated and recontextualized English political statements during the 12-day Iran–Israel war of June 2025. A purpose-built, source-controlled comparable corpus aligned 27 verified English political propositions with one Al Arabiya and one Sky News Arabia rendering, yielding 54 source–target comparisons drawn from 47 unique Arabic articles. A single Arabic–English bilingual coder analyzed source match, translation and recontextualization strategy, modality and evaluation, social-actor representation, agency, responsibility, and framing. The analysis integrated research on journalistic translation with Munday's model of evaluation, van Leeuwen's social-actor framework, Entman's framing functions, and Baker's narrative approach. Fifteen paired units (55.6%) showed substantive convergence and 12 (44.4%) showed divergence. Close translation was the most frequent operation in both outlets, although Sky News Arabia used paraphrase more often. The most consequential contrasts involved certainty, explicit violence, actor visibility, causal responsibility, metaphor, discourse presentation, specificity, and headline salience. These shifts sometimes strengthened, weakened, or redirected problem definitions, causal attributions, and evaluations, whereas diplomatic and de-escalatory recommendations were generally preserved. Because intensification and mitigation occurred in both outlets and convergence remained slightly more common than divergence, the findings support selective, context-dependent recontextualization rather than a stable outlet-wide ideological transformation. Methodologically, the study illustrates the value of proposition-level source verification and paired-outlet control for distinguishing translation shifts from broader journalistic reframing.

1 Introduction

Political statements now circulate through a multilingual digital news ecology in which translation, quotation, editing, aggregation, and platform-specific rewriting often occur as parts of the same production process. Research on global news has therefore moved beyond the assumption that translation is a discrete transfer stage performed after reporting. News agencies and digital outlets routinely integrate interlingual transfer with selection, condensation, localization, and rewriting, so that the journalist-translator participates in producing a new target-language news text rather than reproducing a stable source text sentence by sentence (Bielsa, 2007; Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Orengo, 2005; Valdeón, 2015; Zanettin, 2021). More recent reviews likewise characterize journalistic translation as an interdisciplinary field located at the interface of Translation Studies, journalism, discourse analysis, and media research (Valdeón, 2020a, 2025).

This production logic makes recontextualization central to the analysis of translated news. A presidential post, press-conference answer, diplomatic statement, or institutional warning may reappear as a direct quotation, condensed proposition, paraphrase, headline, or contextualized report. Studies of multilingual newsrooms have shown that audience design, journalistic style, localization, institutional routines, and gatekeeping can all reshape source discourse as it crosses linguistic and editorial boundaries (Davier, 2014; Holland, 2006; Martín Ruano, 2021; van Doorslaer, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2006). Translation may thus function not only as linguistic mediation but also as a gatekeeping and agenda-setting practice through which some elements are selected, backgrounded, foregrounded, or reformulated for a target readership (Valdeón, 2020b, 2021, 2022).

The political consequences of such choices become especially salient during armed conflict. Political actors use language to identify threats, allocate responsibility, legitimate or delegitimate military action, signal certainty and uncertainty, announce success, and define conditions for negotiation or peace. When these propositions are transferred into another language, relatively small shifts in modality, actor naming, agency, lexical intensity, attribution, or metaphor can alter the perceived commitment of a speaker or the causal structure of an event. Translation research has repeatedly shown that evaluative and representational choices may reposition actors and audiences, particularly in ideologically charged news contexts (Baker, 2006; Munday, 2007, 2012; Pan, 2015; Pan & Liao, 2021; Schäffner, 2004). English–Arabic research has reached similar conclusions concerning modal expression, actor representation, reframing, and conflict discourse (Al-Hejin, 2012; Bazzi, 2015, 2019, 2021; Ibrahim, 2026).

At the same time, nonliteral translation should not be equated automatically with ideological manipulation. Journalistic translation is constrained by time, space, genre, house style, readability, source accessibility, and target-audience expectations, and these pressures can produce paraphrase or condensation without a politically consequential change in meaning (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Davier, 2014; Martín Ruano, 2021). The analytical problem is therefore not simply whether a target text differs from its source, but whether a demonstrable difference changes stance, responsibility, social-actor representation, evaluation, or framing. This distinction is particularly important because previous studies have documented both institutionally patterned gatekeeping and ideologically relevant reframing (Allawzi et al., 2022; Song, 2017), while the direction and strength of such effects vary across outlets, events, and textual levels.

The 12-day Iran–Israel war provides a tightly bounded case in which to examine these processes. Between 13 and 24 June 2025, statements by national leaders, diplomats, military actors, and international officials circulated rapidly from English-language sources into Arabic digital news. The conflict generated discourse about nuclear danger, military success, regime stability, escalation, ceasefire, diplomatic opportunity, and humanitarian risk. Because a substantial number of identifiable statements were reported by both Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia, the episode enables a source-controlled comparison in which the same English proposition can be aligned with two Arabic renderings rather than treating thematically similar reports as equivalent translations.

This source control addresses a methodological weakness that can blur comparative news-translation research. Two outlets may cover the same event while selecting different speakers, different moments in a speech, or different propositions; apparent “translation differences” can therefore originate in source selection rather than in the rendering of the same material. This study organizes the corpus around verified propositions and uses two linked comparisons: a vertical comparison between each English source proposition and each Arabic rendering, and a horizontal comparison between Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia while the source proposition is held constant. The resulting corpus contains 27 verified English units, 54 source–target comparisons, and 47 unique Arabic articles.

The study consequently asks not only what linguistic shifts occur, but also when those shifts become politically and journalistically consequential. Its analytical sequence moves from observable translation or recontextualization operations to changes in evaluation and social-actor representation and then to framing effects. Framing is treated as a problem of selection and salience rather than as a synonym for any linguistic difference (de Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999), while research on discursive news values helps explain why headlines and other high-salience textual locations may construct newsworthiness differently from aligned body passages (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, 2017). The study contributes empirically to English–Arabic conflict-news research and methodologically by treating convergence as evidence alongside divergence, separating headline framing from body translation, and requiring ideological claims to be supported by semantic effect, textual context, recurrence, and counterevidence.

The scope of the study is deliberately bounded. It analyzes written English-to-Arabic news renderings, namely the articles and headlines through which two Arabic outlets reported verified English political statements during the June 2025 Iran–Israel war. It does not analyze audiovisual subtitles or Arabic-to-English translation, and its findings should not be extended to those settings; both remain directions for further research.

2 Literature Review and Analytical Framework

2.1 News Translation as Recontextualization

News translation differs from conventional models of bounded source-to-target transfer because foreign-language material may be selected from speeches, posts, interviews, agency dispatches, institutional documents, and previous reports and then combined with editorial explanation, quotation, condensation, and headline construction. Early work on news localization and global news agencies established that translation is embedded in journalistic production and often performed by journalists rather than separately identified translators (Bielsa, 2007; Orengo, 2005). Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) subsequently theorized this integration as a defining feature of global news production, while ethnographic and newsroom studies have shown how speed, accuracy, audience design, and institutional routines make translation simultaneously indispensable and partly invisible (Davier, 2014; van Doorslaer, 2009). Contemporary syntheses therefore treat news media translation as a fluid cluster of translational, editorial, and journalistic practices rather than a narrow equivalence-based activity (Valdeón, 2015, 2020a, 2025; Zanettin, 2021).

Recontextualization captures what happens when discourse is relocated from one communicative event to another. The target report can preserve a source proposition while altering its textual prominence, attribution, degree of explicitness, relation to surrounding facts, or audience orientation. Empirical studies have documented such transformations through audience design and discourse representation (Holland, 2006), adaptation to journalistic style and cultural reference (van Leeuwen, 2006), and the reorganization of source discourse in politically sensitive reporting (Kang, 2007). This literature also cautions against a mechanistic distinction between “translation” and “editing”: in contemporary journalism, target texts frequently emerge through overlapping practices of translation, rewriting, and mediation (Martín Ruano, 2021; Valdeón, 2020b, 2021). Consequently, the Arabic material in this study is treated as translated and recontextualized news discourse rather than as complete parallel translations of English source documents.

This distinction is especially important for headlines. Headlines are not merely shortened sentences; they are high-salience editorial spaces shaped by newsworthiness, compression, and audience attention. Online news translation can selectively appropriate themes at the headline and article levels (Valdeón, 2008), while discursive news-values research shows how linguistic choices construct impact, negativity, personalization, proximity, and other dimensions of newsworthiness (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, 2017). This study therefore uses body passages to

establish source–target alignment and analyzes headlines as a related but distinct site of selection and salience. This prevents an editorial headline decision from being misclassified as a sentence-level translation shift.

2.2 Political Discourse and Ideological Representation

Political discourse concerns not only what is asserted but also how actors, actions, relations, and responsibility are represented. Critical approaches to media discourse have shown that grammatical and lexical choices can foreground or background agency, normalize evaluations, and reproduce relations of power (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). Van Leeuwen's (2008) social-actor framework is particularly useful for translated news because individuals and institutions may be nominated, categorized, activated, passivated, generalized, excluded, or represented through collectives. In translated political reporting, such changes can affect whether responsibility is personalized, institutionalized, obscured, or redistributed.

Translation adds an interlingual and institutional layer to these representational processes. Schäffner (2004) argues that political discourse analysis and Translation Studies need to be considered together because political texts acquire new meanings as they circulate across languages and institutions; Schäffner and Bassnett (2010) further demonstrate the importance of examining political discourse, media, and translation as interacting domains. Baker's (2006) narrative perspective similarly explains how translation can participate in the construction of broader accounts of conflict, legitimacy, victimhood, and responsibility. Textual studies have identified ideological positioning through evaluative resources (Munday, 2007; Pan, 2015), while research on English–Arabic news has documented ideologically consequential shifts in modality, lexical categorization, actor representation, and reframing (Al-Hejin, 2012; Allawzi et al., 2022; Bazzi, 2015, 2019; Ibrahim, 2026).

Nevertheless, the existence of a source–target difference does not by itself establish ideological intervention. Arabic grammar, idiomatic preference, brevity, headline economy, publication format, and routine journalistic paraphrase can all produce nonliteral renderings without materially changing political meaning. Moreover, institutionally patterned ideological effects documented in other settings—such as foreign-news gatekeeping in Korea (Song, 2017) or conflict positioning in translated news (Pan & Liao, 2021)—cannot simply be projected onto a different corpus. This study therefore begins with descriptive comparison and treats a difference as ideologically relevant only when it changes a politically consequential dimension such as responsibility, legitimacy, certainty, threat, evaluation, or actor visibility and when that interpretation is supported by context, recurrence, or a strong source-controlled contrast.

2.3 Modality, Evaluation, and Agency

Modality expresses degrees of possibility, probability, certainty, obligation, permission, prediction, and commitment. In political conflict discourse, these distinctions influence whether an action appears contemplated, expected, inevitable, permissible, or required. A shift from a modalized English proposition to a categorical Arabic future construction can therefore increase perceived speaker commitment, whereas added possibility marking can reduce it. Munday (2007, 2012) demonstrates why evaluative choices and "critical points" of decision-making are central to translation analysis, and Pan (2015) shows how evaluative resources can contribute to ideological positioning in news translation. Wu's (2018) study of the China–Japan dispute further demonstrates that translated news can transform stance through reframing even when the underlying event remains constant.

Agency concerns who is represented as acting, deciding, attacking, preventing, restraining, or causing an outcome. Active and passive constructions, nominalization, actor substitution, attribution, and shifts between individuals, states, and institutions can make responsibility more or less explicit. English–Arabic studies similarly show that apparently local lexical or grammatical choices may redistribute ideological or causal responsibility (Al-Hejin, 2012; Bazzi, 2015, 2019). Actor naming is therefore coded separately from agency: a rendering may preserve the event proposition yet replace a named leader with a state, an institution, or a

generalized collective. Keeping modality, evaluation, actor naming, agency, and responsibility distinct makes later framing claims traceable to observable evidence.

2.4 Framing in Translated Political News

Framing theory explains how communication selects aspects of perceived reality and makes them more salient. Entman (1993) identifies four frequently cited framing functions: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral evaluations, and suggesting remedies. Later work distinguishes frame building from frame effects and stresses the need for explicit operationalization (de Vreese, 2005; Scheufele, 1999). These distinctions are useful for translation research because not every lexical difference constitutes a new frame. A source–target shift is framing-relevant when it materially changes the definition, causal attribution, evaluation, or proposed response associated with the proposition.

Translated news can contribute to framing through lexical selection, evaluative force, actor labeling, omission, specification, attribution, and redistribution of salience. Research has documented reframing in politically sensitive and conflict-related translation, including the transformation of stance (Wu, 2018), repositioning in reported conflicts (Pan & Liao, 2021), and English–Arabic political reframing (Allawzi et al., 2022; Bazzi, 2021). In the present corpus, six broad frame domains serve as sensitizing concepts: threat and security, responsibility, conflict and military action, peace and diplomacy, victory and defeat, and humanitarian or nuclear risk. Multiple frames may coexist in one unit; their presence alone does not demonstrate an ideological difference between outlets.

2.5 Comparative Source-Controlled Analysis

A controlled comparison requires more than thematic similarity. Political actors frequently repeat related claims across consecutive days, and outlets may quote different sentences from the same speech, rely on different agency dispatches, or paraphrase different stages of an evolving event. Comparative studies of translated news have shown the value of tracing source material and institutional selection, but they also illustrate how source selection and target rewriting can become analytically entangled (Song, 2017; Valdeón, 2022). The present design therefore admits a unit only when the English wording, speaker, date, and proposition can be linked to identifiable passages in both Arabic outlets.

Each unit is examined in two directions. Vertical analysis establishes what changes between the verified English source and each Arabic rendering. Horizontal analysis then compares Al Arabiya with Sky News Arabia while holding the source proposition constant. This paired architecture makes it easier to distinguish source-derived features from outlet-specific recontextualization and to locate whether a difference occurs in body translation or headline framing. It also makes convergence analytically meaningful: near-identical renderings function as baseline or null cases against which claims of systematic divergence can be tested.

2.6 Integrated Analytical Framework

The study uses an integrated, theory-guided framework in which each component performs a distinct analytical task. Research on news translation and recontextualization explains how source discourse is transformed during journalistic production (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Valdeón, 2015; Zanettin, 2021). Munday's (2012) work on evaluation and stance guides analysis of modality, commitment, and lexical intensity. Van Leeuwen's (2008) social-actor framework guides analysis of nomination, categorization, inclusion, exclusion, activation, and backgrounding. Entman's (1993) framing model then guides interpretation of whether a change affects problem definition, causal attribution, evaluation, or a proposed response. Baker's (2006) narrative account provides the final cross-unit lens for considering whether recurrent transformations participate in a broader political representation of conflict.

These components are applied sequentially rather than interchangeably. The researcher first establishes the source–target change, then identifies its effect on stance or actor representation, and only then evaluates its framing consequence. Broader ideological interpretation is reserved

for recurrent or directionally coherent evidence and is tested against convergence and counterexamples. This staged procedure responds to a recurring concern in journalistic translation research: textual difference may arise from ordinary translation, editing, localization, or newsroom constraints as well as from ideological positioning (Davier, 2014; Martín Ruano, 2021; Valdeón, 2020a). The framework is therefore designed to avoid classifying every nonliteral rendering as ideological intervention.

Table 1. Integrated analytical framework used in the study

Theoretical lens and analytical level	Analytical question	Operational evidence
News translation and recontextualization Bielsa and Bassnett; Valdeón	What changes as the verified proposition enters Arabic news discourse?	Close translation, paraphrase, omission, addition, condensation, generalization, specification, and headline selection
Evaluation and stance Munday	Does the rendering change certainty, obligation, commitment, or evaluative intensity?	Modal verbs and particles, future constructions, hedges, intensifiers, mitigation, and evaluative lexical choices
Social actor representation van Leeuwen	Who is named, categorized, activated, backgrounded, omitted, or substituted?	Actor naming, agency, grammatical role, causal responsibility, personalization, and institutionalization
Framing Entman	Does the shift alter problem definition, cause, evaluation, or proposed response?	Threat and security, responsibility, military action, diplomacy, victory, humanitarian consequence, and nuclear risk
Narrative and ideological interpretation Baker	Do recurrent directional choices support a broader political representation?	Semantic effect, recurrence, cross-unit directionality, convergence/null cases, and counterevidence

2.7 Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. Which translation and recontextualization strategies are used by Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia when rendering the same verified English political propositions, and what semantic effects do these strategies produce?

RQ2. Where do the two outlets converge or diverge in the representation of stance, social actors, agency, responsibility, and evaluation when the English source proposition is held constant?

RQ3. How do recurrent body-translation and headline-recontextualization choices preserve, strengthen, weaken, or redirect the framing of threat, responsibility, military action, diplomacy, victory, and humanitarian or nuclear risk, and do these patterns support an outlet-level ideological interpretation?

The questions follow the framework's inferential sequence. RQ1 establishes the linguistic transformation and its semantic effect; RQ2 applies evaluation and social-actor analysis to the controlled outlet comparison; and RQ3 uses framing and narrative theory to assess patterned political significance while testing claims against convergence and counterevidence.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a theory-guided qualitative comparative case-study design supported by a purpose-built multilingual news corpus. The case is political discourse surrounding the 12-day Iran–Israel war from 13 to 24 June 2025. The design is source-controlled: identifiable English propositions form the fixed comparison point for their Arabic renderings in Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia. The study seeks analytical explanation of textual patterns rather than statistical generalization to all reporting by either outlet.

The corpus is comparable and aligned at proposition level, but it is not a conventional parallel corpus of complete source and target texts. The Arabic articles may quote, paraphrase, condense, contextualize, or redistribute material from the English source. The design therefore combines translation analysis with analysis of journalistic recontextualization.

3.2 Case Boundaries

The temporal boundary extends from the beginning of Israeli strikes on Iran on 13 June 2025 to the ceasefire on 24 June 2025. Eligible source statements had to concern the conflict directly, including military action, nuclear policy or risk, escalation, diplomacy, ceasefire, responsibility, or conflict outcomes. The corpus is limited to English-source propositions rendered in Arabic digital news. It does not include audiovisual subtitles, and it examines only the English-to-Arabic direction; Arabic-to-English translation is not analyzed.

3.3 Selection of News Outlets

Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia (hereafter Sky) were selected because both are major transnational Arabic-language news organizations that maintained substantial digital coverage of the conflict and provide dated online reports suitable for systematic retrieval. Restricting the comparison to two outlets allowed the same inclusion, verification, and alignment procedures to be applied consistently. The unit of comparison is the rendering of a verified source proposition, not the outlets' overall editorial positions. Both outlets are Gulf-based, so their geopolitical positioning may be closer to one another than to Arabic news media elsewhere in the region; some convergence between them would therefore not be surprising, and the findings are not generalized to Arabic-language news media as a whole.

3.4 Sampling and Eligibility Criteria

Purposive criterion-based sampling was used. A candidate proposition was included only when all of the following conditions were met:

1. The English statement was identifiable and attributable to a named political actor or clearly defined institutional actor.
2. The wording and date were verifiable through a primary, official, or reliable contemporaneous archival source.
3. Both Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia contained identifiable coverage of the same statement or proposition.
4. Each Arabic text contained a direct quotation, close rendering, or sufficiently identifiable paraphrase of the English proposition.
5. The aligned passages provided enough textual material for meaningful translation and discourse comparison.
6. The item fell within the temporal and thematic boundaries of the June 2025 conflict.

Articles were excluded when they merely concerned the same topic or military event but could not be linked to the selected source proposition. Reports attributing similar language to a different speaker were also excluded. Ambiguous candidates were retained outside the analytical corpus rather than forced into the verified count. Because a proposition entered the corpus only if both outlets covered it, the sample favors widely reported statements. [Insert from the reserve log: number of candidate propositions screened and number excluded at each stage.]

3.5 Retrieval and Source Verification

Data collection used targeted searches of Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia. Queries combined the speaker or institutional actor with broad event and proposition terms. Broad searches were followed by closer phrase and date checks because headlines often foregrounded a different element from the source proposition. Searches normally covered the source date and the following one or two calendar days to accommodate publication timing and time-zone differences.

The English source was verified before an Arabic item was admitted. Priority was given to original social-media posts, official statements, government records, institutional releases, and archival transcripts; reliable contemporaneous reports were used where a primary transcript was unavailable. The exact wording, speaker, source date, title, and URL were recorded. Each Arabic report was then examined at body-text level to establish that it reproduced or clearly paraphrased the same proposition. Similarity of topic alone was insufficient.

3.6 Unit of Analysis

The principal unit of analysis is an identifiable English political sentence or proposition together with its corresponding Arabic rendering in each outlet. One source event may contain several independently meaningful propositions, and one Arabic article may report more than one source proposition. Such propositions were coded separately when each could be aligned reliably.

Translation units, source events, and news articles were counted separately. This distinction avoids inflating the number of political events and permits legitimate reuse of an article when it contains more than one independently aligned proposition. T16 and T20, for example, represent separate propositions from the same António Guterres Security Council speech.

3.7 Final Corpus

The final corpus contains 27 verified English translation units aligned with 27 Al Arabiya renderings and 27 Sky News Arabia renderings, producing 54 English-to-Arabic source–target comparison instances. The 27 units represent 26 distinct source statements or events and 11 source-actor categories. After deduplication, the units draw on 22 unique Al Arabiya articles and 25 unique Sky News Arabia articles, for a total of 47 unique Arabic news articles. All units were assigned permanent identifiers T01–T27 and marked VERIFIED and READY after source and body-level rechecking.

3.8 Data Organization

The corpus register records the unit ID, speaker or source actor, topic, source date, exact English wording, English source title and URL, publication date for each Arabic outlet, Arabic headline, relevant Arabic evidence, article URL, verification status, coding readiness, verification note, and initial analytical note. Rejected and provisional candidates remain in a separate reserve log with reasons for exclusion. The final corpus was frozen before analytical coding so that later category decisions could not alter the sample opportunistically.

3.9 Coding Framework and Procedure

Coding proceeded through four linked stages. First, the researcher aligned each English proposition with its Arabic body rendering and recorded observable translation or recontextualization strategies: close translation, lexical substitution, paraphrase, omission, addition, condensation, generalization, specification, intensification, mitigation, and modality shift. Multiple strategies were retained when they described different aspects of the same rendering. At this descriptive stage, no ideological interpretation was assigned.

Second, evaluation and stance were examined through changes in possibility, certainty, obligation, commitment, and lexical intensity (Munday, 2012). Third, social-actor representation was examined through naming or categorization, inclusion or omission, activation or backgrounding, agency, and causal responsibility (van Leeuwen, 2008). The coding matrix kept actor naming, agency, responsibility, and evaluation separate because a translation can preserve an event while changing who is personalized, institutionalized, or represented as acting.

Fourth, the researcher used Entman's (1993) framing functions to assess whether the documented change affected problem definition, causal attribution, evaluation, or a proposed response. Frame domains included threat and security, responsibility, conflict and military action, peace and diplomacy, victory and defeat, and humanitarian or nuclear risk. Baker's (2006) narrative perspective was used only at the cross-unit stage to test whether recurrent

directional choices supported a broader political representation. The matrix contained one row for each unit by outlet, yielding 54 outlet-specific rows. Coding proceeded vertically from source to target and then horizontally across the paired outlets. Headlines were coded separately from body renderings so that editorial salience was not misidentified as translation of the source proposition.

3.10 Pilot Coding and Codebook Stabilization

Before full coding, the researcher pilot-coded five varied units (T04, T07, T18, T24, and T27), representing 10 outlet-specific comparisons. The pilot covered modality, explicit violence, nuclear risk, actor and agency representation, and a convergence case. It established three decision rules: body translation was coded separately from headline framing; linguistic shifts were described before their framing significance was assessed; and an isolated difference was not treated as evidence of outlet-level ideology. The stabilized definitions were then applied to all 54 rows, including retrospective confirmation of the pilot decisions.

3.11 Interpretation and Analytical Caution

A three-part threshold governed interpretation. First, a source–target difference had to be linguistically demonstrable. Second, it had to alter a theoretically relevant dimension, such as commitment, actor status, agency, causal responsibility, evaluation, problem definition, or proposed response. Third, an outlet-level ideological interpretation required recurrence or directional consistency across units and had to remain credible after convergence cases and counterexamples were considered. Modality was consequential only when it changed possibility, certainty, obligation, or commitment; omission was consequential only when the omitted material carried relevant agentive, evaluative, or framing information.

Convergence was coded alongside divergence and treated as theoretically meaningful negative evidence. Near-identical renderings functioned as baseline or null cases, while inconsistent directions of intensification or mitigation counted against a simple outlet-level bias claim. A single striking example could support close qualitative analysis, but it could not establish a stable institutional ideology.

3.12 Trustworthiness and Reflexive Consistency

Trustworthiness was supported through exact source retention, traceable links, common inclusion criteria, proposition-level alignment, a predefined theory-to-code map, and preservation of rejected or ambiguous candidates outside the analytical corpus. The source-controlled design reduced false comparison, while separate body and headline fields protected the distinction between translation and article-level framing.

The analysis was conducted by one Arabic-English bilingual researcher; consequently, no claim of intercoder reliability is made and no agreement coefficient is reported. Reflexive consistency was strengthened through a varied pilot, a documented decision trail, retrospective confirmation of pilot rows, repeated vertical and horizontal comparison, explicit consideration of null cases and counterevidence, and a final audit of all 54 records. The audit found no missing analytical fields or unresolved review status. These procedures improve transparency and dependability but do not replace independent replication, and the single-coder design remains a limitation.

3.13 Analytical Outputs

After coding, descriptive summaries compared source-match types and multi-label strategy frequencies across outlets. Theory-guided close analysis then examined high-information contrasts and convergence cases. Results were organized by the research questions and by recurrent mechanisms—stance, social actors, agency, evaluation, and framing—rather than as a chronological catalogue of units.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

The study analyzed publicly available political statements and published news reports. It involved no human participants and no collection of private personal data, and formal ethical approval was therefore not required. Quotations were limited to the wording necessary for linguistic analysis, and all sources are attributed through the corpus register and reference list.

4 Results

4.1 Corpus and Coding Overview

The finalized corpus contained 27 verified English source propositions; each aligned with one Al Arabiya rendering and one Sky News Arabia rendering. The resulting matrix comprised 54 outlet-specific source–target comparisons representing 26 distinct source events and 47 unique Arabic news articles (22 Al Arabiya and 25 Sky News Arabia). All 54 rows were complete for the principal analytical fields. These counts distinguish propositions, events, articles, and outlet-specific comparisons and therefore avoid treating repeated propositions from one event or several units from one article as independent news events.

At the paired-unit level, 15 of 27 units (55.6%) showed substantive convergence in the Arabic body renderings, whereas 12 (44.4%) showed divergence in at least one theoretically relevant feature. Thirteen pairs were designated high-information cases because the contrast affected modality, explicitness, actor representation, agency, evaluative force, metaphor, or discourse presentation. All 12 divergent pairs were high-information cases; the thirteenth, T08, was a body-level convergence with a discourse-presentation shift (direct first-person speech in Al Arabiya, attributed report in Sky). The near balance between convergence and divergence is analytically important: outlet difference was recurrent, but preservation remained the modal relationship and provides necessary negative evidence against assuming systematic transformation.

Table 2. Overall Relationship Between Paired Arabic Body Renderings

Relationship	Units	%	Interpretation
Convergence	15	55.6	Core meaning substantially aligned across outlets
Divergence	12	44.4	Body wording or discourse presentation differed materially
Total	**27**	**100.0**	**One paired comparison per verified English proposition**

4.2 Translation and Recontextualization Patterns

The source-match profile addresses RQ1 by measuring how directly each Arabic body passage reproduced the verified source proposition. Al Arabiya contained 10 near-direct matches, 10 close translations, two close paraphrases, and five identifiable paraphrases. Sky News Arabia contained nine near-direct matches, six close translations, eight close paraphrases, and four identifiable paraphrases. Thus, 20 of 27 Al Arabiya renderings (74.1%) fell in the two closest categories, compared with 15 of 27 Sky renderings (55.6%). Sky relied more often on close paraphrase, while neither outlet showed a large concentration of only weakly identifiable matches.

Table 3. Source-Match Profile by Outlet

Source-match type	Al Arabiya	Sky News Arabia	Total
Near-direct translation	10	9	19
Close translation	10	6	16
Close paraphrase	2	8	10
Identifiable paraphrase	5	4	9
Total	**27**	**27**	**54**

Table 4. Frequency of Principal Translation and Recontextualization Strategies

Strategy	Al Arabiya	Sky News Arabia	Total
Close translation	20	16	36
Paraphrase	7	11	18
Omission	6	7	13
Lexical substitution	7	5	12
Addition	5	5	10
Specification	6	4	10
Generalization	1	4	5
Condensation	3	2	5

Note. Counts are multi-label and do not sum to 27 per outlet. Generalization reports the exact core label; actor and temporal generalization were retained as separate, more specific codes in the audit sheet. Labels occurring fewer than five times are not shown.

Table 4 reports the eight strategy labels that occurred at least five times. Because coding was multi-label, a single rendering could combine close translation with omission, addition, specification, or generalization; the frequencies therefore describe operations rather than mutually exclusive types. Close translation dominated in both outlets (20 Al Arabiya; 16 Sky), while paraphrase was more frequent in Sky (11) than in Al Arabiya (7). Omission and addition were similar across outlets, and the modest differences in specification and generalization indicate tendencies rather than categorical outlet styles. Lexical substitution (7 Al Arabiya; 5 Sky) and condensation (3; 2) were also slightly more frequent in Al Arabiya. Strategy labels (Table 4) and source-match types (Table 3) are separate coding variables, so the counts for close translation and paraphrase differ between the two tables.

Several units functioned as convergence baselines. Both outlets reproduced Trump's "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!" as مشروط غير استسلام in T01. They also retained the obligation and urgency of "They should talk … immediately, before it's too late" in T05, the uncertainty of "Only time will tell" in T09, and the conditional endpoint of Netanyahu's operation statement in T19. The translations in T22, concerning a two-week diplomatic window, and T27, concerning G7 consensus on de-escalation, were effectively identical across the outlets. These cases demonstrate that divergence was neither automatic nor systematic across the corpus.

Condensation and selection were more consequential where they redistributed information. In T02, Al Arabiya reduced Trump's announcement of a "Complete and Total CEASEFIRE" and the official end of the "12 Day War" to the proposition that the war would officially end within 24 hours. Sky retained the ceasefire, the 24-hour sequence, and the 12-day-war label. In T17, both outlets preserved the negotiated-solution frame, but Sky condensed the absolute formulation that Iran must never "obtain or acquire" a nuclear weapon to preventing possession. In T26, Al Arabiya retained the specific possibility that uranium enrichment could continue at a lower rate, whereas Sky preserved the refusal to stop enrichment but shifted negotiability into a more general headline reference to concessions.

4.3 Cross-Outlet Differences in Modality, Actor Representation, and Evaluation

4.3.1 Modality and Evaluative Force

RQ2 asked where the outlets diverged in stance, social-actor representation, agency, responsibility, and evaluation while the source proposition remained constant. The contrasts clustered around three mechanisms: shifts in modality and evaluative force; changes in actor visibility and causal responsibility; and changes in explicitness, metaphor, or discourse presentation. These mechanisms are reported separately below because they affect political meaning in different ways.

The clearest modality contrast appeared in T04. The English source combined the hedge "I think" with the repeated prediction that "a deal will be signed." Al Arabiya rendered this as قد إيران تبرم اتفاقاً نووياً, using قد to present the agreement as a possibility and therefore reducing

commitment. Sky News Arabia rendered it as النووي برنامجها بشأن اتفاقا المطاف نهاية في ستوقع إيران, removing the epistemic hedge and presenting a categorical future. Both outlets also made Iran explicit as the actor and specified the nuclear context, but their commitment effects moved in opposite directions: mitigation in Al Arabiya and intensification in Sky.

A second modality pattern appeared in T18, but it operated differently across body text and headline. Grossi warned that a direct hit on Bushehr "could result" in a very high radioactive release. Al Arabiya generalized the condition from a direct hit to any attack and used سيفضي, a categorical future construction, thereby strengthening the predicted consequence. Sky's body retained possibility through فقد يسبب and described widespread radioactive contamination. Its headline, however, stated that an attack "will lead to a nuclear disaster" (نووية كارثة إلى سيؤدي). Thus, Al Arabiya's main intensification occurred in the body rendering, whereas Sky's strongest intensification occurred in the headline.

4.3.2 Social Actors, Agency, and Responsibility

Actor naming and causal responsibility produced the sharpest contrast in T24. The English source stated that one call from Washington could "muzzle someone like Netanyahu." Al Arabiya retained Washington, named Benjamin Netanyahu, and preserved the silencing metaphor. Sky replaced this interpersonal configuration with a statement that the United States could stop Israeli attacks and added a reference to Trump. The proposition therefore moved from pressure exerted on a named leader to restraint of a state's military conduct, changing both the represented actor and the locus of responsibility.

4.3.3 Explicitness, Metaphor, and Discourse Presentation

Explicitness and metaphor varied without producing a single directional pattern. In T07, Al Arabiya retained Trump's parenthetical gloss "kill" as نقتله, whereas Sky omitted the literal gloss and used عليه القضاء, reducing the directness of lethal wording. In T20, Al Arabiya preserved the metaphorical warning that events could "get out of hand" as السيطرة عن الأمور تخرج, while Sky rendered the consequence as a more generalized loss of control. Conversely, T13 shows Al Arabiya intensifying "removal" into على القضاء, while Sky used the semantically closer إزالة. The evidence therefore shows local recalibration of force, not stable intensification by one outlet.

Discourse presentation supplied an additional layer of mediation. Al Arabiya reproduced "Give peace a chance" in T16 as a direct appeal, للسلام فرصة أعطوا, preserving the source's imperative voice. Sky converted the appeal into indirect reported speech and specified the speaker's call for a diplomatic opportunity. In T08, Al Arabiya likewise retained first-person directness, whereas Sky foregrounded attribution. These shifts did not necessarily reverse the proposition, but they redistributed responsibility for the wording and altered the immediacy with which the political actor addressed the audience.

Table 5. Principal High-Information Contrasts

Unit	Feature	Al Arabiya	Sky News Arabia	Result
T04	Modality	Possibility قد	Categorical future ستوقع	Opposite certainty shifts
T07	Explicitness	Retains نقتله	Omits explicit kill gloss	Sky mitigates body wording
T18	Risk intensity	Body strengthens possibility to certainty	Body remains modal; headline says nuclear disaster	Risk is intensified at different textual levels
T20	Metaphor	Retains uncontrollable fire	Generalizes to loss of control	Sky reduces figurative intensity
T24	Actor and agency	Retains Netanyahu and silencing	Substitutes Israeli attacks and adds Trump	Personalized versus institutionalized control
T26	Specificity	Retains lower enrichment rate	Uses generic concessions framing	Specific versus generalized negotiability

4.4 Theory-Guided Framing and Ideological Interpretation

RQ3 asked whether recurrent translation and headline choices preserved, strengthened, weakened, or redirected conflict frames. Applying Entman's (1993) four framing functions showed that most propositions already supplied a problem definition, causal account, evaluation, or proposed response. Translation usually preserved that function, but selected changes altered its salience or force. The findings are organized by framing function so that ideological interpretation remains anchored in observable textual evidence.

Problem definition changed most clearly in risk and war-objective statements. In T18, Al Arabiya converted the possibility that a strike on Bushehr "could result" in radioactive release into a categorical consequence in the body, strengthening the nuclear-danger frame. Sky retained modal possibility in the body but used "nuclear disaster" in the headline, shifting amplification to the paratext. In T15, Sky retained the institutional actor "Israeli Air Force," whereas Al Arabiya generalized the actor and added nuclear and missile objectives; the latter rendering broadened what the military campaign was represented as addressing.

Causal attribution was altered when actors were specified, generalized, or substituted. T24 redirected responsibility from Washington's potential influence over Netanyahu to American capacity to stop Israeli attacks. In T11, Al Arabiya specified Israeli attacks as the causal pressure on the Iranian regime, whereas Sky more closely preserved the source's characterization of regime weakness. These are framing-relevant shifts because they change who or what is presented as producing the political condition, even though the broader conflict topic remains stable.

Moral and evaluative force was recalibrated through modality, lexical intensity, and explicitness. T04 strengthened a possible diplomatic agreement into a categorical future in Sky's wording; T07 reduced literal explicitness in Sky by omitting the source gloss "kill"; T13 intensified "removal" in Al Arabiya; and T20 preserved the source metaphor more closely in Al Arabiya than in Sky. Since strengthening and mitigation occurred in both outlets, the corpus does not support a unidirectional evaluative signature.

Treatment recommendations were the most stable framing function. Calls to negotiate in T05, end the war in T10, pursue a negotiated solution in T17, allow a two-week diplomatic interval in T22, and maintain ceasefire or de-escalation in T02 and T27 were generally retained. T04 was the principal exception because certainty changed, not because diplomacy disappeared. This stability matters: the outlets often selected different wording while preserving the source proposition's proposed response.

Headline comparison confirmed Entman's selection-and-salience mechanism while also showing why headline and body evidence must remain separate. In T27, convergent bodies appeared beneath headlines that foregrounded different contextual elements. In T18, Sky's headline intensified nuclear risk more strongly than its body rendering. Such cases demonstrate outlet-level recontextualization, but they cannot be counted as body-translation shifts unless the same change occurs in the aligned passage.

Under Baker's (2006) narrative perspective, an ideological claim requires recurrent, directionally coherent accumulation rather than isolated differences. The corpus contains consequential local transformations, including stronger certainty, altered actor visibility, changed causal attribution, and redistributed explicitness. It also contains 15 convergence cases and mixed directions of strengthening and mitigation. The most defensible interpretation is therefore selective and context-dependent recontextualization: both outlets reshape political discourse at particular decision points, but the present 27-unit corpus does not establish a consistent outlet-wide ideological transformation.

4.5 Summary of Findings by Research Question

For RQ1, the closest source-match categories predominated, particularly in Al Arabiya, while both outlets also used paraphrase, omission, addition, specification, and generalization. For RQ2, the principal divergences concerned modality, evaluative force, actor visibility,

causal responsibility, explicitness, metaphor, and the choice between direct and reported discourse. For RQ3, these differences sometimes altered problem definition, causal attribution, evaluation, or salience, but treatment recommendations were usually retained. Taken together, the results support recurrent local reframing but not a stable, one-directional ideological contrast between the two outlets.

Because one bilingual researcher conducted the coding, the findings should be read as a transparent, theory-guided qualitative interpretation rather than independently replicated categorical measurement. Their evidential strength lies in verified source propositions, paired outlet control, complete coding, explicit multi-label counts, and analysis that proceeds from linguistic evidence to discourse effect and only then to framing or ideology. Claims about broader editorial policy require a larger corpus, independent recoding, and evidence from production contexts.

5 Discussion

5.1 Principal Findings

The study set out to determine how Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia rendered the same verified English political propositions during a short, high-intensity conflict. Three findings are central. First, both outlets maintained a strong identifiable relationship with the source discourse: the two closest source-match categories accounted for 74.1% of Al Arabiya renderings and 55.6% of Sky News Arabia renderings. Second, difference was nevertheless substantial: 12 of the 27 paired units diverged in at least one theoretically relevant feature, and 13 pairs contained high-information contrasts affecting modality, evaluation, actor representation, agency, explicitness, metaphor, discourse presentation, specificity, or headline salience. Third, those changes did not form a consistent directional pattern. Both outlets preserved, intensified, mitigated, and redirected source meaning at different points, while 15 pairs converged. The combined evidence therefore supports selective recontextualization at particular editorial decision points rather than the stronger claim that one outlet systematically transformed political discourse more than the other.

5.2 News Translation as Recontextualization

The predominance of close and near-direct renderings does not contradict the view of news translation as recontextualization. Research has long shown that translated news is produced through selection, condensation, localization, rewriting, and adaptation rather than through sentence-by-sentence transfer alone (Bielsa, 2007; Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009; Orengo, 2005). Studies of audience design, newsroom practice, and journalistic adaptation likewise demonstrate that source discourse can remain recognizable while its organization, attribution, or emphasis changes in the target environment (Davier, 2014; Holland, 2006; Kang, 2007; van Doorslaer, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2006). In the present corpus, T02, T14, and T15 exemplify this pattern: the source proposition remains recoverable, but condensation or added objectives redistributes what readers are invited to treat as central. The findings therefore support contemporary accounts of news media translation as a hybrid editorial-translational practice (Valdeón, 2015, 2020a, 2025; Zanettin, 2021).

The difference between Al Arabiya's larger number of close matches and Sky News Arabia's greater use of paraphrase should consequently be read as a corpus-specific editorial tendency, not as a direct measure of accuracy or ideological bias. Paraphrase can accommodate Arabic syntax, quotation integration, space constraints, and target-audience expectations, and newsroom research shows that speed and institutional routines often make such reformulation normal rather than exceptional (Davier, 2014). Martín Ruano (2021) similarly cautions against mechanistic models that separate translation from the wider ecology of contemporary journalism. At the same time, gatekeeping research shows that selection and rewriting can become ideologically consequential when they recur directionally (Song, 2017; Valdeón, 2022). The mixed pattern in the present corpus—substantial preservation alongside localized

divergence—therefore supports a distinction between recontextualization as a routine journalistic process and ideological reframing as an interpretation that requires additional evidence.

5.3 Modality, Evaluation, and Political Positioning

The modality contrasts confirm that small grammatical choices can carry disproportionate political significance. In T04, movement from a hedged prediction to a categorical future increased the apparent commitment attached to a diplomatic outcome. In T18, Al Arabiya strengthened a possible radioactive consequence into a categorical one in the body, whereas Sky News Arabia retained possibility in the body but intensified risk in the headline through the expression "nuclear disaster." These examples align with Munday's (2007, 2012) argument that evaluation is concentrated at critical points where translators choose among alternatives that differ in certainty, intensity, and alignment. They also complement Pan's (2015) findings on evaluative positioning and Wu's (2018) demonstration that stance can be transformed through reframing in translated political news. In English–Arabic contexts, Bazzi (2015) and Ibrahim (2026) likewise identify modality and lexical categorization as potential sites of ideological transformation.

The present evidence, however, complicates any assumption that stronger modality necessarily signals a stable ideological agenda. Intensification and mitigation appeared in both outlets and at different textual levels. A categorical body rendering in one case could coexist with a more cautious rendering elsewhere, while a headline could intensify a proposition that remained modal in the body. This mixed direction is theoretically important because it distinguishes the existence of evaluative mediation from proof of a coherent institutional position. The analytical threshold used here therefore required a demonstrable change in semantic force before a case was treated as framing-relevant, and outlet-level interpretation required recurrence and counterevidence testing. Such caution is consistent with calls to integrate discourse analysis with translation research without presuming in advance that every nonliteral choice is ideological (Al-Hejin, 2012; Schäffner, 2004).

5.4 Social Actors, Agency, and Responsibility

Changes in actor representation were particularly important because they affected who appeared to act, cause, decide, restrain, or bear responsibility. T24 changed an interpersonal claim about Washington silencing Netanyahu into a claim about the United States stopping Israeli attacks, thereby shifting both the represented actor and the object of control. T11 similarly specified Israeli attacks as a causal pressure in Al Arabiya, while Sky News Arabia remained closer to the source characterization of regime weakness. In van Leeuwen's (2008) terms, nomination, categorization, activation, backgrounding, and role allocation organize the social field through which responsibility is understood. The paired design makes this effect unusually visible because the source proposition and political moment are held constant.

These findings are consistent with studies showing that translated conflict news can reposition readers by relabeling actors, altering attribution, and redistributing evaluative alignment. Pan and Liao (2021) demonstrate how positioning in reported conflicts can shift through translation, while Bazzi (2019, 2021) shows how transediting and victim representation can reproduce or contest power relations in Middle Eastern conflict coverage. English–Arabic research has also documented reframing through actor and agency choices (Allawzi et al., 2022) and through wider ideological transformations across lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic levels (Ibrahim, 2026). Yet the present corpus does not reproduce a sufficiently uniform institutional pattern to attribute a single ideological position to either outlet. Compared with studies that identify more directional gatekeeping effects (Song, 2017), its contribution is to show the value of source-controlled counterevidence: actor-level ideological claims become more defensible when exact source propositions, paired target renderings, and convergence cases are considered together.

5.5 Framing, Headlines, and the Limits of Ideological Inference

Entman's (1993) framework clarified which textual differences mattered for framing by separating problem definition, causal attribution, evaluation, and treatment recommendation. T18 altered the salience and certainty of nuclear risk; T15 broadened represented military objectives; T24 changed the causal actor and object of restraint; and T07, T13, and T20 recalibrated explicitness or lexical force. By contrast, negotiation, ceasefire, de-escalation, and diplomatic opportunity were usually retained. This distribution suggests that framing change in the corpus was concentrated in how problems, causes, and evaluations were represented rather than in wholesale replacement of proposed political responses. The distinction is consistent with broader framing scholarship, which emphasizes selective salience and explicit operationalization rather than treating any textual difference as a separate frame (de Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999).

The results also demonstrate why headline framing and body translation must be analyzed separately. Headlines are high-salience paratexts that compress information and construct newsworthiness; they may foreground conflict, impact, negativity, personalization, or other news values even when the aligned body passage remains close to the source (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, 2017). Valdeón (2008) showed that online news translation can selectively appropriate themes and texts, while later work has conceptualized translation as part of gatekeeping and agenda-setting in multilingual news production (Valdeón, 2021, 2022). In T18 and T27, the headline foregrounded meanings that were not equivalent to a change in the aligned body passage. Collapsing the two levels would therefore overstate translation intervention and obscure the specifically editorial location of reframing.

Baker's (2006) narrative approach further suggests that local shifts acquire broader ideological significance when they accumulate into recurrent narratives. The corpus contains politically meaningful transformations, but their directions are mixed and convergence is slightly more common than divergence. This negative evidence is substantive rather than incidental: it shows that both outlets frequently preserved the same stance or framing even during an intensely polarized conflict. The result contrasts productively with research that finds more systematic ideological gatekeeping or reframing in particular media settings (Pan, 2015; Song, 2017; Ibrahim, 2026). The most defensible interpretation is therefore one of localized framing potential and selective recontextualization, not a claim that the 27 propositions establish a stable organizational ideology.

5.6 Theoretical, Methodological, and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the study illustrates the value of linking complementary frameworks in a controlled sequence rather than using "ideology" as an all-purpose label. News-translation research identifies recontextualizing operations; evaluation analysis specifies changes in certainty and intensity; social-actor analysis identifies changes in actor visibility and responsibility; Entman's framing model locates the communicative function affected; and Baker's narrative perspective supplies a threshold for broader cross-unit interpretation. This layered approach is compatible with calls for closer interdisciplinarity among Translation Studies, journalism, and discourse analysis (Schäffner & Bassnett, 2010; Valdeón, 2020b, 2025; Zanettin, 2021). It also responds to the specific need in English–Arabic political news research to distinguish textual evidence of reframing from generalized assumptions about translator or institutional ideology (Al-Hejin, 2012; Bazzi, 2015; Ibrahim, 2026).

Methodologically, proposition-level verification addresses a recurrent problem in comparative news research: two reports may discuss the same event without translating the same statement. The vertical source–target comparison establishes what changed, whereas the horizontal outlet comparison tests whether the difference is outlet-specific. Counting propositions, source events, articles, and outlet-specific rows separately also prevents inflated sample descriptions. The design therefore complements prior work on institutional selection and translated-news positioning (Pan & Liao, 2021; Song, 2017) by tightening source

equivalence before interpretation begins. It can be replicated in larger multilingual corpora and combined with independent coding, corpus-assisted measures, or newsroom ethnography.

Practically, the findings suggest that editors and translators should monitor a small set of high-risk decision points: modality, actor naming, causal wording, violent explicitness, specification and generalization, direct versus reported discourse, and the relationship between headlines and body passages. These are not inherently problematic translation operations; they become consequential when they change certainty, reassign agency, intensify threat, or alter who is presented as responsible. A source-linked editorial checklist could therefore improve transparency without requiring literal translation. Such a practice is compatible with the broader understanding of journalistic translation as audience-oriented adaptation under newsroom constraints (Davier, 2014; Martín Ruano, 2021), while still recognizing the gatekeeping power of multilingual news production (Valdeón, 2021, 2022).

5.7 Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The study has five principal limitations. First, the corpus is purposive and small: 27 propositions can reveal mechanisms and high-information contrasts but cannot estimate the outlets' overall translation behavior. Second, the short conflict window may privilege urgent statements, military claims, and rapidly updated articles. Third, one Arabic–English bilingual researcher conducted the coding; the documented audit trail strengthens consistency, but independent recoding would provide an external test of category stability. Fourth, the analysis concerns published textual products and cannot establish the intentions of translators, editors, or institutions. Fifth, article revisions, platform-specific headlines, embedded video, images, and social-media distribution may contribute additional framing outside the principal body-text comparison. These limitations are particularly relevant because newsroom and gatekeeping research shows that textual outcomes are shaped by production conditions that cannot be reconstructed reliably from texts alone (Davier, 2014; Valdeón, 2022). In addition, the requirement that both outlets cover a statement favors widely reported propositions, and because both outlets are Gulf-based, convergence between them may partly reflect similar positioning rather than general Arabic news practice.

Further research should expand the number of propositions, include additional Arabic outlets, and compare conflict and non-conflict periods. A larger corpus could test whether the present differences in close translation, paraphrase, specification, and generalization remain stable and whether localized framing effects accumulate into stronger institutional patterns. Independent bilingual coders could assess agreement on observable strategy categories while retaining reflexive qualitative interpretation for framing and ideology. Interviews or newsroom observation would help distinguish institutional policy from time pressure, genre convention, and individual editorial judgment, while corpus-assisted analysis could test the frequency and direction of recurrent actor labels or modality patterns. Finally, multimodal analysis could examine how photographs, captions, video, and platform-specific headlines interact with translated body discourse, extending the present separation of body translation and headline framing into a fuller account of digital news production (Bednarek & Caple, 2017; Valdeón, 2025).

6 Conclusion

This study compared 27 verified English political propositions with paired Arabic renderings from Al Arabiya and Sky News Arabia during the June 2025 Iran–Israel conflict. The findings indicate that translation in digital news is neither simple reproduction nor unrestricted ideological rewriting. Close rendering predominated, yet recurrent shifts in modality, actor representation, causal responsibility, explicitness, metaphor, discourse presentation, specificity, and headline salience altered how selected propositions could be understood. These changes sometimes strengthened or redirected frames of nuclear danger, military action, responsibility, and political evaluation.

The central conclusion is one of qualified variation. Fifteen paired units converged and 12 diverged; intensification and mitigation occurred in both outlets; and diplomatic or de-escalatory recommendations were generally preserved. The corpus therefore supports selective, context-dependent recontextualization rather than a consistent outlet-wide ideological transformation. By combining verified proposition-level alignment, paired-outlet comparison, explicit attention to convergence, and a staged theory-to-evidence procedure, the study offers a replicable way to identify politically consequential translation choices without confusing difference with bias, headline salience with body translation, or local framing effects with institutional ideology.

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