

Narrative Account of the Arab Spring: Translations of Aljazeera and RT of the Egyptian and Syrian Uprisings as Case Study

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Abstract—the events of the Arab Spring attracted the attention of many scholars from various disciplines. However, the general trend of existing literature seems to ignore the different cultural representations within the Arab world leading for assumptions that the uprisings share similar outcomes and/or motivations. This article attempts to deconstruct the terms Arab Spring and Arab world through shedding light on two of the most influential uprisings that brought about social, economic, and political changes. To do so, it combines CDA and narrative theory to address the subject of the thematic nature of the subsequent media messages during the Egyptian and Syrian uprisings to investigate the process of meaning-making and the role of language in social reality construction. The purpose is to motivate researchers to address the largely ignored issue of the different representations in media and narratives.

Index Terms—Arab Spring, narrative theory, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language of media, translation and media, agenda setting, RT, Aljazeera (AJE)

I. INTRODUCTION

Media and news sources have been devoting considerable efforts to classifying the Arab Spring activities and participants. Similarly to how scholars in the years following 9/11 attacks understandably focused on terrorism representation and metaphor (Krueger, 2008 and Ryan, 2004), this article investigates the steps leading to the construction of the conflicting narratives. It focuses on the periods of the 19-days unrest in Egypt which lead to the step down of Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011 and the suspected use of chemical weapons in Syria on August 21, 2013. It particularly focuses on the scrutinizing utterances where disagreements between news channels are expected to occur. It then links the roles played by media in their use of language as social practice in constructing realities rather than merely presenting them leading to positioning the audience in an intended area where their interpretations of the unfolding events are influenced.

The act of translation is traditionally seen as an act of transferring written and uttered texts from one language into another. It usually comes as a form of identifying the target culture with an attempt of rewriting the source text in different cultural and linguistic frames. From this aspect, the act of translation is the act of transferring two significant systems in media and communication studies; the linguistic and cultural systems. This article is taking interest in the link and relation between media and translation as a form of meaning-making process influenced by modern studies in critical discourse analysis, linguistics and narrative theory. They aim to establish the rules and steps of creating connotations, interpretations and versions of the same story or the bigger projected and perceived narratives of the Syrian and Egyptian uprisings. Or as Saldanha (2011, p. 150, emphasis in original) summarises: “discourse is both socially conditioned, *and* shapes social relationships, and that it is necessary to adopt a critical stance towards the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed.” The examination of translations acts as precursor for understanding how were certain utterances or written texts comprehended because the way the text is understood governs the way it is translated.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The 3 ways analysis combining CDA, narrative theory and content analysis covers the texts from different angles. While CDA tackles the issues of authorship, linguistics, asks when and how certain things were said, narrative theory looks more into what was translated and links them to the larger texts looked at in the CDA as an inseparable part of the bigger narrative. Content analysis then deals with the issues of emotions, self-referential narratives, media memory, etc. and establish a relation with both created narrative and other subsequent media messages. Together, these theories, at least partially, stand on the systematic meaning-making process as shown below. Among the first to shed light on the role translation plays in creating meanings is Christina Sch äffner (2007). Sch äffner¹ addressed this subject from three

¹ Ibid

different aspects: the relation between politics² and translation, translating texts of political nature, and politicising translations. Schäffner (2007, p. 138) acknowledges that at that time there was still no ‘major monograph’ on the subject of translation and political discourse. She carried on researching on this subject in her (2009) ‘Political discourse and translation’ and (2010) *Political Discourse, Media and Translation*. Then moved on to research the topics of contextualisation and links between texts in 2012, the role of the translator as an active agent in translation in 2013, and most recently the role played by the translators in positioning the audience to take an intended direction towards making certain interpretations in 2014 and 2015.

As shown above, the diversity of the texts and their distinct characteristics does not only require special consideration, but also a different approach of the existing theories themselves. The distinct texts and their contradictions enrich the theories of narratives and CDA and test the research hypothesis of the systematic meaning-making process.

III. MEANING-MAKING ON LEXICAL LEVEL

An important first step is the consideration of linguistic integration in social reality. This is because from narrative perspective, texts and translations are not separated from other factors influencing the constructed bigger narratives. To clarify, when an earlier text classifies participants as violent or pro-democracy, this affects texts produced later that might be interpreted in a manner that echoes their activities though the later text might not mention them or refers to them only indirectly. House (2013, p. 19) argues that the focus on the text to be translated implies its meanings are contained in the text itself while there is “a shift from the semantics of the text to the pragmatics of text interpretation.” An observation that seems to be in line with the findings this article discusses. House (2013, p. 20) also adds the audience bring to the texts their “subjective understanding, their personal background, and their contextual knowledge” to interpret it. However, since their understanding of the unfolding events is expected to be influenced by the media representation of episodes leading to or shortly follow broadcasting the speeches, the question is how were they made to understand the events at hand.

This part explores the social and cultural dimensions of texts³ as crafted objects. Discourses shape how the audience see the world and the language used is derived from context. Therefore, an important first step to analyse the language is examining the context. The question to be asked then is when can we consider a meaning created to go back and investigate how it was created? According to Emmitt and Zbaracki (2010) overtime, viewpoints develop and then seen as natural due to a process of meaning making such as constant use i.e they become normalised and no longer questioned. As a result, language creates reality⁴ and at that point, this research considers a meaning has been created and then goes back to trace the steps that led to its creation. Analysis of the broadcasts from this aspect first looks at the way meaning is made in different modalities⁵. This approach considers discourse as a way of “representing a particular aspect of reality from a particular ideological⁶ perspective” (Ivanic, 1998. P. 17). Since it is determined by interpretations, discourse is not only a way of speaking and writing, but also of thinking. Therefore, the broadcasts can be studied critically as they might index the way the broadcasters are enacting ideologies to answer, at least partially, how are the meanings created because “language is not an abstract system, but is always socially and historically located in discourses” (Weedon, 1980. Cited in Kramersch, 2013, p.25).

At early stages, AJE appears to isolate the stories of the ongoing conflict between the Syrian regime and the opposition⁷ forces from the rest of the world. Stories of this conflict often dominate the highlights of the day and the excerpts chosen to be translated from speeches of both officials and opposition leaders are often focusing on the clashes between the two forces. This is then usually followed by news of the situation in Egypt. On the other hand, RT often prioritise the American – Russian relations and attempts to link it to the ongoing conflict. It focuses on the history of the American-led interventions in neighbouring countries like Iraq and Libya and others such as Vietnam and Bosnia. Memory in media differs in RT and AJE’s coverage; while AJE focuses on the use of Chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein against civilians in 1980s, RT focuses on the destabilisation of the region created, in its view, by the American-led intervention in Libya and Iraq.

As mentioned earlier, since language is derived from the context, language used needs to be analysed first by examining the context. To examine the context, three aspects need to be considered: the register, tenor, and mode. Register deals with understanding the language choice which is used in accordance with the situation. Tenor deals with the relation between the broadcaster and the listener *i.e* is it informative, persuasive or both. Finally, mode considers the form and type of communication *i.e* heard, seen or a combination of them. Therefore, broadcasters or any text producer can position their targeted audience towards the direction of taking an intended position to reach intended conclusions

² Including culture and media.

³ Texts are not seen as neutral or representations or reality as they are social constructions created by the broadcasters for a purpose.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ It addresses how the meanings were created, related and organised on the textual and communication level.

⁶ Ideologies in this article are considered as “representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintain and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9)

⁷ According to RT, the main body of the opposition forces is the armed group of Al Nusra which is the Al Qaeda branch in the Levant and classified by the majority of countries as a terrorist organisation. According to AJE, the main opposition body is the Syrian National Coalition which is recognised by most regional and global countries and represents Syria’s seat at the Arab League.

and interpretations (Schäffner, 2015). For example, in their reports, AJE refers to the opposition forces as civilians and their actions as strive for freedom while RT refers to them as militants and sometimes as terrorists or extremists. Both AJE and RT sometimes call the rebels as opposition forces, but RT⁸ describes anti-government groups and actions as “terrorism” and “militant”. While terrorism is self-explanatory, the word militant according to Oxford Dictionary means “favouring confrontational or violent methods in support of a political or social cause.” Therefore, there is an apparent distinction in connotations when words such as citizens, activists or people are used by AJE⁹ as opposed to terrorists and militants used by RT.

Similarly, in their coverage of the Egyptian uprising, RT and AJE’s classification of participants differ. Both channels reported on February 2nd clashes between protesters but with different word choice. While RT reported “pro and anti-Mubarak demonstrators clash”¹⁰, AJE reported clashes between “pro-democracy protesters and those fighting for the government.”¹¹ Similarly, while RT repeatedly described the protests violent such as saying “dozens have been killed in the violent anti-government protest”¹², AJE was reporting it was peaceful saying “protesters are holding peaceful and celebratory demonstrations.”¹³ This article reverts later to this aspect to investigate it in light of audience positioning and translations.

A. Story Focus

TABLE 1:
AJE AND RT STORY FOCUS (EGYPT)

(N=237)	AJE		RT		Total		Chi-square/ (p-value)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Government	22	17.19	24	22.02	46	19.40	0.7 (0.4)
Humanitarian	49	38.28	14	18.84	63	26.58	14.32 (p < 0.001)
Political	18	14.06	39	35.78	57	24.05	11.54 (p < 0.001)
Uprising	39	30.47	32	29.36	71	29.96	0.02 (0.88)
Total	128	100.0	109	100.0	237	100.0	

$$\chi^2 = 26.60; df = 3; \chi^2/df = 8.87; Cramer's V = 0.335$$

In terms of government and uprising perspective, the results show there are no statistically significant results with *p*-values 0.4 and 0.88 respectively. On the other hand, statistically significant results are observed in humanitarian and political aspects. These results are in line with previous findings published by Aday *et al* (2005) who observed that AJE tends to focus on humanitarian issues including civilian casualties and their suffering. In AJE coverage, the highest percentage was for humanitarian aspect (38.28%) and the least was on political aspect with (14.06%), while RT was the opposite with political being the highest (35.78%) and humanitarian being the lowest (18.84%). Bennett (2012, pp. 22-23) states “the idea of agenda setting involves using the news to influence what the public regards as important for them to think about in society and politics.” Therefore, the focus on humanitarian aspect on the expense of the political aspect is suggestive of AJE’s audience positioning.

As table 2 below summarises, similar results were observed in RT’s broadcasts covering the Syrian uprising. However, AJE’s broadcasts shows equal focus on both political and humanitarian aspects. Statistically significant results were observed in the humanitarian and government aspects while there are no statistically significant results in the military/terrorism episodes.

TABLE 2:
AJE AND RT STORY FOCUS (SYRIA)

(N=298)	AJE		RT		Total		Chi-square/ (p-value)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Government	9	6.38	31	19.75	40	13.42	9.88 (0.0017)
Military/Terrorism	24	17.02	25	15.92	49	16.44	0.84 (0.81)
Humanitarian	46	32.62	19	12.10	65	21.81	22.80 (p < 0.001)
Political	46	32.62	78	49.68	124	41.61	25.34 (0.023)
Opposition	16	11.35	4	2.55	20	6.71	13.07 (0.003)
Total	141	100.0	157	100.0	298	100.0	

$$\chi^2 = 38.044; df = 4; \chi^2/df = 9.51; Cramer's V = 0.3573$$

News channels do not only choose the focus, but also the voices they want to be heard more. Voicing a certain group more is often motivated by an attempt to be in their favour. Ginneken (1998, p.85) argues in the context of “the politics of loud and whispering voices” that “news is based on a selective articulation of certain voices about supposed events: not only the voices of journalists themselves, but also their sources.” He also adds (1998, p.89) in the context of credibility, “journalists are ready to believe, and have the public believe, some sources and not others.” A key point to

⁸ RT 23/08/2013.

⁹ AJE 21/08/2013.

¹⁰ RT 02/02/2011.

¹¹ AJE 02/02/2011.

¹² RT 29/01/2011.

¹³ AJE 01/02/2011.

be considered is interpretation. Fairclough (2003, p. 53) argues “framing can be conducive to an interpretation favourable to a group and unfavourable for another.” Having said that, it is important to note that movements often seek to be voiced by media perhaps more often than the government. McAdam (2011, p. 276) argues “most movements spend considerable time and energy in seeking to attract and shape media coverage of their activities”. It is also important to note that voicing a participant does not necessarily entail being in favour of their narrative. A channel might voice a participant and then attempt to refute their statements. From the relation between voices and discourse perspective, Barkho (2010, p. 42) argues “when discourse is contextualised, voices taking part in it do not enjoy equal opportunity to power, emphasis and authority.” Both RT and AJE voiced both parties; however, they were not equally heard as the tables below summarise.

TABLE 3:
AJE AND RT NEWS SOURCE (EGYPT)

(N=237)	AJE		RT		Total		Chi-square/ (p-value)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Government	16	12.50	26	23.85	42	17.72	4.28 (0.04)
Opposition	25	19.53	11	10.09	36	15.19	3.45 (0.06)
Civilians	24	18.75	9	8.26	33	13.92	4.66 (0.03)
Government and Civilians	0	0	7	6.42	7	2.95	8.22 (0.004)
Opposition and Civilians	16	12.50	3	2.75	19	8.01	7.00 (0.008)
UN	6	4.69	0	0	6	2.53	5.10 (0.02)
Social Media	6	4.69	0	0	6	2.53	5.10 (0.02)
Correspondents	11	8.59	10	9.17	21	8.86	0.02 (0.88)
Russia	0	0	16	14.68	16	6.75	18.8 (p < 0.001)
U.S.	5	3.90	6	5.50	11	4.64	0.32 (0.56)
Experts	19	14.84	21	19.27	40	16.88	0.68 (0.40)
Total	128	100.0	109	100.0	237	100.0	

$$\chi^2 = 57.62; df = 9; \chi^2/df = 6.40; Cramer's V = 0.49$$

Results revealed that RT voiced the opposition (10.09%) less than half the times of voicing the government (23.85%). In contrast to its counterpart, AJE voiced the opposition (19.53%) compared to (12.5%) the government. It is important here to make the distinction between RT and AJE's definition of “Egyptians”. When AJE used “Egyptians”, it referred to both the opposition and other civilians and they were voiced (12.5%) compared to RT (2.75%). Such as “Egyptians from all walks of life took to the street”¹⁴ and “Egyptians demand cheaper food and more freedom”¹⁵. However, RT used “Egyptians” to refer to the government and civilians and voiced them together (6.42%) compared to AJE (0.0%). For example, “Egyptians want the international committee to stay out of their affairs”¹⁶. Most notably was the complete lack of AJE voicing the Russian view (0.0%) compared to RT (14.68%) while they both voiced the U.S. in a few cases (3.9%) and (5.5%) respectively. For example, RT reported Russia says “Egypt should resolve crisis by itself, no outside pressure is needed”¹⁷.

TABLE 3:
AJE AND RT NEWS SOURCE (SYRIA)

(N=298)	AJE		RT		Total		Chi-square/ (p-value)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Government	10	7.09	32	20.38	41	13.76	9.56 (0.002)
Correspondents	14	9.93	31	19.75	44	14.77	4.87 (0.027)
Experts	15	10.64	8	5.10	23	7.71	2.96 (0.086)
Opposition	23	16.31	5	3.18	28	9.40	13.62 (p < 0.001)
Civilians	18	12.77	7	4.46	25	8.40	6.11 (0.013)
UN	10	7.09	6	3.82	16	5.37	1.48 (0.22)
Both government and civilians	0	0	15	9.55	15	5.03	13.47 (p < 0.001)
Both opposition and civilians	5	3.55	0	0	5	1.68	5.57(0.018)
Russia and allies	10	7.09	28	17.83	38	12.75	6.72(0.01)
U.S. and allies	36	25.53	25	15.92	63	21.14	4.27(0.069)
Total	141	100.0	157	100.0	298	100.0	

$$\chi^2 = 68.63689; df = 9; \chi^2/df = 7.62632111; Cramer's V = 0.159974002828303$$

The results in the above tables indicate that the narrative RT intends to construct is, to some extent, influenced by loyalty to the Egyptian government and Russia while AJE's narrative is influenced by the opposition views as the following table summarises. As Barkho (2010, p. 43) explains “we are aware that hard-news discourse is of multiple voices but need to see how these voices are represented”. From CDA perspective, main and secondary voices need to be

¹⁴ AJE 25/01/2011.

¹⁵ AJE 27/01/2011.

¹⁶ RT 02/02/2011.

¹⁷ RT 02/02/2011.

distinguished. This can be done by asking why certain participants were voiced. For example, a channel might voice a participant who is expected to side with the government such as a leading figure in the ruling party but he might side with the opposition. Alternatively, a channel might voice participants and then attempt to refute them using visuals, witnesses, UN statistics, etc.

B. Translations: Syrian Uprising

On the first day of the alleged attack, AJE was quick to accept the claims and RT was quite sceptical. RT chose words carefully to emphasise where did the accusations come from. For example, while AJE said activists say and the government denies¹⁸, RT¹⁹ said the rebels accuse the government, but both officials and locals say they have seen no evidence of a chemical attack. It then added that the first to break this news was the Saudi Arabian network Al-Arabiya and stressed on, as it believes, “Saudi Arabia has its own agenda inside Syria; it is anti-president Assad.” And added in the next day, these reports came from “biased regional media”²⁰. Therefore, from the early stages, RT stressed on linking the ongoing conflict to the interests of other countries and their possible interventions an attempt which was not made by AJE till later stages as will be shown later. Therefore, another way to look at this subject is to ask how are the audience being positioned rather than how is the meaning created. In technical terms, this approach is often referred to as critical literacy²¹ to be able to analyse texts with the aim of examining the ideologies at work. To do so, questions such as who is doing what to whom? Whose interests the texts serve? Who is being marginalised or silenced and who is not? Should be addressed.

To illustrate, the following translation provides an example for this process. AJE broadcasted on August 21st, the first day of the alleged attack, a translated speech delivered by, as they call, an activist. “The number of victims from children and others is very high. I carried in my own hands 50 dead children. The worst thing about what happened is the indiscriminate nature of the attack and the ignorance of the people who did not know what to do when the attack took place.” AJE added, “pictures appear to show dozens of dead bodies that have no visible wounds or trauma.”²² It is useful to look first at how RT portrayed this story at an early stage to facilitate standing on how were the audience being positioned by AJE and vice versa. RT responded to this by saying rebels accuse the government of launching an attack, but “we have been talking to locals who confirm there was fighting earlier, but they insist there have been absolutely no signs of any chemical attacks.”²³

Therefore, there are two aspects to consider from the terminology used in these two broadcasts. Firstly, the source of information is labelled by AJE as an activist and by RT as rebels. The differences between activist and rebel signal the level of credibility attached to this source by the broadcasters. Secondly, to say this source says that an attack took place is different than saying this source accuse because the later requires evidence. Therefore, following that accusation by saying locals “insist there have been absolutely no signs of any chemical attacks”²⁴, signal the positioning of the audience intended by RT as discrediting the rebels as a reliable source of information. However, AJE did the opposite by reporting there are “dozens of dead bodies that have no visible wounds or trauma” to signal that these were not killed by conventional weapons. Both RT and AJE add their own interpretations, speculations and predictions to the ongoing conflict. For example, before the UN investigations team reached Syria, AJE reported on the second day August 22nd, 2013 “government forces fired rockets loaded with toxic gas into Eastern Ghouta” and following reports stated over 1000 were killed²⁵. RT reported on the same day “there is no confirmation of the use of chemical weapons” and it also emphasised that if they had been in fact used, then the opposition is to blame basing their speculation on two points: Syrian regime forces are winning ground and the timing of the attack.²⁶ An important question to be considered is whose interests the texts serve? Apparently, AJE’s broadcasts are consistent with what the activists had to say and therefore, they serve the interests of the opposition. On the other hand, RT seems to attempt to discredit the opposition forces and therefore, they serve the interests of the regime. Who is being marginalised or silenced? While RT attempts to discredit the opposition in order to silence them and voice the regime, AJE attempts to do the opposite.

C. Translations: Egyptian Uprising

Intertextuality, as Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 276) explain, is “the way discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier as well as those which are produced synchronically or subsequently.” Therefore, Fairclough and Wodak’s perspective seem to be in line with the explanation of the thematic coverage where the subsequent media messages are linked together in one way or another. From translation perspective, narratives, as Baker (2006, p.3) explains,

¹⁸ AJE 21/08/2013.

¹⁹ RT 21/08/2013.

²⁰ RT 22/08/2013.

²¹ Interrogating texts.

²² AJE 21/08/2013.

²³ RT 21/08/2013.

²⁴ RT 21/08/2013.

²⁵ AJE 22/08/2013.

²⁶ RT 22/08/2013.

are dynamic entities; they change in subtle or radical ways as people experience and become exposed to new stories on a daily basis. This assumption has a number of consequences. First, narrative theory recognizes that people's behaviour is ultimately guided by the stories they come to believe about the events in which they are embedded, rather than by their gender, race, colour of skin, or any other attribute. Second, because narratives are dynamic, they cannot be streamlined into a set of stable stories that people simply choose from. Narrative theory recognizes that at any moment in time we can be located within a variety of divergent, criss-crossing, often vacillating narratives, thus acknowledging the complexity and fluidity of our positioning in relation to other participants in interaction. Third, because narratives are continually open to change with our exposure to new experience and new stories, they have significant subversive or transformative potential.

Baker (2006) then exemplifies this notion by saying to undermine regimes such as Nazi Germany an alternative narrative is constructed to challenge the stories that they had earlier used to sustain them. Baker (2009, p. 11) also added "the issue of representation is closely linked to the environment of reception". In his investigation of the cultural aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict media coverage, Wolfsfeld (1997, p.54) argues "the media serves as *public interpreters* of events and as *symbolic arenas* for ideological struggle between antagonists" (italics in original). From dialogism perspective, Barkho (2010, p.122) states that one of its important aspects is "how a new text accommodates an older one that, in news, is discursively represented in the reporting of the speech through quoting, scare quoting, and paraphrasing."

Therefore, the focus in analysing the following translations draws on Sch äffner (2013) approach where the question asked is how does narrating a story from particular perspective participate in constructing a narrative because it is expected from the decisions mentioned earlier, the viewers, being influenced by the constructed narrative, will reach different interpretations. From sociocultural approach perspective, Wolf (2002, p. 33) adds:

Sociological approach to the study of translation therefore would follow the insight that translation is a socially-regulated activity and consequently analyse the social agents responsible for the creation of translation. The analysis of the social implications of translation helps us to identify the translator as constructing and constructed subject in society, and to view translation as a social practice.

Her remarks can relate to the current investigation in the sense that the meanings are not contained only in the produced translations as their interpretation is associated with the context presented during, before or after producing translations.

January 28th Mubarak speech: The excerpt that was chosen to be translated says:

"the incident that took place today and the past few days have left the majority of Egyptian people fearing for Egypt and its future, causer of further mayhem, chaos and destruction. I, shouldering my first responsibility to maintain the homeland security and the citizens safety, cannot tolerate, cannot allow this fear to grip our people and therefore I would not allow this to haunt our future and fate. I have requested the government to step down today and I will designate a new government as of tomorrow."²⁷ If taken separately, the inclusion of the speaker's voice in broadcasters' coverage of a speech delivered depends, at least partially, on the broadcasters' decision of whether to use direct or indirect reporting. Though this decision is important, there are other aspects need to be considered. Observing the broadcasts concerned with the translations showed RT and AJE used forms of additions in form of commentary and interpretations, being selective of what to include in their excerpts or both. Fairclough (2003, p. 53) argues:

when the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to frame it, how to contextualize it, in terms of other parts of the text – about relations between report and authorial account. For example, the report that the Libyans 'said they wanted more time to sort out the details of the handover' is framed with 'faced by the threat of more sanctions', and one might see this framing as conducive to a rather negative interpretation of what the Libyan officials are reported to have said as, for instance, 'stalling' – indeed the correspondent does later hypothesize about 'a delaying tactic'.

Similarly, as he promised in his speech, Mubarak appointed a vice president for the first time in Egypt as a response to the protesters' demands. RT reported this as "Mubarak to appoint new government amid deadly protests against his rule"²⁸. However, AJE reported "Mubarak appointed his chief of intelligence in a bid to save his own presidency" and "Mubarak may have chosen him to retain international support because Suleiman earned the respect of U.S. and Israel through his elegance in the Arab-Israeli conflict."²⁹ On the other hand, RT saw this as a compromise made by the government, but the opposition is not willing to offer something of the sort. AJE also added as a response to the speech "Mubarak sounds absolutely out of touch with his people" and correspondents later concluded "Mubarak has earned the hatred and disregard of the Egyptian people"³⁰. Based on these, AJE concluded "appointing vice president is seen too little too late."³¹

February 1st Mubarak Speech:

²⁷ AJE 28/01/2011.

²⁸ RT 29/01/2011.

²⁹ AJE 29/01/2011.

³⁰ AJE 28/01/2011.

³¹ AJE 30/01/2011.

AJE's coverage of the 10 minutes speech (1013) words focused almost solely on the issue that Mubarak intends to finish the remainder of his term in office. Mubarak said he will continue the remainder of his term to ensure peaceful transfer of power and will not be running for re-election. RT reported this as "Mubarak pledges September stepdown, but protesters demand immediate exit."³² However, AJE reported this as "defiant Mubarak vows to finish term"³³. As a comment on the translated speech, AJE said "Mubarak seemed largely unfazed by the protests during his recorded address". AJE also added Mubarak said "the young people have the right to peaceful demonstrations. But his tone quickly turned accusatory, saying the protestors had been taken advantage of by people trying to undermine the government." AJE concluded "it is clear that President Mubarak is in denial over his legacy" and if he "did not heed the call to leave power at once, he would be not only a lame-duck president but a dead man walking."³⁴ Basing this speculation on "he is unfortunately going to extend the agony here for another six-seven months. He continues to polarise the country. He continues to get people even more angry and could resort to violence"³⁵. AJE concluded, "indeed, none of the protestors interviewed by Al Jazeera earlier today said they would accept Mubarak finishing his term in office."³⁶ Similarly to Fairclough's Libya example mentioned earlier, this aspect was viewed in two ways: "waiting game" and "pressure from the US administration, which urged him not to seek re-election"³⁷. AJE viewed this as an attempt to "outlast the crowds amassed at Tahrir Square."³⁸

On the other hand, RT focused on the issues of possible "destabilisation", "Mubarak is the only thing holding Egypt in its place", and the fears of "Islamic takeover of Egypt."³⁹ RT based these speculations on "people are looting museums" and "Israel is nervous" because they "prefer the status quo to any other changes."⁴⁰ This is in line with observations noted above of RT's attempt to frame the uprising in a larger political narrative. RT in this example is also attempting to extend the political meaning to include neighbouring countries by highlighting the effect this uprising might have on them. However, AJE stressed on the following day of delivering the speech that "police forces are supervising looting" and "the security forces are terrorising the people."⁴¹ This, to some extent, may challenge the meaning Mubarak intended to create a meaning of stabilisation is only possible after Mubarak steps down. From framing narratives in translations perspective, Baker (2006, p. 105) remarks "translators and interpreters can and do resort to various strategies to strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate, explicitly or implicitly." The strategies observed in the reports linked to the produced translations seemed to focus on recontextualisation of certain aspects to be reframed in a different context and emphasising certain aspects on the expense of others. By doing so, the channels actions signal whether they empathise with the speaker. For example, actions included labelling groups, participants, and actions. Some of these actions can also be approached in light of additions and omissions as the next section investigates.

From translation and relevance perspective, Gutt (2010) argues since translation is part of communication, the context determines the interpretation. Therefore, as this article shows, addressing the translations produced is a question of how were the speeches interpreted because it is expected that an RT viewer might understand them differently from an AJE viewer. This assumption is based on RT and AJE's efforts before and after the speeches were delivered to position the audience as discussed in the sections leading to the translations. From narrative account in examining translations, produced translations are not separated from other texts (Baker, 2006). To exemplify, from the dates of broadcasting this event, AJE seems to have attempted to refute both RT and Mubarak's first speech. The focus of RT's broadcast on January 29th, 2011 titled "Mob Rule" was the "violent" actions of protesters towards the police and that the "police stations have been raided."⁴² AJE, which previously stressed the protesters are peaceful, responded on the following day saying "people attacked the police because police are protecting the corrupt regime not the people"⁴³. AJE also showed footage showing IDs of arrested "thugs" belonging to the security forces.⁴⁴ AJE agreed partly with Mubarak's second speech where he stated the protests are being infiltrated. AJE broadcasted "violence is caused by saboteurs and thugs infiltrating the demonstrations"⁴⁵. However, AJE added in the same report that "looters are members of the central security, interior ministry and police"⁴⁶. This added an effect that was not intended by the speaker.

IV. FINDINGS SUMMARY

³² RT 02/02/2011.

³³ AJE 02/02/2011.

³⁴ AJE 02/02/2011.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ RT 02/02/2011.

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ AJE 29/01/2011.

⁴² RT 29/01/2011.

⁴³ AJE 30/01/2011.

⁴⁴ AJE 30/01/2011.

⁴⁵ AJE 01/02/2011.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The main objective of this article was investigating how were the social, political, and cultural contexts manifested in the process of creating AJE and RT narratives for the coverage of a media event during the Syrian and Egyptian uprisings. The analysis shed light on how translations of speeches delivered by officials and notable opposition leaders can function as the corner stone to construct narratives when they are interpreted or perceived differently to ultimately lead AJE and RT to promote their interpretations through constructing realities rather than representing them. The investigation has also showed that the produced translations undergone a number of various shifts and alterations that determined, at least partially, the final projected narratives, e.g. the Syrian regime is helping securing the world by compacting a group of al Qaeda-affiliated violent extremist rebels who are constantly targeting civilians and religious minorities communities as through the eyes of RT or the Syrian regime is oppressing its people who are striving for freedom and rights by indiscriminate bombardment including the use of chemical weapons as through the eyes of AJE. The competition between the two channels is evident through the larger projected narratives as well as the episodes within these narratives such as labelling the actors of these narratives as activists or rebels, people/civilians, or extremists/terrorists.

The range of illustrative examples provided in this article are aimed to demonstrate that the relation between the mentioned episodes is not established by unfolding events alone, but due to a systematic meaning making process which is shown through the patterns emerging from consistencies either in favour of or against the translations. These examples also showed the impact of lexical choices on both the translations and the reports prepared to cover a channel's interpretation of that translation. Since this media event is of political nature, politically sensitive concepts were examined in the light of cultural, socio-political and historical contexts as in the case of the use of media memory by RT. Compared to AJE, RT made its political position clearer. It is opposed to U.S. foreign policy and it is questioning the motivation of the U.S. intervention. Therefore, particularly in RT's coverage, the examples have shown that the language used is ideologically motivated and that is important because acknowledging this observation shows, at least partially, how they created different interpretations on these episodes which in turn resulted in different narrative.

Finally, the analysis established, at least to some extent, that the shifts in emphasis following the production of translation is often motivated by attempts to strengthen the constructed narrative or to at least maintain it. Certain translation strategies ranging between lexical choices to additions and omissions were dominant. Most frequently, omissions and addition of interpretations were the mostly used. Arguably, they are amongst the strategies that impact the meanings the most. To sum up, consider the following example. For the sake of an argument, assume this was mentioned in a broadcast: The Syrians are fighting to protect their country. An RT viewer that is following their interpretations would most likely understand this as: The Syrian government is fighting to protect the civilians from the militants. However, AJE viewers would probably understand it as the activists are fighting to rid their country of Assad's dictatorship.

V. CONCLUSION

In contrast to earlier research which suggest AJE often takes anti-American and anti-West tone (Lynch, 2006; Miles, 2005), this article shows, at least with regards to the unrests in Syria and Egypt, that AJE supports the narrative the US intended to construct and refute that of Russia while RT intended to do the opposite. The study of framing in global media events enjoyed significant attention from scholars such as (Barkho 2010; Schudson 2002; Wolfsfeld 1997) where issues such as comparison of BBC, CNN, and Al-Jazeera coverages were compared and contrasted on events including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (sometimes referred to as Arab-Israeli conflict), first and second Gulf wars, Somalia conflict, and September 11th attacks. However, in investigating the coverage of the Arab Spring events, scholars opted to adopt similar strategy to that which was adopted in earlier research. This resulted in neglecting the differences in political and cultural representations of the countries witnessing the Arab Spring events because the mentioned earlier research tackled separate countries within the Arab World that witnessed events limited to one or two countries. The Arab Spring events, however, took place in 18 out of 22 Arab League states. This article shows that approaching the Arab World as a single entity and the Arab Spring as a single event marginalises the representation of differences between the countries witnessing the Arab Spring. Though the examination only considered 2 out of 18 countries witnessing the Arab Spring events, distinct representations in media were observed.

APPENDIX A. RT COVERAGE OF SYRIA'S UPRISING AUGUST 21ST-SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2013.

Date	Time of Broadcast/Duration	Host
21/8/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35409
22/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35443
23/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35488
23/08/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35495
24/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35515
24/08/2013	13:00/ 90 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35519
25/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35531
25/08/2013	2:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35535
26/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35552
26/08/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35558
27/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35620
27/08/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35626
28/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35667
28/08/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35673
29/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35700
29/08/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35706
30/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35747
30/08/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35759
31/08/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35781
01/09/2013	14:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35800
02/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35857
02/09/2013	13:00/ 2 hours 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35866
03/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35907
03/09/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35913
04/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35954
04/09/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35960
05/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35995
06/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/36034
06/09/2013	13:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36056
07/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/36078
07/09/2013	13:00/ 2 hours 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/36082
08/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/36094
08/09/2013	14:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36098
09/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/36121
10/09/2013	2:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36209

Time Displayed is GMT.

APPENDIX B. AJE COVERAGE OF SYRIA'S UPRISING AUGUST 21ST-SEPTEMBER 9TH.

Date	Time of Broadcast/ Duration	Host
21/08/2013	20:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35431
22/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35444
23/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35489
23/08/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35501
23/08/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35509
24/08/2013	12:00/ 1 hour	http://videosever.bl.uk/35593
24/08/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35523
25/08/2013	19:00/ 2 hours 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/35542
26/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35554
27/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35621
27/08/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35642
28/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35668
28/08/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35679
28/08/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35689
29/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35701
29/08/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35721
30/08/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35748
30/08/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35775
31/08/2013	12:00/ 1 hour	http://videosever.bl.uk/35828
01/09/2013	19:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35845
02/09/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35858
02/09/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35883
03/09/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35908
03/09/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35930
04/09/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35955
04/09/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35977
05/09/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/35996
05/09/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36019
06/09/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36035
06/09/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36072
07/09/2013	12:00/ 30 minutes	http://videosever.bl.uk/36171
07/09/2013	16:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36085
08/09/2013	19:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36186
09/09/2013	11:00/ 2 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36122
09/09/2013	20:00/ 3 hours	http://videosever.bl.uk/36144

Time Displayed is GMT.

APPENDIX C. RT COVERAGE OF EGYPT'S UPRISING JANUARY 28TH-FEBRUARY 11TH, 2011.

Date	Time Of Broadcast/ Duration	Host
28/01/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5144
29/01/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5164
30/01/2011	11:00/56 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5184
31/01/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5207
01/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5232
02/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5260
03/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5290
04/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5336
05/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5349
06/02/2011	11:00/56 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5368
07/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5396
08/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5429
09/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5450
10/02/2011	13:00/34 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5475
11/02/2011	15:00/30 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5546

Time Displayed is GMT.

APPENDIX D. AJE COVERAGE OF EGYPT'S UPRISING JANUARY 25TH-FEBRUARY 11TH, 2011.

Date	Time of Broadcast/ Duration	Host
25/01/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5056
26/01/2011	23:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5078
27/01/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5205
28/01/2011	23:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5146
29/01/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5167
30/01/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5187
31/01/2011	23:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5209
01/02/2011	13:00/179 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5235
02/02/2011	17:00/58 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5270
03/02/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5292
04/02/2011	13:00/179 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5321
05/02/2011	15:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5352
06/02/2011	18:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5371
07/02/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5399
08/02/2011	21:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5431
09/02/2011	23:00/57 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5452
10/02/2011	13:00/179 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5477
11/02/2011	13:00/179 mins	http://videosever.bl.uk/5549

Time Displayed is GMT.

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