



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**TRANSLATION SHIFTS IN ALJAZEERA AND BBC TRANSLATIONS OF
OBAMA'S SPEECH ON THE ARAB SPRING**

NAZAR MOHAMMED TAWFIQ

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By

NAZAR MOHAMMED TAWFIQ

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

March 2019

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Media translation is among the subfields of translation studies that has grown in the last two decades, especially the translation of political discourse. However, there are scarce studies on tendencies or policies of international media agencies in terms of translator's behaviour and the nature of the translated texts. The current study seeks to analyse and contrast the Arabic translations of Obama's speech on Arab Spring delivered at the Department of State in 2011 which was translated by Aljazeera and BBC Arabic satellite television channels. For this purpose, four translation models; Molina and Albir (2002), Schjoldager (2008), Dukāte (2009) and Darwish (2010) were employed to detect and analyse translation shifts exercised by these two channels. The qualitative content analysis was adopted, where each translation was contrasted to the original English text so that translation shifts can be identified. The coding of the translations of Aljazeera and BBC was performed through a special application added to the Microsoft Office Word 2016. The study found that translation shifts were a priority for both media channels.

In other words, literal translation was avoided to a great extent and such shifts might be attributable, sometimes, to syntactic and semantic constraints (obligatory shifts) triggered by linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English. However, optional shifts were noted in greater rates in both Aljazeera and BBC. In terms of differences, there was no significant variation between Aljazeera and BBC in the rates of using obligatory and optional shifts which indicates that the translation policy in both international news agencies prioritise translator's fidelity to the editorial policy of the media agency in order to meet the expectations of target audience on the expense of faithfulness to the original text despite the fact each channel has its own ideology and media discourse.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**ANJAKAN TERJEMAHAN DALAM PENTERJEMAHAN UCAPAN OBAMA
OLEH ALJAZEERA DAN BBC MENGENAI KEBANGKITAN ARAB (ARAB
SPRING)**

Oleh

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Terjemahan media adalah antara subbidang kajian terjemahan yang telah berkembang dengan pesat dalam dua dekad yang lalu, terutamanya terjemahan wacana politik. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat kajian yang jarang didapati mengenai kecenderungan atau dasar agensi media antarabangsa dari segi tingkah laku penterjemah dan sifat teks yang diterjemahkan. Kajian ini bertujuan menganalisis dan membezakan terjemahan bahasa Arab bagi ucapan Obama mengenai Arab Spring yang disampaikan di Jabatan Negara pada tahun 2011 yang diterjemahkan oleh saluran televisyen satelit Aljazeera dan BBC Bahasa Arab. Untuk tujuan ini, tiga model penterjemahan; Molina dan Albir (2002), Schjoldager (2008), Dukāte (2009) dan Darwish (2010) digunakan untuk mengesan dan menganalisis perubahan terjemahan yang dilaksanakan oleh dua saluran ini.

Analisis kandungan kualitatif telah diterima pakai dengan setiap terjemahan balik bahasa Inggeris dibezakan dengan teks bahasa Inggeris asal supaya perubahan terjemahan dapat dikenal pasti. Pengekodan terjemahan Aljazeera dan BBC telah dilakukan melalui aplikasi khas yang ditambahkan ke Microsoft Office Word 2016. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa perubahan terjemahan merupakan keutamaan bagi kedua-dua saluran media ini.

Dengan erti kata lain, terjemahan literal telah banyak dielakkan dan perubahan-perubahan seperti itu mungkin, adakalanya dikaitkan dengan kekangan sintaksis dan semantik (perubahan wajib) yang dicetuskan oleh perbezaan bahasa dan budaya antara bahasa Arab dengan bahasa Inggeris. Walau bagaimanapun, perubahan pilihan telah dicatatkan pada kadar yang lebih tinggi dalam kedua-dua saluran Aljazeera dan BBC. Dari segi perbezaan, tidak ada variasi ketara antara Aljazeera dengan BBC dalam

menggunakan perubahan wajib dan pilihan yang menunjukkan bahawa dasar terjemahan di kedua-dua agensi berita antarabangsa ini memberi keutamaan kepada kesetiaan penterjemah terhadap harapan audiens sasaran dan kepada wacana media saluran-saluran media bahasa Arab ini sehingga menjejaskan kesetiaan kepada teks asal walaupun pada hakikatnya setiap saluran mempunyai ideologi dan wacana medianya yang tersendiri.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Alj	Aljazeera channel
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TS	Translation Studies
TT	Target Text

ARABIC TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

In order to facilitate the pronunciation of Arabic words appearing in the original texts, especially for non-Arab readers, the following transliteration system has consistently been used in this study.

1. Consonants :

ء (alif) ' (except when initial)

ب	b	ز	z	ف	f
ت	t	س	s	ق	q
ث	th	ش	sh	ك	k
ج	j	ص	ṣ	ل	l
ح	ḥ	ض	ḍ	م	m
خ	kh	ط	ṭ	ن	n
د	d	ظ	ẓ	هـ	h
ذ	dh	ع	' (ayn)	و	w
ر	r	غ	gh	ي	y

2. Vowels and Diphthongs:

اَ	a
اُ	u
اِ	i
اَآ	ā
اِآ	á
اُآ	ū
اِآ	I
اَو	aw
اِآ	ay

- This Arabic Transliteration System is taken from the 'Library of Congress'.

- It should be noted that English sound system has no one-to-one correspondence for (ء -ayn, ح, ع, هـ, ص, ض, ط, ظ, ع, ق & غ).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses background of study, statement of problem, justification of study, objectives of study, research questions, operational definition, theoretical framework, scope and significance of the study, and flowchart of study.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Definition of Arab Spring

Arab Spring refers to socio-political events that emerged in several Arab states and led to a profound change in political regimes (Litsas, 2013). This spring was triggered in Tunisia on December 17, 2010, in Sidi Bouzid city, when Bouazizi, a poor vegetable vendor, immolated himself as a kind of protest against the authorities who confiscated his cart because it was unlicensed (Wouters & Duquet, 2013). His action had resulted in a public outcry that soon turned into a revolution that spread rapidly to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. This reaction by the public was not surprising as they have been suppressed by deadly dictatorships.

These peoples suffered from economic corruption and poverty for more than three decades (Jamshidi, 2014; Salamey, 2015). These movements managed to alter the political systems of Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, and Egypt, and it may also change the system in Syria as well (Mameli, 2013). Within a relatively short period since the start of Arab uprisings, huge publications have addressed the Arab Spring (Christensen & Christensen, 2013).

1.1.2 Historical Background of the Arab Spring

To understand the potential motives behind recent Arab revolutions, we have to know first that most political leaders in the Middle East and North Africa region have no real legitimacy. After World War II, European invaders have withdrawn their armies and handed the power to local military leaders so that they can easily manage these newly independent nations. (Berger 2011). Following the prevalence of Arab nationalism, the majority of Arab countries were ruled by what were known as 'revolutionary councils', whose membership was predominated by military leaders. These councils relied heavily on armed forces to carry out the state's domestic and international agendas (Greffrath & Duvenhage, 2014). In most of these newly-formed Arab nations, freedoms of speech, assembly and belief were faced with brutality, expulsion, imprisonment and even kidnapping (Al-Momani, 2011). The internal security was the first and main concern of ruling regimes and the people were not normally represented. These regimes relied heavily on western powers to maintain their sovereignty (Akin, 2012). Another contributive factor for these revolutions was

that about 60% of the population of the Arab world is under the age of thirty and about 40% of this young generation is unemployed (Dagtas, 2013).

1.1.3 West Reaction towards Arab Spring

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area has been emphasised by the EU and US foreign policies due to three main reasons: oil exports, its impact on Israel security and its strategic location. The Middle East and North Africa is the reservoir of more than 54% of total global oil. Arab Spring will have its implications on the future of oil-dependent economies (Bahgat, 2012; Dadush & Dunne, 2011). The implications of Arab Spring on Israel security are also emphasised by its western partners.

Israelis are always sensitive to their security, and their reaction to the spread of democracy close to their borders seems to be pessimistic. Who comes to power next is of great concern to Israel. Jewish leaders are particularly fearful that Islamists will gain power as this may jeopardise the fate of the peace process between Arabs and Israel (Byman, 2011). Regarding the location, strategic trade routes like Suez Canal, Eden Strait, and Arabian Gulf pass through the MENA region (Leech & Gaskarth, 2015)

The uprisings in the MENA region shocked the West as Arab peoples have shown their capability of changing longstanding political systems only through peaceful popular protests. Most political surveys indicate that the initial motive behind US and EU stance towards the Middle Eastern countries is built on their interests. The West promotes democracy in these countries only when it does not challenge their interests (Hanau Santini & Hassan, 2012).

On the public level, Western nations welcomed the birth of new democracies in the region. However, in the last decades, Western economies hugely benefited from their cooperation with the classical political systems. Eventually, Western nations felt obliged to rearrange their foreign goals and strategies and to open a dialogue with these emerging democracies (Aliboni, 2011). This led to a significant gap between realism and idealism of the foreign policies and political discourse of Western nations regarding the most recent revolutions in the Arab area (Atlas, 2012).

1.2 Statement of Problem

With the rise of the cultural direction in translation studies, the status of the translator gained more attention. Such a direction assumes that translator behaviour is not arbitrary; it is influenced by several factors such as the patronage of the institution, ideology, cultural background, etc. (Fu, 2009; Zhao, 2009). Translator behaviour in institutions is challenged by two basic forces; faithfulness and loyalty.

Faithfulness describes the degree of correspondence between the original and translated texts based on certain criteria. It pushes the translator to be honest and accurate to the original message as much as possible. Meanwhile, loyalty refers to the translator's compliance with institutions' rules, norms, policies, and code of conduct. It is primarily intended to meet the expectations of the target audience. Each extremity has a tendency towards certain translation shifts (Emery, 2004; Nord, 2002).

One important aspect of translation behaviour is related to the extent to which translators are biased to the source text or target text-oriented translation shifts while attempting to maintain equivalence between the original and the translated texts. Since it is difficult for translators to attain both form and content while translating between Arabic and English, translators either sacrifice content or form (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2016). To overcome all these differences and achieve equivalence, the translator usually sacrifices form and translators translating between Arabic and English usually have to depart from the linguistic rules (morphological, syntactical, lexical and pragmatic) of the source text and reshape the translation according to the rules of the target language. Such departures are known as translation shifts. One important aspect of translation behaviour is how translators carry out obligatory and optional translation shifts while attempting to maintain equivalence between the original and the translated texts. Concerning political texts, it should be stressed that persuasive styles in English are very different from those of Arabic. Therefore, it is difficult for faithful translators to attain both form and content while translating between Arabic and English. Translators either sacrifice content or form (Abdelaal & Rashid, 2016). To overcome all these differences and achieve equivalence, the translator usually sacrifices form. He has to depart from the linguistic rules (morphological, syntactical, lexical and pragmatic) of the source text and reshape the translation according to the rules of the target language. Such departures are known as translation shifts (Rydning & Lachaud, 2010).

Despite the centrality of translation shifts in assessing translation quality and in comparing the degree of professionalism, accuracy, bias, and manipulation in various translation institutions, a search of the literature revealed that only a few studies have dealt with translation shifts in general and in particular the translation of political discourse. The scarcity of previous studies in this area becomes more apparent when they involved Arabic-English language pair.

Although the current thesis has an applied dimension, it should be stressed that previous research in the domain of translation shifts incorporates both theoretical and applied studies. The major theoretical contributions in this regard may be attributed to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, 2000), Nida (1964), Catford (1965), van Leuven-Zwart (1989), Toury (2004), Cyrus (2009), Halverson (2007), and Meifang and Li (2009). A critique of previous applied studies in this area reveals that there is incoherence and even discrepancy in their findings and conclusions. For example, Blum-Kulka (1986) who is a pioneer in this regard concluded that translated texts tend to be explicitated through using redundant cohesive devices. In the same year, Broeck showed that the

word order of the source text was restructured in a way that is familiar to the target audience, which is supported recently by Zhu (2016).

On the contrary, Bandia (1993) conducted a normative study and indicated that African translators preferred source-text oriented translation shifts when they translated African creative works into European languages. Such incoherence may be primarily attributed to the fact the claims of such studies are based only on the qualitative paradigm and overlooked statistics and quantitative methods. The same is true when it comes to other non-Arabic studies like Karoly (2013), Gagnon and Kalantari (2017), and Banhegyi (2017), or when it comes to studies that involve Arabic-English language pair such as Ayyad (2011), Al-Fahmawi (2014), Hajjo and Kadhim (2017) and Rasul (2018).

The review of most relevant literature showed a clear gap in the study of translation shifts as they lacked comprehensiveness and profundity since research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of short texts such as excerpts, news headlines, recipes, etc. and they did not deal with entire texts. Furthermore, all these studies focused on certain translation shifts like omission, paraphrase and overlooked other shifts. Due to the limited scope of both of the analysed texts and models of analysis, the judgements about translator behaviour in media agencies may lack adequacy and accuracy especially when it comes to gauging translators tendencies towards source-oriented or target-oriented shifts.

Thus, the main problem that is going to be addressed in this comparative study is examining to what extent international news agencies including Aljazeera and BBC differ in their translation shifts and what are their priorities while dealing with political texts since there are so scarce published works about actual translation behaviour in such media institutions. The current study seeks to fill this gap through following several strategies that were not stressed on in previous studies. First, through analysing a complete speech event (Obama's speech on Arab Spring) because this may offer a sort of saturation in the examined data. Second, making two levels of comparisons with the first being conducted between the two target texts of Aljazeera and the BBC against the original English text and then by contrasting both target texts against each other. Third, four models of analysis are used instead of relying on a single model to add rigour to the findings of the thesis as each model focuses on certain aspects of the translation that may not be examined by other models because most translation models are developed or motivated by various reasons or perspectives. Thus, they may contribute to more representative or at least more reasonable findings. Fourth and most importantly, the study uses simple descriptive statistics in its analysis in order to reach certain figures that may serve as indicators for translation behaviour in both Western and Arab media outlets.

1.3 Justification of Study

This section presents the justification of why the researcher made a comparison between BBC and Aljazeera translation of Obama's speech. The researcher discovered that there were some noticeable shifts in the translation of Obama's speech from the source language (SL) to target language (TL) between these two well-known television (tv) channels. The researcher also noted that both channels deviated from direct translation in order to meet the expectations of their target audience, their government leaders, their organizational and media policies. The researcher decided to choose these two news channels for the following reasons:

1. Aljazeera and BBC channels are seen as models that represent other Arabic satellite networks, and this makes them ideal models for drawing safe generalisations.
2. Aljazeera and BBC serve as suitable research subjects as they translate news, contemporary affairs, documentaries and other various media resources.
3. Several kinds of translation activities are carried out in these two channels including written translation, dubbing, voice-over, live translation and narration (Darwish, 2010a).
4. These two channels have Arabic and English services that are well received by Western and Arab audiences.
5. Both channels claimed that they are independent and impartial in their newscoverage, although they are funded by their governments (Al Nahed, 2015).
6. There are numerous studies like (Abdul-mageed & Herring, 2008; Bicket & Wall, 2009; Johnson & Fahmy, 2008; Khodadady & Fard, 2014) that claim both news channels manipulate the translation of SL text to impose their ideologies on their target audience; and to orientate the perception of their target audience towards a particular issue.

Thus, for these reasons, these two channels were selected for this study.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study has four objectives, which are listed below:

1. To identify direct and interventional techniques used by Aljazeera and BBC translators.
2. To analyse translation microstrategies adopted by Aljazeera and BBC translators.
3. To discuss translators' preferences concerning domestication and foreignisation in the target text of Aljazeera and BBC.
4. To investigate differences in ideological stance between BBC and Aljazeera as reflected in their translations shifts.

1.5 Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following research questions:

- i. How direct and interventional translation techniques are used in Aljazeera and the BBC?
- ii. What are the most common and least-frequently translation microstrategies adopted by both translators?
- iii. What are translators' preferences concerning domestication and foreignisation in the target text of Aljazeera and BBC?
- iv. How are the differences in ideological stance between BBC and Aljazeera are reflected in translation shifts?

1.6 Operational Definitions

There are nine key words in this study which will be defined below: obligatory shifts, optional shifts, source text, source-text oriented strategies, target text, target-text oriented strategies, translation institution, translation model and translation shift.

1.6.1 Obligatory Shift

This term refers to *shifts* that occur during translation process between SL and TL. It happens due to the differences in morphology, syntax, grammar, semantics, and pragmatics between two languages.

1.6.2 Optional Shifts

This term refers to shifts that occur in translation due to reasons other than language itself. Such reasons include translator's ideology, competence, style, institution translation policy.

1.6.3 Source Text

This term refers to the English transcript of the televised speech delivered by American President Barack Obama in 2011 in the Department of State about the Arab Spring (attached to the appendix).

1.6.4 Source-Text Oriented Strategies

This term refers to translation strategies which are used by the translators of Aljazeera and BBC when they attempt to be close as much as possible to the structure and norms of the English source text.

1.6.5 Target Text

This term refers to the Arabic transcripts of the televised Arabic translations of both Aljazeera and BBC of Obama's Speech on Arabic Spring (both attached to the appendix).

1.6.6 Target-Text Oriented Strategies

This term refers to translation strategies used by the translators of Aljazeera and BBC when they attempt to be close as much as possible to the structure and norms of the Arabic language and targeted Arab audience.

1.6.7 Translation Institution

This term refers to any organization or entity (whether private or public) that uses or depends on translation for exercising some of their activities. Such institutions include national and international media agencies, various agencies and organizations of the United Nations, European Union, publishing houses, giant corporations, etc. These institutions may have certain policies, rules, and ethics regarding that determine the process of translation, translator behaviour and the nature of the translated text. In the current work, translation institution refers to both Aljazeera and BBC television channels.

1.6.8 Translation Model

Translation model refers to a set of macro and micro categorisations of the translated text depending on various linguistic levels. Translation models differ in their complexity ranging from simple to detailed and comprehensive models. These models are developed by translation scholars to detect or to analyse particular translation phenomenon. Four translation models (Darwish 2010, Molina and Albir 2002, Schjoldager 2008, and Dukate 2009) were used in this thesis to detect three corresponding translation phenomena.

1.6.9 Translation Shift

This term refers to the main theme of the current study and it refers to any deviation in the target text from the source text, whether obligatory or optional due to linguistic or non-linguistic reasons.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study employed four translation models namely: Translation Microstrategies (Schjoldager, 2008); Direct and Interventional Method (Darwish, 2010); Domestication and Foreignisation Techniques (Molina & Albir, 2002) and Ideological Manipulation (Dukate (2009). These models will be discussed in detail in **Chapter Three** (Research Design and Methodology).

1.8 Limitation of Study

There were several limitations encountered by the researcher in completing this study:

This study is limited to only one speech from Obama's compilation of speeches on Middle East issues. There are several reasons for using one speech in this study. First, since the purpose of using the data is describing particular concepts rather than making quantitative or statistical claims, large data seems unnecessary in this study (McEnery & Wilson 1996). Moreover, Lew (2009) indicates that there is no unified criterion in determining the size of sample texts that can be treated as adequate and representative.

Third, Kennedy (1998) argued that a bigger data size does not necessarily mean that it is more useful than the smaller ones because, sometimes, only samples from the text may be selected instead of the whole text relying on the purpose of analysis (while in this study the whole text is analysed). Fourth, prioritising quality over quantity is the major characteristic of data in translation studies (Baker, 2006b). Finally, the English text is contrasted to two Arabic target text, which means that three texts are practically analysed through using four translation models which consequently amplified the data.

1.9 Significance of Study

This study will make significant contributions to the following disciplines: translation, translation training, media discourse and politics of the Middle East.

1.9.1 The Field of Translation

First, most previous studies on translation of political discourse like (Fu, 2009), (Zhao, 2009), (Clark, 2010), (Alian, 2016), and (Cheibani, 2017) did not take translation shift into consideration.

On the other hand, there are scarce studies on translation shifts such as Jawad (2004), Cosme (2006), Hirsch (2011), Hosseini-Maasoum and Shahbaiki (2013), Meifang and Li (2009), and Hemsworth (2017), and all of them were done on non-political discourse. Thus, this study will be the first one to investigate translation shifts in political discourse.

Second, findings of the current study will contribute to understanding to how various translation shifts including foreignization and domestication, microstrategies, ideological stance and direct and interventional method are used by Aljazeera and BBC, and how they differ in their preferences regarding particular translation shifts.

1.9.2 Translation Training

The findings of this study will contribute to enriching translation pedagogy strategies in transnational news agencies as they set forth challenges and limitations encountering translators working in such institutions. This paves the way for developing certain strategies to overcome such challenges and to offer better translation products.

1.9.3 Media Discourse and Politics of the Middle East

The findings of this study will contribute to highlighting the link between translation, ideology and media discourse in Aljazeera and BBC. It will also demonstrate how translation is employed to serve certain political ends of these news channels because previous studies that examined translation process in Aljazeera and the BBC like (Mason, 2000), (Darwish, 2006), (Darwish, 2010b), (Barkho, 2011), (Kadhim and Kader 2011), (Ashubbak 2013), and (Giovanni 2016) were all done on the micro-linguistic level without taking into account the wider socio-political context.

In short, this study will make significant contributions to the above fields.

The flowchart was designed to reflect the overall research process.

1.10 Flowchart of Study

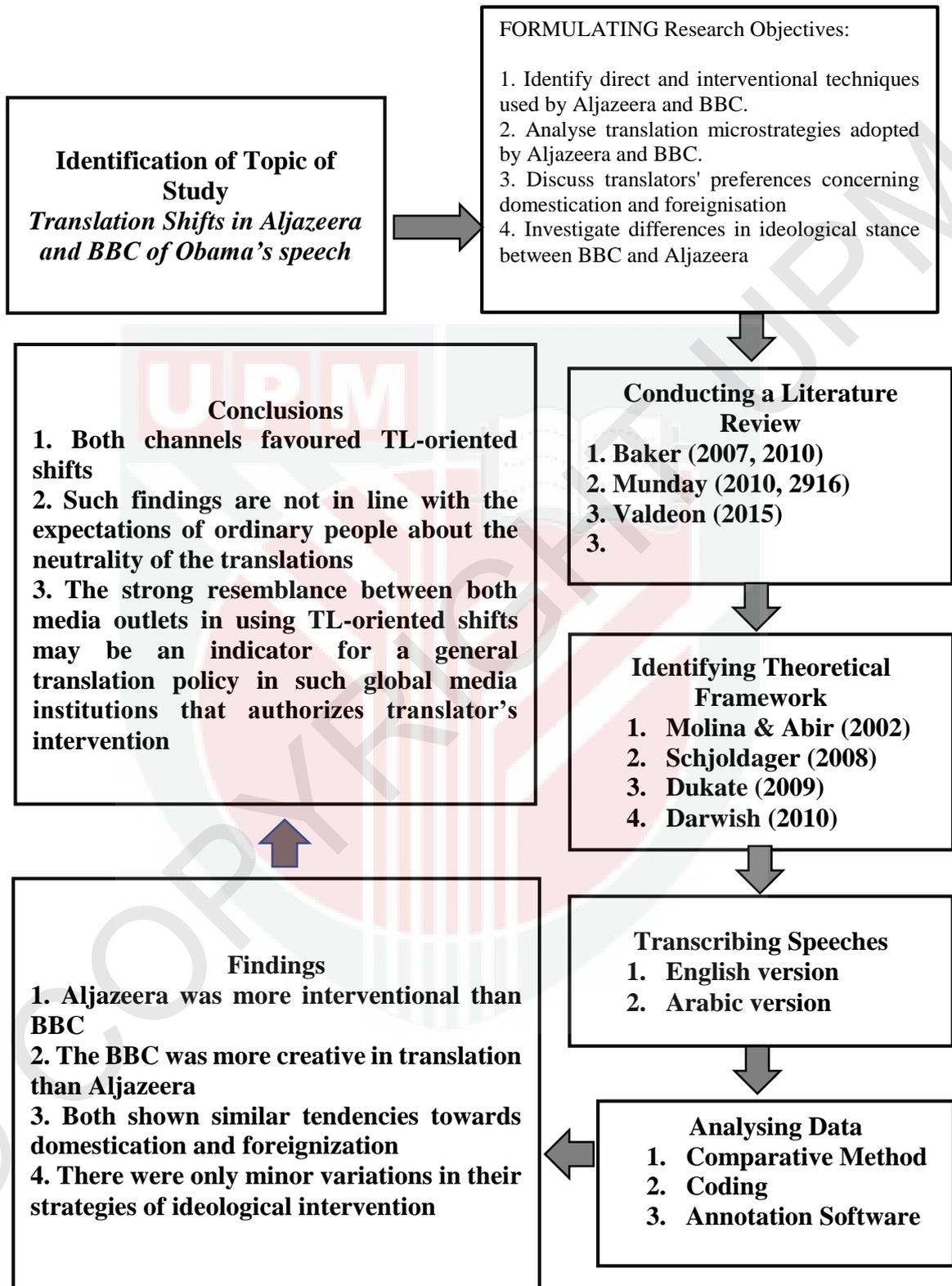


Figure 1.1 : Flow Chart of Study

1.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed several themes related to this study such as the birth of Arab spring and the revolution that had triggered this historical event. There have been many speeches delivered by world leaders on this topic, however, one that is most significant speech is Mr Obama's speech as it comes from the most powerful nation. In addition, this chapter has discussed the statement of problem, justification of study, objectives of the study, research questions, operational definition, theoretical framework, scope and significance of the study, and flowchart of study.

This discussion will continue in the following chapter, LITERATURE REVIEW.



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Nazar Mohammed Tawfiq was born in Mosul, Iraq. After completing high school in Bardarash District, he obtained B.Sc in Biology in 2000 from Salahaddin University, Erbil, Iraq; then he got BA and MA in Translation from Mosul University, Mosul, Iraq. After obtaining a scholarship from the Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq, Nazar is completing his study as a PhD candidate in the field of Translation and Interpretation in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication at University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Selangor, Malaysia.

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Nazar M. Tawfiq joins several professional associations to enhance his skills such as the Association of Iraqi Translators in 2017, and he was officially licensed as a legal sworn translator by the Judicial Council of Kurdistan Region Government, Iraq in 2018. He is currently working as a home-based translator with HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL besides working as a freelance translator for many other NGOs and companies in Iraq such as KAR Group, Internews Network, and Catholic Relief Services.

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