

## **Ideological Conceptual Metaphors in Arabic-English Translation of Political Discourse**

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**Abstract :** *This study explores a translation topic that is neglected in the literature on handling metaphor in translation, namely how translators deal with ideological metaphors. Based on the framework of the conceptual theory of metaphor, the study shows how official governmental translators of National Day speeches of Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman systematically avoided any expression in the target text of the ideological conceptual metaphor OMANIS ARE SONS OF OMAN. Translators follow translation techniques that filter out the ideological load of this metaphor. Findings of the study show that translators are not only transmitters of information from a source language to a target language, but are ideology experts, i.e. they are aware of the ideologies functioning in the source text and are deeply involved in creating a positive image about the source culture in the target culture.*

### **1. Metaphor as a Conceptual Process**

The year 1980 was a turning point in understanding metaphor. In this year, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson published their celebrated book *Metaphors We Live by*, in which they challenged the traditional theories of metaphor by proposing that metaphor is inherently conceptual and that the linguistic expressions, which were traditionally known as metaphors, are actually linguistic instantiations of deeper conceptual metaphors. A conceptual metaphor is defined as a process of an ontological correspondence between two conceptual domains. This takes place by mapping a particular domain of experience (source domain) onto another domain of experience (target domain). The target domain is often an abstract experience or concept which does not have a rich structure while the source domain usually belongs to our daily life and has a rich structure. An example of a conceptual metaphor is LIFE IS A JOURNEY in which the domain of journey is mapped onto the domain of life, which gives us such linguistic expressions as you still have a long way to go, this is a turning point and they are facing a dead end in their marriage.

Source domains of metaphors often belong to a category of concepts referred to as basic-level concepts. Most of those concepts are physical in

nature. Examples are the concepts of movement, structure, balance and containment. But, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) have recently stressed, not all basic-level concepts are physical:

The basic-level, of course, is not just about objects. There are basic-level actions, for which we have conventional mental images and motor programs, like swimming, walking, and grasping. We also have basic level social concepts, like families, clubs, and baseball teams, as well as basic-level social actions like arguing. And there are basic emotions, like happiness, anger, and sadness. (ibid:29)

This simply means that different phenomena of social life and its ideologies can be forms of basic-level concepts and experiences.

This understanding of metaphor, i.e., that metaphor as inherently conceptual, is important for Translation Studies in many respects. First, it avoids the limitations of current studies on metaphor in Translation Studies, which limit their views to exploring how single linguistic expressions resist or accept translatability. By viewing metaphor as a conceptual process, it becomes possible to see relations that are above the single expression, i.e., those that take into consideration a systematically coherent set of expressions that realize a conceptual metaphor. Second, the conceptual theory of metaphor makes it possible to present a better description and explanation of several translatorial decisions. That is, by studying how translators have handled different linguistic manifestations of a conceptual metaphor, it becomes possible to see forms of translatorial actions that are not limited to a particular linguistic expression but are based on translators' awareness of the existence of an underlying conceptual metaphor. In this paper, for example, we will see that as far as manifestations of metaphor are concerned, the translatorial actions are better described at a level that is higher than the level of the lexical and semantic aspects, which are often the core of most of the existing accounts of metaphor in Translation Studies. We shall further see that some shifts in translation are motivated, not by semantic or lexical aspects of metaphors, but, essentially, by the ideological nature of particular conceptual metaphors. Those shifts are explained on the basis of seeing the translation process as that of a purposeful activity rather than a mere transportation of the semantic meaning of a text from one language to another (see Nord, 1997).

## **2. Metaphor and Ideology**

Scholars in critical discourse analysis have noticed the ideological potential of metaphor. In Fairclough's words, ideology "involves the representation of 'the world' from the perspective of a particular interest" (Fairclough 1995: 44). Seeing metaphor as "a means of representing one experience in terms of another" (Fairclough 1989: 119). Fairclough recognises this potential and contends that it is of particular interest for critical analysis, "for different metaphors have different ideological attachments" (ibid). Ng and Bradac (1993) also point out the ideological power of metaphor. They assume that a source of this power is "its transparency at the point at which it becomes a familiar part of one's mental world" (ibid: 140). On this point they also argue that metaphors "come to seem natural and inevitable and, therefore, no more objectionable than one's own field of vision, and unfortunately, one may be misled by one's own selective view of things" (ibid: 141).

This means that ideological metaphors become part of the social common sense. That is, these metaphors become entrenched in a particular culture to the point that members of that culture fail to notice or accept that there are metaphors and not real facts. To use the terminology of critical theory, metaphors become a property of the orderliness of discourse, that is, they become naturalized. Naturalization of ideological representations means that those representations, such as metaphor, "come to be seen as non-ideological 'common sense'" (Fairclough 1995: 28); or in Fowler's words, by "accepting as natural a coding which is in fact arbitrary, we become acquiescent, uncritical, we acknowledge meanings without examining them" (Fowler 1996: 57; see also van Dijk 1998: 102-107). Revealing that some metaphors are in fact ideological requires such deconstructionist methodologies as defamiliarization, which means "the use of some strategy to force us to look, to be critical" (Fowler: ibid).

In this context, one has to point out the similar finding that both critical discourse analysis and studies on conceptual metaphors are presenting. Both fields of inquiry point to the significance of the unconscious processes that underlie linguistic expressions. Critical discourse analysis provides an ideological explanation. That is, such processes become discursive, serving a particular power group in a particular society to maintain its social power through the processes of naturalization. People often fail to notice that what they deem as natural is in fact ideological. Conceptual metaphors work in a similar way. People often "live by"

conceptual metaphors, using them unconsciously and dealing with them as if they were real and not metaphorical. If we attempt to bring these two similar propositions together, a clearer picture of the working of ideology emerges: in the process of naturalizing their discourse, ideologies depend on conceptual metaphors that carry, from their source domains, properties that, when used unconsciously, serve a particular ideological orientation in a specific society. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the relevance of unconsciousness in conceptual metaphor studies and in critical discourse analysis, using the example PEOPLE ARE SONS OF THEIR COUNTRY.

Example: PEOPLE ARE SONS OF THEIR COUNTRY		
Level of Consciousness	Critical Discourse Analysis	Conceptual Theory of Metaphor
Surface Level	Common sense: A usual way of speaking	No metaphor recognized: 'People are sons of their country' is literal and not metaphor
Unconscious Deep Level	Ideological discourse serving the interests of specific groups: The expression illustrates the masculinist dominant social ideology	Conceptual mapping of a domain onto another domain: The expression instantiates a mapping from the ideological source domain of family relationships onto politics

*Unconsciousness in Critical Discourse Analysis and Conceptual Metaphor Theory*

The above table shows that at the surface level, referring to people as 'sons of their country' is a common sense which people do not normally see as expressing a deeper ideological metaphor. At the deep level though, seeing 'people as sons' is actually a metaphor, which underlies masculinist ideology (people as sons not daughters or sons and daughters for example) (For more on the patriarchic nature of the Arab family and its influence on the political culture in the Arab World see Sharabi (1987) and Barakat 2000: 465-478 and 551-555).

What is suggested here is that by joining the findings of the conceptual theory of metaphor with those of critical discourse analysis we get a clearer picture of how ideology functions through metaphor. This new

picture is highly significant for MiT research. Specifically, it raises the following question: What happens when a translator translates a source text that uses a metaphor whose source domain is ideological? This question will be examined below with a case study of one conceptual metaphor (PEOPLE ARE SONS OF THEIR COUNTRY) in National Day speeches by Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, the Sultan of Oman (born 1940, in power since 1970). The speeches were published in 1995 by the Omani Ministry of Information in two volumes: a volume containing the Arabic original texts entitled *النطق السامي* An'Nutqu As'Sami (The Royal Speech) and another volume containing the official English translations entitled *The Royal Speeches of H. M. Sultan Qaboos bin Said 1970-1995*.

### 3. A Case Study

As pointed out above, the conceptual metaphor “People are sons of their country” will form the basis of this study.

The source domain in this metaphor is that of the Arabic family. According to this metaphor, a country is a family. The following table shows some aspects of this metaphor.

Elements of the Metaphor	Source Domain	is mapped onto	Target Domain
	FAMILY		COUNTRY
Structural elements	Father	→	Ruler or Government
	Sons and daughters	→	The People
	Mother	→	Country
Functional elements, Entailments and examples	Intra-family relationships	→	State-People relationships
	Father is more powerful than other members	→	Government has the ultimate power
	Ideological Values (Masculinist social ideology): Male is more powerful than female	→	Ideological Entailments Mapped onto the Target Domain: PEOPLE ARE SONS OF THE COUNTRY

### Conceptualising the COUNTRY Metaphorically as a FAMILY

Of particular importance of the elements highlighted in the above table is the aspect of ideological values. The ideological values in a society get mapped to structure the target domain of the metaphor as in the conceptual metaphor under investigation. Several instances of the metaphor ‘Nation is a family’ occur in the speeches of Sultan Qaboos bin Said . We have, however, noted two cases that deserve pointing at as follows:

#### Case 1:

وقد أستطعنا كسر شوكتهم ووفرنا الأمن والحماية لسكان الجبال في المقاطعة الجنوبية ضد إرهابهم. (73-72)

[literal translation] *we succeeded in breaking their backbone and provided security and defense for the inhabitants of the mountains in the southern province against their [the Communists'] terrorism*

[official translation] *In spite of this, we stand firm and have succeeded in breaking their backbone, as a result of which our brethren in the mountains now enjoy protection and security from their terrorism. (36)*

The above example shows a case where an expression of the NATION AS FAMILY metaphor is introduced. While, in the Arabic source text, Sultan Qaboos bin Said speaks about providing security and protection for the non-metaphorical inhabitants of the mountains, the English translation opts for activating the FAMILY metaphor (‘our brethren’). The perceived potential effect for this change is creating a humane image of the Sultan. Through this choice, i.e. metaphorising a non-metaphorical concept, the translator makes the Sultan appear as a member of a larger family whose members are equal (belonging to the same rank as brothers in a family). Another related effect of this shift is that it assists in shifting the view of the Dhofar War from a political and military power struggle to a social and moral struggle in which the Sultan, being a member of a family, legitimately works for bringing peace and security to other members.

#### Case 2:

ان شعبنا اذ يحتفل اليوم بهذه الذكرى الوطنية العزيزة في جميع أنحاء البلاد، من أقصى الشمال الى أقصى الجنوب وفي الداخل وفي السهول وفي المدن والريف فإنه يذكر بكل فخر واعتزاز الانتصارات المجيدة والانجازات العظيمة التي حققناها معا بالتلاحم

والتآلف والعمل والكفاح والتضحية، يواجه المستقبل بإيمان عميق وقلوب ملؤها الثقة و  
العزيمة والأمل. (133)

[literal translation] *our people, while celebrating today this dear national anniversary in all corners of our country, from the furthest north to the furthest south, and in the interior and in the plains, cities and countryside, remembers with pride and glory the dignified victories and great achievements which we have achieved together by the cooperation, harmony, work, struggle and sacrifice, [and it also] faces the future with deep belief and hearts that are full of confidence, will and hope*

Note: In this example, the Sultan speaks about the Omani people's celebration of an anniversary of the National Day. The proposition is that the Omani people are celebrating this anniversary in all parts of Oman: south and north, plains, cities and countryside. The English translation keeps this geographical extension of the celebrations, but adds a simile realizing the NATION AS FAMILY metaphor, as follows.

[official translation] *Throughout our beloved country our people are celebrating this National Anniversary as one united family from the far north to the far south, in the interior and on the coastal plains, in the towns and in the rural areas, our Omani people are proudly conscious on this day of the great victories we have won together and are facing the future with confidence and determination. (59)*

The FAMILY metaphor is realized in the expression as one united family. This expression is an example of how a conceptual metaphor, the FAMILY, is realized using a tool that is traditionally seen as non-metaphorical, namely the simile represented in the word as. In discussing this shift, we need to notice the adjectival phrase one united, which realizes the image schematic metaphor WHOLE or UNITY, as opposed to its PARTS or FRAGMENTATION. That is, this phrase, in addition to the head noun family, present the Omani country (as represented metonymically in its people who in turn are metaphorised as a FAMILY) to the English-speaking audience of the translation as resistant to external forces.<sup>1</sup>

The context in which the above utterance was said presents some clues to understanding this shift. The Sultan delivered the speech incorporating this utterance on the National Day in 1977, that is, two years after the Sultan forces had triumphed over the Omani communist groups in the Southern province of Dhofar. Seen from this angle (i.e. the FAMILY metaphor perspective), these groups were fighting against their own family and were deceived by enemies of the family (i.e. China and the

USSR). The emphasis on the unity of the one family thus is a message to the external world that implies, in explicit political terms, that the Sultan is now in control of all Oman and the Omanis who are united in their loyalty to the government. This shift carries the potential of being a political message to whom-it-may-concern, particularly the Communist powers at that time like the USSR and China.

The above two examples show how a particular way of handling a conceptual metaphor has implications that go beyond such phenomena as translatability and equivalence and which are directly related to the political situation in which the translation is produced.

Now let us consider the metaphor Omanis are the sons of their country in Translation, particularly from the viewpoint of gender implications.

Families, social units that join people related by blood or marriage, are a universal phenomenon. Ideological differences however exist among different societies as to the power relations within the family. Man as a rule is traditionally more powerful than woman. In the Western countries, this has led to the movement of feminism, which in turn has led to both conceptual and linguistic changes. Despite the fact that "men have more power than women in modern Western society" (Kiesling 1997: 65), feminism has strongly influenced this society to give women equal rights. One of the ways of obtaining these rights is through a feminist critique of language (see Cameron 1990: 1), which has already resulted in shifting from traditional terms like chairman to chairperson for instance. A specific type of this critique of language has to do with metaphorisation. Gibbon (1999) devotes a section of her book *Feminist Perspectives on Language* to 'Language, Gender and Metaphor' (26-31), in which she discusses how perceptions about women are used in conceptualizing other phenomena:

Hurricanes, until recently, were systematically given female names; nature is personified as female in Mother Nature and viewed as an irrational and potentially destructive force to be controlled and subdued by man/men. (Gibbon 1999: 30)

Let us remind ourselves that a metaphor maps not only the structural aspects of the source domain but also its functional and connotative properties. Following this rule, the FAMILY metaphor in the Sultan Qaboos bin Said's speeches is expected to reflect the masculinist Omani society. The metaphor under discussion shows how the domination of men in a masculine society is entrenched through metaphor. This metaphor, which maps the domain of family to the political domain of



people of a country, presupposes superior masculine power. It is ideological because the element from the domain of family that is mapped to construct the concept of people is not that of children but of sons.

Some studies have noted a correlation between masculinity and concepts of political discourse. For example, Aertselaer (1997) discussed the representations of masculinity in Spanish political discourse. One of the cases he mentions is an excerpt from a political statement by Felipe González, the Socialist Party leader, as a suggestion to the leader of the Partido Popular upon the latter's defeat in the June 1993 national elections for parliamentary seats. The segment goes "*Espero que sepan aceptarlo con hombría*" which Aertselaer (1997:159) translates as "*I hope they know how to take it [the defeat] like a man*". He adds that

In Spanish society, *hombria* evokes male identity indicators pertaining to diverse areas: biological orientations (strength, versus weakness for women), societal orientation (power, control and dominance, as opposed to female submissiveness; men as leadership-centred, as opposed to relationship-centring for Spanish women), and rhetorical orientation (assertive speech acts versus passiveness on the part of women) (ibid)

In this study, we are not interested in presuming a general discussion of representations of masculinity in Arabic political discourse. The following discussion is limited to analysing how the metaphor under discussion is handled in the English translations of the speeches of Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

Out of 23 instances of instantiating this metaphor in the source Arabic texts, sons appeared only in two cases, while one instance was shifted to sons and daughters, one to children, two to countrymen, two to citizens, three to Omanis while the majority of instances (12 instances, 52.1% of the total) were demetaphorised as people. These translation procedures are discussed below.

### 3.1 Procedure One: De-Masculinising the FAMILY Metaphor

In this case, the signs of masculine society as represented in the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE SONS completely disappear in the translation. Instead, the translation attempts to de-masculinise the discourse of the Sultan. By de-masculinising we mean that, while the source text uses the word *أبناء* *abna'* when referring to the people of Oman, the target text uses a word or set of words that do not show any preference to masculinity. There are two major ways of de-masculinising

metaphors. The first is by providing an expression that keeps to the same FAMILY metaphor but at the same time does not presuppose a masculinist social ideology. The second is by getting rid of the metaphor altogether and providing a non expression of the concept of PEOPLE.

### 3.1.1. Preserving Conceptual FAMILY Metaphor but Including Female Elements

Here, while the source text presupposes the masculine ideology only, the translator adds an expression which represents the other gender, as in the following example, in which Sultan Qaboos talks about the conditions that prevailed before he assumed power on 23 July 1970.

كان كثير من ابناءنا ذوي المواهب قد تركوا البلاد بعد ان يأسوا من الاوضاع التي كانت سائدة حينذاك (165)

[literal translation] *many of our talented sons had left the country after they lost hope regarding the conditions that were widespread [in the country] then*

[official translation] *Many of our gifted sons and daughters had left in despair to make a life for themselves in other lands (81)*

So for *abna'ina* (literally, *our sons*), which refers to the Omani people in general, the translation gives sons and daughters. This shift is an attempt on the part of the translator to create an ideological balance. A case similar to the above example is shifting *ikhwah* (brothers) to brothers and sisters. Here, the Sultan addresses the Omani people by saying *ayuhhal ikhwah* (*O' Brothers*), but the translation presents a more gender sensitive expression as in the following example:

[official translation] *But today, dear brothers and sisters, we can pause for a moment in our labours to draw renewed faith and confidence from the glory of our achievements. (55)*

The above examples show that the translation shifts here are not only conceptual but ideological, i.e., the shift brings in another ideology than that expressed in the original.

### 3.1.2. Preserving the Conceptual FAMILY Metaphor but Using an Expression Referring to Both Genders

In this case, the source texts refers to *abna'* (sons), while the translation chooses an expression that keeps to the FAMILY metaphor but does not

realize either of the two genders. The following example is an illustrative example:

التركيز على التعليم المهني والعالي يأتي اهتماما باتاحة الفرصة لأبناننا لتلقي العلم في شتى مراحل الدراسة بوطنهم الحبيب (74)

[literal translation] *the emphasis on vocational and high education comes as a [sign off] our concern of providing the chance for our sons to receive science in the different stages of education in their dear homeland*

[official translation] *We have now moved to higher as well as vocational education. Our object in providing both the vocational and higher education is to enable our children to receive their education in its various stages in their mother country. (38)*

In this utterance , students are seen as *abna'una* (our sons). In the translation, it was clear the translator was aware of the FAMILY metaphor. This is clear in two shifts. The first has to do with shifting *abna'una* to *our children*. The English noun *children* , like the Arabic word *atfal*, is a general word that includes both male and female young people. The second shift is from *watanahum alhabeeb* (their dear (or loved) homeland), to another expression of the FAMILY, metaphor which is the noun *mother*. The concept of mother is coherently related to the concept of children. Both these shifts eliminate the manifestation of the masculinist ideology that is present in the word *abna'* in Arabic.

### 3.2 Procedure 2: Demetaphorisation

The elimination of the masculinist reference is also manifest in another procedure employed by the translators of the official English translation of the speeches of Sultan Qaboos: demetaphorisation. Demetaphorisation here means using a term that refers directly to the people of Oman, and getting rid of the metaphor completely. Below is a brief discussion with relevant examples.

#### 3.2.1. Sons vs. people

The major procedure for handling the SONS conceptual metaphor is to replace the word *abna'* (sons) with the word *people*. The following example shows this procedure.

لقد تمكن أبناء هذا الوطن العزيز من تحقيق نتائج ايجابية في شتى المجالات (71)

[literal translation] *the sons of this dear homeland have achieved positive results in different fields*

[official translation] *Our people have achieved successful results in all fields of life, under hard and abnormal circumstances. (35)*

In the above example, Sultan Qaboos refers to *abna'* of the country who have made achievements in different fields of life. In the English, the metaphorical concept is eliminated and we get the expression *Our people*.

In some cases, Sultan Qaboos uses *abna'* to refer to the population of a particular region of Oman. In the following example, the Sultan talks about *abnau' almantiqah aljanoobiyyah* (literally, the sons of the southern district):

ان أبناء المنطقة الجنوبية يتمتعون الان بمشاهده الارسال التلفزيوني (92)

[literal translation] *the sons of the southern district are enjoying now watching the coloured televised broadcasting*

[official translation] *The people of the southern district today are enjoying colour television (52)*

As in the case of the above example, the translation eliminates the masculinist reference and opts for *The people of the southern district*. This shift takes place not only in the cases when the Sultan talks about Omani people only, but also when the Sultan talks about people of other countries as *abna'* of those countries, as in the following example in which the Sultan refers to the people of the former South Yemen:

انهم يدفعون بالأبرياء من ابناء شعبهم وقودا لحرب لا تمت للدين بصلة (91)

[literal translation] *they are pushing the innocent sons of their nation as fuel for a war that has nothing to do with religion*

[official translation] *They use their innocent people as fuel in a war which has no relation whatsoever with religion or nationhood, (51)*

Rendering *abna'* (sons) as *people* thus eliminates not only the metaphorical understanding of the country as a family, but also the embedded ideological masculine ideology that is represented in the word *abna'*.

### 3.2.2. Sons of Oman vs. Omanis

In this case, the English translation uses the word Omanis where the source text uses *abna'* (sons) as in the following example.

ففي مثل هذا اليوم من كل عام تحتفل الروابط المقدسة والتمينة التي تربط أبناء هذا  
الوطن العزيز معا بأصدق معاني الحب والولاء والتفاني لعماننا الحبيبة (149)

[literal translation] *in this day every year the holy and strong links that link the sons of this dear homeland celebrate together with the most sincere meanings of love, loyalty, and devotion for our dear Oman*

[official translation] *For on this special day each year the sacred and insoluble ties which bind all Omanis together in the love and devotion we bear to our dear country are foremost in our minds as we remember the glorious victories of our past and view together the road that lies before us. (69)*

Here, the Sultan speaks about the feelings of pride the sons of Oman show on the anniversary of the National Day. In the translation, we get a shift to Omanis. This choice is based on the fact that the noun Omanis, unlike the noun sons, is general and can include both sexes.

### 3.2.3. Sons of Oman vs. Countrymen /Citizens

In this case the translator used some official terms to refer to people instead of sons, which was used in the Arabic source texts. The term countrymen was used as equivalent to the Arabic phrase sons of Oman, which Sultan Qaboos uses to address the Omani people:

يا أبناء عمان الأعزاء (139)

[literal translation] *O, sons of dear Oman*

[official translation] *My Dear Countrymen (64)*

يا أبناء عمان الأبية أينما كنتم (35)

[literal translation] *O, sons of lofty Oman wherever you are*

[official translation] *Dear Countrymen (29)*

In two other instances, the source text talks about 'sons' but in English we get the more official word citizens.

مهمتنا الوطنية [...] تدعونا جميعا الى تمجيد العمل كقيمة نبيلة تعطي للحياة  
مضمونا ايجابيا نافعا وكواجب مقدس يحتمه الايمان بحق الوطن على أبنائه (253)

[literal translation] *our national responsibility calls upon us to glorify work as a noble value that gives to life a useful positive substance and as a holy duty that is decreed by the belief on the right of the homeland by its sons*

[official translation] *We must recognize that work is noble and its makes life positive and useful. Moreover, it is a sacred duty on the citizen towards the Motherland. (160)*

ان الاوطان انما تبنى وتزدهر بكفاح أبنائها البررة الاوفياء (254)

[literal translation] *Homelands are built and become prosperous through the struggling of its loyal dutiful sons*

[official translation] *Countries are built and become prosperous through the sincere work and the struggle of their own citizens. (161)*

### 3.3. Procedure 3: Preserving Same Metaphorical Expression

Here, the target text keeps the image of 'sons' that was realised in the ST. We have come across two instances of following this procedure.

وانه ليحز في نفوسنا انه في هذه اللحظة التي نحتفل فيها بهذا اليوم المجيد هنا  
يتعرض أخوة لنا وأبناء هناك لسنوف القهر والارهاب (30)

[literal translation] *it is distressing that in this moment in which we celebrate this glorified day here [we have] brothers and sons there who are subjected to different forms of coercion and terrorism*

[official translation] *It is most distressing to us that at this moment, while we are all celebrating this glorious day here, we have brothers and sons there who are being subjected to coercion, terrorism and danger (20)*

Sultan Qaboos said this in the first celebration of the National Day anniversary in 1971, one year after he had assumed power. He was speaking about the Dhofari people, who were fighting the Communist guerillas in the southern region in Oman. He refers to the people as ukhwah wa abna' (brothers and sons). The translation keeps the same expressions without any change. We have to point out, however, that the translator of that particular text was not systematic in handling the SONS metaphor. That is, in another expression of this metaphor, we find that he shifts abna' (sons) to people as in the following example:

وهذه غاية لا يمكن تحقيقها الا عن طريق مشاركة أبناء الشعب في تحمل أعباء  
المسؤولية ومهمة البناء (29)

[literal translation] *and this [development] is a goal that can not be achieved except by the path of participation of the sons of the people in bearing the burdens of the responsibility and the task of building*

[official translation] *That will be achieved only when the people share the burden of responsibility and help with the task of building. (19)*

The next example is found in the translation of the speech on the occasion of the fourth National Day. Here the Sultan addresses the people as *ayyuh al muwatinoon, ya abna' a Oman al habeebah* (Literally: O citizens, O sons of dear Oman). The translation keeps the same expression in 'My Brother Citizens, The Sons of Our Dear Oman'. In the same text, we also get the Sultan addressing Omani students as *abna' i at talabah* ( my sons the students). In the translation, we get *O my sons*. One of the most glaring examples of the metaphor under discussion is found in this text from a royal speech delivered on the fourth National Day :

وعمان ام تحب كل ابنائها، والعمانيون كلهم ابناء لهذه الام الحنون، تريد لهم جميعا  
بررة أوفياء لذا فحبها وتقديرها يتفاوت من ابن الى ابن لكنها تحب الجميع (76)

[literal translation] *Oman is a mother that loves all her sons, and all Omanis are sons of this loving/warmhearted mother; she wants them all to be dutiful and loyal, so her love and appreciation varies from one son to [another] son, but she loves [them] all*

Note: Here, the Sultan elaborates on the metaphor where Oman is represented as a mother who loves her sons and who expects them to be loyal to her . The translation runs almost completely literally as follows.

[official translation] *Oman loves her sons equally and the Omanis all are sons of their merciful Motherland. She expects them to be loyal and obedient to her cause, but the love of country differs from one citizen to another, but Oman loves all her sons ... (40)*

The fact that we found very small number of instances of preserving the referent **sons** in the English translation might be explained on the grounds that in translating this particular text, the translator decided to keep close to the source text conceptual world. Despite this, however, there are instances within the same text where the translator follows the general tendency of not keeping the term *sons* by shifting it to *people* as in the following two examples.

لقد تمكن أبناء هذا الوطن العزيز من تحقيق نتائج ايجابية في شتى المجالات (71)

[literal translation] *the sons of this dear homeland have achieved positive results in different fields*

[official translation] *Our people have achieved successful results in all fields of life, under hard and abnormal circumstances. (35)*

يكفي هذا دليلا على مقدار اهتمامنا بأبنائنا وبلدنا واصرارنا على اختصار الزمن (75)

[literal translation] *this [governmental efforts] are sufficient as a proof of the extent of our care for our sons and country, and our insistence to ikhtisar az'zaman (cut time short)*

[official translation] *This in itself is proof of the extent of our interest in the advancement of the people of our country and our insistence to make as rapid a progress as possible. (39)*

Notice , however, that in some contexts the noun *Abna'* is suppressed when used in conjunction with other nouns like *students* : cf.

وهنا نريد ان ننبه ابناءنا الطلبة الموفدين في بعثات تعليمية ... (74)

[literal translation] *here we would like to point our sons the students who are sent in educational scholarships ...*

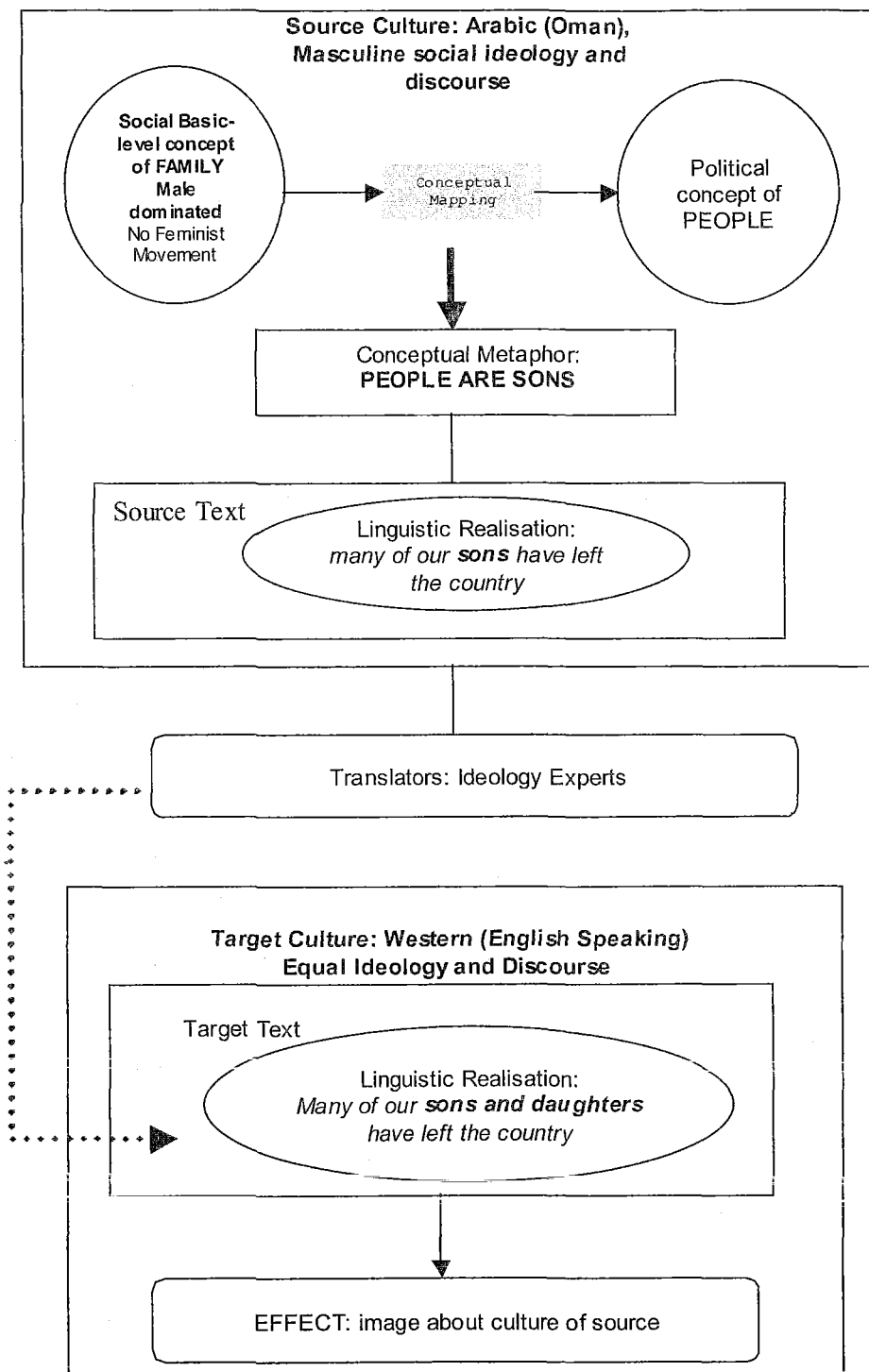
[official translation] *We would, however, wish to draw the attention of our students studying abroad, to beware of being seduced by foreign ideas. (38)*

All in all then, we could conclude that in handling the SONS metaphor in the official English translations of the speeches of Sultan Qaboos, the translators show a systematic tendency to demetaphorise the concept of PEOPLE ARE SONS. We note that in the few texts where the term *sons* appeared in the English translation to refer to *people* or a particular segment of the people (e.g students), there was not a systematic strategy to instantiate the same metaphorical mapping, since we get instances of demetaphorising in the same translations.

It is expedient in this context to draw attention to one major point about these scarce cases of preserving the word *sons* in translation. The cases where the tem *sons* appears are in the two years 1971 and 1974, that is, in the early years of Sultan Qaboos' rule (which began in 1970). It seems that throughout the following years, a major strategy developed of not keeping this metaphor in the English translation.



The following diagram is a schematic reproduction of the ideological dimension of the translation process that was adopted to deal with the conceptual metaphor under discussion



## A Schematic Representation of the Aspects of Ideological Metaphors (the Case of OMANI PEOPLE ARE SONS OF OMAN)

### 4. Extending the Analysis

In the ensuing sections, we will pursue (albeit briefly) our discussion of the proverb with regard to the concepts of (i) translating as an independent action, (ii) power relationship between the source and the target cultures, (iii) the translator as an ideological expert, and (iv) the process of image creation in translation.

#### 4.1 Translation as an Action Independent of the Source Text

The above analysis of how translators of Sultan Qaboos handled the metaphor OMANI PEOPLE ARE SONS OF OMAN lends credibility to the argument of several translation scholars who see translation, not as a transportation of the meaning of a source text written in a specific language into a target text, but as an action which is not dependent on the action of the production of the source text itself. The translators' decision to de-masculinise the conceptual metaphor OMANI PEOPLE ARE SONS OF OMAN and not keeping it as it is (e.g., by using such expressions as *sons of Oman*) means that the translators were not concerned with preserving the same meaning elements both at the semantic level (i.e., the meaning of the Arabic lexical item *abna'*) and at the ideological level (i.e., the masculine social ideology). They rather had the choice of either (1) keeping the same semantic and ideological load of the metaphor, or (2) simply doing another thing. The fact that the translators opted for the second alternative means that they were aware, either consciously or unconsciously, of the fact that translation is more than carrying meaning to the foreign language. It also means that translation is an action which is different from the production of the source text.

#### 4.2 Power Relationship between Source Culture and Target Culture

Before we discuss the effect of ideology on the translators' decisions, we need to stress the importance of the power relationship between the source culture and the target culture. The Arabic culture (represented by the masculine metaphor PEOPLE ARE SONS) is not able to force its values and dominant ideologies onto the Western culture, because the latter is more powerful internationally. Of course this includes all spheres of life, such as the scientific, political, military, and intellectual. This difference in power might not be involved directly in the translator's

handling of the SONS metaphor, but it serves as a relevant background for translation decisions.

#### **4.3 The Translator as an Inter-ideological Expert**

As pointed out above, the choice of eliminating the SONS metaphor shows that the translators are aware of the ideological dimension. But what does the word "aware" mean? One could look at awareness from different points of view, such as the mental or psychological. The following discussion is limited to social meaning of awareness, that is, the social implications of the translation action, as far as metaphor is concerned. In this sense, awareness means that translators know how to treat ideological matters. To refer to this description of translators I will use the term inter-ideological experts. Shifting *abna'* (sons) into sons and daughters, for example, means that the translators knew about the issue of the gender struggle, expressed by the feminist movement in the West. This movement, which, generally speaking, calls for a more equal relationship between men and women, does not exist in an effective way in Oman, so the Sultan's usage of the masculine metaphor conforms to the Omani social situation.

The data discussed above also plainly show that the translator's decision is not motivated by the semantic and conceptual load of the source text, but by the *skopos* of translation. *Skopos* theory stresses that the notion of function enables the translator to embed the product of translatorial action in a situation of human needs (Schäffner 1998: 4). The human needs in the case of handling the conceptual ideological metaphor OMANI PEOPLE ARE SONS OF OMAN are thus political, namely to create an image of the speaker of the source text.

#### **4.4 The Role of Translation in Image Creation**

The above analysis shows that translators are very strongly involved in an image creation of the political system in Oman. The target readers do not have access to the original which is written in Arabic for Omani readers who share the same masculine ideology represented by this conceptual metaphor. The target readers see only the translation which gives them a text that conforms to a large extent to their own ideological orientations, or at least a text that conforms to the dominant ideology in their culture. The image of the Omani Arabic culture that is presented to and, potentially, received, in the target culture is very different from the reality

(where reality means the actual ideological structure in Oman, as regarding the gender relationships) (see Barakat 2000 for a detailed analysis of a description of the prevailing social ideologies and values in modern Arab society).

## 5. Conclusion

The conclusions that can be legitimately drawn from the data and analysis in this paper are:

1. Translators are commonly aware that ideological metaphors are not arbitrary and acquiescent as the majority of source text readers assume.
2. Translators, being multi-cultural experts, go through a stage that not all readers go through, namely the stage in which they decide that the conceptual metaphor of the source text, as represented in the actual words, is an ideology-specific.
3. By being able to be critical and to refuse to acknowledge meaning "without examining them", translators play two roles. On the one hand they are ideology servants, in that they work as filters that stop particular elements of the ideology of the source culture from getting through to target culture. The other role, which is the other face of the same coin, is that they form a hidden conscious social group who, because of the nature of their job, are in a position to see aspects of social life that other people normally ignore.

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