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Legal Translation in a Political Context: The Trick of Choosing between Alternatives in Translating Electoral Terms

Zakia Deeb

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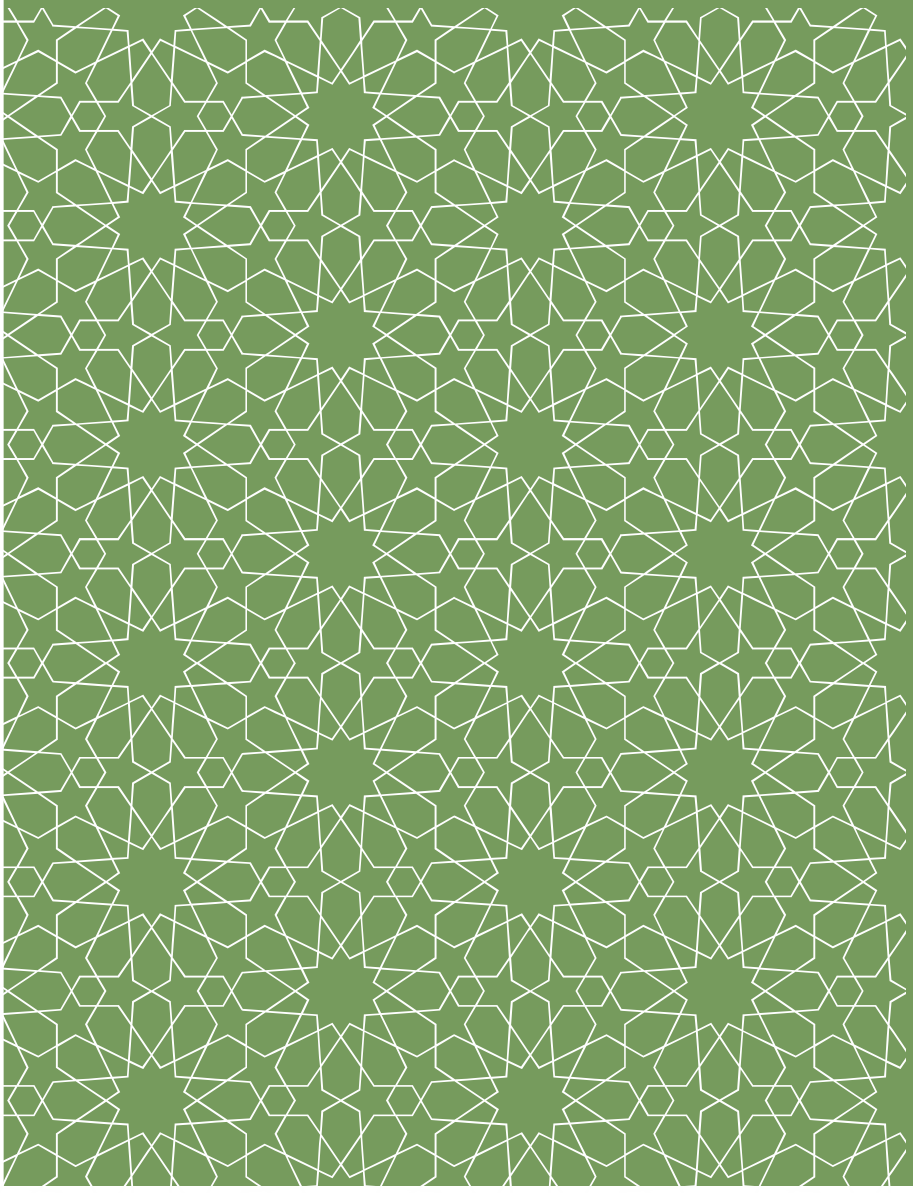

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Abstract:

Legal Translation in a Political Context:
The Trick of Choosing between Alternatives in Translating Electoral Terms

Zakia Deeb

Legal electoral terminology is a specialist subject within the broader legal language discourse. When translating into Arabic, even basic electoral terms can be translated differently in different Arab countries for various reasons due to different sources of inspiration. Most legal electoral terms have a variety of alternative equivalents within the relevant linguistic field or semi-legal domain. This paper discusses such alternatives while presenting problems related to the existing resources in the field. Data collected from the 2012 election of members of the Libyan General National Congress are analysed to test the consistency in selecting from these alternatives. Furthermore, material presented in various recently compiled dictionaries, glossaries and manuals of electoral terms are used as examples. The hypothesis drawn from working on a large body of material translated from English into Arabic is that the consistency in selecting equivalents for electoral legal terms is only partial. Consistency is more apparent when terms are law proper but not otherwise. Also, material from different sources indicates problems concerning standardisation, abbreviations and acronyms as well as cultural and linguistic problems.

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Legal Translation in a Political Context:
The Trick of Choosing between Alternatives in Translating Electoral Terms

Zakia Deeb

1. Introduction

The idea to engage in research of this area of legal translation, namely the translation of electoral terms, was inspired by practical on-the-ground experience. While dealing with the translation of electoral terms, a number of issues were noticed regarding the variety of choices available as equivalents in the target language and the often inconsistent definitions in the available resources. Considering that experience of elections in Libya is almost non-existent, as well as all the newly introduced concepts in other Arab countries following the recent changes and reforms resulting from the so-called "Arab Spring", the need to research and explore the translation of electoral terms between Arabic and other languages, mainly English and French, has become a necessity.

Since election concepts such as 'election campaigning', 'election results challenge' and 'election dispute resolutions' originated in a different culture, namely in well-established democracies in a western political environment, it is understandable that conveying them in Arabic might entail resorting to different translation strategies. Literal translation might work in some cases, such as 'election campaigning' but not in others, as in the case of 'election results challenge'. Expressions such as 'the run-up to the elections', 'election silence', 'election boycotting', 'swing voters', 'landslide win', 'voters' apathy' and 'bottom-up re-election' not only require self-explanatory matching equivalents in Arabic but also elaborate definitions. Moreover, not only concepts and expressions, but also single word terms such as 'quota', 'veto', 'logistics', raise the issue of whether they should be translated (given an equivalent in Arabic) or Arabised (English sounding Arabic script). On the other hand, outdated terms need updating in accordance with the advances of modern technology.

Two main observations were made during the survey of the translation of electoral terms from English into Arabic. First, the vast number of options given in glossaries, dictionaries and supplementary material as alternative choices for translating electoral terms. Second, the discrepancy between different Arab countries with regard to the definition of electoral terms. Data collected from a wide range of material and different sources was described and then analysed, showing four main types of alternatives in translating electoral terms into Arabic (two codes and two lexical items). It also shows the existence of four types of problems related to dictionaries, glossaries and manuals of electoral terms. These include the choice between alternatives: abbreviations and acronyms, standardisation issues, and cultural concepts and linguistic aspects that cause confusion in practice. In addition, another noticeable phenomenon is the inconsistency, apparently in an attempt at stylistic variation among users, not only in the translation of electoral terms proper, but also in the use of general language in the context of election campaigning, administration and management with regard to fixed expressions that have well established Arabic equivalents. Having said that, this paper aims at pinpointing a number of issues related to translating electoral terms, chief among them the skill of choosing between available alternatives when varying shades of meaning make a difference in strictly legal discourse. It is hoped that the findings contribute to striking a balance between expressions that will be comprehensible across the Arab world but also well-integrated within a specific jurisdiction.

2. Background

Compiling and translating electoral terms from and into Arabic, is fairly new. While legal translation has achieved relatively respectable attention, some think it is 'under researched' (see El-Farahaty 2016: 473). Research into the translation of electoral terminology, especially between English and Arabic, is particularly scarce, despite the fact that it is crucial in this era of change and reform in the quest to establish democracy in the Arab world. The problem is that concepts of election campaigning and debates are not only different to those that are well established in Western democracies, but also newly introduced. The first election debate in the Arab world took place in 2007 in Mauritania, the second in 2012 in Egypt, while the third was as recent as 2019 in Tunisia. The 2014 parliamentary and presidential election debate

in Tunisia does not seem to have gained much attention in the media. Indeed, an article published by Gulf News in 2019 refers to the televised 2019 presidential election debate in Tunisia ahead of the presidential polls as the 'first great debate'.[1] Experience shows that translation of the most basic terms in election jargon can be problematic due to either lack of an exact equivalent, the existence of closely related alternatives, or the absence of standardisation. These difficulties were expressed by Philippa Neave, who

> worked as a consultant for the UN, helping to organise what were often the first democratic elections in Arab countries undergoing political transition. She witnessed people involved in the electoral process struggling with some of the basic electoral vocabulary - or lack of it. So, she helped produce an Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology: a glossary of 481 terms explained clearly and accurately in Arabic, English and French.[2]

There is no doubt that the Lexicon is a product of great effort. Despite the fact that it is comprehensive and valuable, it does, however, highlight the level of discrepancy in the use of electoral terms, at least in the eight countries surveyed (Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine and Tunisia), let alone in the rest of the Arab world. Of the 481 terms entries in the glossary, differences exist in 246 entries; just over half of them. This is relatively understandable considering the various reasons for it, chief among them the different sources of information. One needs only to think of the differences between the legal language used in the Maghreb and the Mashreq, for example, such as between Moroccan criminal procedure law and its

[1] 'Rare in the Arab world: Tunisia airs first "great debate" ahead of presidential polls', *Gulf News*, 8 September 2019. Available at: https://gulfnews.com/world/mena/rare-in-the-arab-world-tunisia-airs-first-great-debate-ahead-of-presidential-polls-1.1567928183539. Last accessed: 1 December 2020.

[2] Interview with Philippa Neave, the UN consultant who helped with elections in the Arab world after the uprisings (Arab Spring) in a number of Arab countries: 'Do you speak democracy? Arab countries in transition get first election glossary', Issued on: 04/12/2014 - 12:25, Modified: 04/12/2014 - 17:22, *The Interview*, FRANCE 24. Available at: https://www.france24.com/en/20141203-interview-philippa-neave-arabic-lexicon-electoral-terminology-transition-democracy. Last accessed: 28 January 2021.

Egyptian counterpart. Among the many examples of differences in translation which emerged in the 2012 Libyan election, due to the recruitment of an Iraqi expert in law with experience in elections as a UN consultant and a Lebanese translation agency, is the difference between legal terms used in different Arab legal systems. For example, 'Public Notary Authentication' was translated by the Lebanese agency as مصادقة الكاتب العدل while its conventional equivalent in Libyan legal discourse is اعتماد محرر العقود.

With regard to translating electoral terms, the problem is the many possible alternatives. A simple basic term such as 'dispute solving' in the context of election, for example, has more than one equivalent which are all used interchangeably: حل النزاعات، فض النزاعات، الفصل في النزاعات، تسوية النزاعات. While in general either alternative will do, in a legal context a slight variation in meaning can make a difference. For example, الفصل في النزاعات strictly means *adjudication* ('the hearing and deciding of a legal case in a court of law') (NDI *Election Terminology: A Translator's Guide to Frequently Used Terms and Phrases*, 2009: 2), while تسوية النزاعات can be 'outside court dispute settlement'. The problem is that the inclusion of all the alternatives for the translation of a term in a glossary would not be efficiently helpful and, on the other hand, their exclusion would deprive users from resorting to the options available in real practice. According to Biel (2008: 26), in translating terms, 'the translator has to conduct terminology mining, find an equivalent and check how established it is'.

Moreover, while words in English such as 'adjudication', 'settlement', 'decree', 'resolution', 'verdict', 'arbitration', and 'negotiation' are given as alternative synonyms for the word 'solving' in the context of 'dispute solving', one would probably think 'negotiation' would be the least possible equivalent to any of the Arabic alternatives given above since it comes at the end of the list of synonyms for the word 'solving'. In fact, the opposite is true in the case of the following statement in the context of complaints against election results: 'possible referral to prosecutor for criminal negotiation'إمكانية الإحالة إلى المدعي العام للفصل فيها جنائياً بحكم قضائي. In fact, not even the translation of 'prosecutor' is without alternatives: (المدعي العام and النائب العام).

The matter is complicated even further when translating terms that are part of collocations in English as in the case of: 'challenge the validity of the elections' as

illustrated in its commonly used translation in Arabic: شَكٌّ في صِحّةِ الانْتِخاباتِ *doubt in the accuracy of elections*. In the context of 'challenge the results of the election' the translation is طعن في نتائج الانتخابات *refuting the results of the election (a rebuttal procedure)*. Moreover, resorting to the strategy of paraphrasing idiomatic expressions using phrasal verbs in English often results in the expression becoming more general than idiomatic in Arabic as in the case of translating 'the run-up to the elections' into الفَتْرةِ الّتي تَسْبِقُ الانْتِخاباتِ *the period that precedes elections*.

The problem is most apparent when online non-professional volunteers are recruited to translate newsletters or other communications that include electoral terminology for public use, or projects that are executed without being peer reviewed. In the translation of legal texts in general, the main difficulties according to Khaydarova (2019: 158) are:

> usually associated with the interpretation of professional legal terminology. It is the interpretation of the terms and the legal concepts behind them in this particular system of law that is the obstacle for novice translators. Existing bilingual dictionaries of legal terms cannot solve the problem of translation, as different contexts require knowledge of which translation option to choose in each case.

The risk of being misled is susceptibly high when the selection of the best possible option for the case in hand is not guaranteed. In this paper, data collected from different sources will be analysed with the aim of discovering the variety of alternatives given to define electoral terms and to what extent this might be bewildering. The hypothesis drawn from working on this material translated from English into Arabic shows that consistency in selecting equivalents for electoral legal terms is only partial in different Arab countries and even, sometimes, within the same country. Consistency is only apparent when terms are law proper but not otherwise. Moreover, occasional mismatches between the original and the translation into Arabic are also noticeable when explanatory notes are provided. The following are the main sources of data in the present study:

1. Translated documents from the 2012 election of members of the Libyan General National Congress:
    - HNEC (High National Election Commission)
    - UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)
    - IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems)

2. Reviewing:
    - UNDP *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* (2014) المعجم العربي لمصطلحات الإنتخابات.
    - NDI *Election Terminology: A Translator's Guide to Frequently Used Terms and Phrases* (2009) المصطلحات الإنتخابية دليل المترجم للمصطلحات والعبارات الشائعة.
    - O'Day's (2003) *Political Campaign Planning Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Winning Elections* and its Arabic version دليل إعداد الحملات السياسية الإنتخابية: مرشد الخطوة خطوة للفوز في الإنتخابات.

Translated documents from the 2012 election of members of the Libyan General National Congress, the focus of analysis here, are of two types. HNEC documents (e.g. Law No. 3 of 2012 on the establishment of the HNEC; Law No. 4 of 2012 on the election of the National Council, Campaigning Regulation and Regulation of Political Entity and Candidate Finances, and Financial Disclosure Reporting) are in Arabic. While the legally binding Arabic texts are already heavily influenced by certain English texts, they are usually under review by UNDP and IFES experts. This is to ensure amendment to meet international standards in the area of election processes and election dispute resolutions on condition of conforming to the local judiciary system and established norms before being officially ratified.[3] Sometimes such reviewing results in amendments to certain regulations (e.g. the handling of the challenges related to the electoral process as a whole by the District First Instance Court Judge for expedited procedures where the registration and polling centres are under the scope of the court's jurisdiction, the period in which an appeal against the decision is to be presented before the President of the Primary Court of his

[3] See section on 'Standards from International and Domestic Legal Instruments' in the 2013 Democracy Reporting International report: Constituent Assembly Elections in Libya: Assessment of the Legal Framework, p. 11.

authorised representative, and the period in which the magistrate is to issue his decision on the appeal). UNDP (election processes) and IFES (election dispute resolutions) documents are obviously in English and translated into Arabic.

Examples from the above-mentioned sources are analysed here with the aim to compare terms and, occasionally, extracts with their translations into Arabic. This is to, initially, determine the way alternatives are presented and then to assess to what extent this is problematic and also – where relevant – to pinpoint areas of mismatch. To enhance the argument and to support the conclusions with evidence, besides the above-mentioned Lexicon and Guide and Manual, other more specific glossaries will be reviewed. Among these are the Glossary of Political, Legislative, and Legal Terms - English Arabic (2011),[4] the Glossary of the U.S. Election Terms,[5] and Appendix A – Glossary of Terms and Acronyms for Santa Clara County Election Administration Plan.[6]

However, since the approach is almost purely descriptive, the intention here is not to judge the value of existing resources for translating electoral terms. Instead, it is to explore the present situation regarding Arabic concepts that have been newly introduced in the election process with an aim to drawing attention to areas that need more work in a field of such vast growth. Among all the criteria proposed by Jackson (1996) to evaluate dictionaries (vocabulary, word formation, homographs, definitions, lexical relations, pronunciation, grammar, usage, examples, etymology, special features) 'definitions' and regional 'usage' by potential users are the focus here. For a framework for the description and evaluation of dictionary evaluation criteria, see Swanepoel (2008).

Before engaging in data analysis, the concept of 'choosing between alternatives' is explained below and translating electoral terms into Arabic is discussed.

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[4] Available at: http://www.cid.suny.edu/publications1/arab/Glossary.pdf. Last accessed: 13 April 2020.

[5] Available at: https://no.usembassy.gov/education-culture/about-the-usa/us-elections/glossary-u-s-election-terms/. Last accessed: 31 August 2020.

[6] Available at: https://www.sccgov.org. Last accessed: 31 August, 2020.

3. The concept of 'choosing between alternatives'

The word *alternative* is defined in the Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary as 'something that can be chosen instead of something else: a choice or option'[7]. However, the paradox of choice is to what extent it is good to have choices or options! The dilemma is that too many choices might cause puzzlement. In psychology, Schwartz (2004: 2) states that 'as the number of choices grows further, the negatives escalate until we become overloaded. At this point, choice no longer liberates, but debilitates. It might even be said to tyrannize'. He goes even further and explains that '… too much choice causes the feeling of less happiness, less satisfaction and can even lead to paralysis' (ibid.). Moreover, Chernev (2003b) found that participants were less confident with their decision when choosing from a large number of options. According to Iyengar and Lepper (2000: 1004) 'perhaps it is not that people are made unhappy by the decisions they make in the face of abundant options but that they are instead unsure—they are burdened by the responsibility of distinguishing good from bad decisions'. However, in the context of learners' dictionaries, Bogaards (1996: 282) stresses that 'as far as findability for receptive purposes is concerned, it is clear that the more lexical units there are in a dictionary, the better are the chances that a learner will find what he needs'.

In translation, if the 'search for perfect equivalence in legal translation is […] doomed to frustration', according to Ainsworth (2014: 53), choosing between alternatives is no less difficult. According to Hatim (2014: 181), however, the option of choosing between alternatives is a necessity for calling a process of language transfer a translation: 'If the question of choosing between alternatives is not relevant (often because there are none), then what is involved will be language work and not translation.'

Choosing between alternatives in translation involves strategies for solving problems that result in decision making. The saying that 'alternatives should be given to make a *better* decision not *equal* decisions' might be only a cliché but, in reality, however,

[7] Entry 2 of 2, available at: https://learnersdictionary.com/definition/alternative. Last accessed: 31 January 2021.

it does make sense. In sensitive documents such as election documents which sometimes require advice for action, experience shows that amendment according to the choice between alternatives might result in a change of advice and approach of advisors. The problem is when the translator is offered alternative translations with no guidance in a world of inconsistency and lack of standardisation with regard to the use of terms. In legal translation, choices should be limited to the precision of the subject matter. Moreover, many general legal terms apply to electoral discourse as in the case of 'adjournment' which is given the following alternative translations in the Glossary of Political, Legislative, and Legal Terms - English Arabic according to its instances of use: رفع الجلسة، تأجيل عقد البرلمان، أو وقف جلساته لفترة.[8]

When translating electoral terminology into Arabic, clarifications are often needed in dealing with dictionaries, glossaries, manuals and supporting supplementary material, with the condition of not overloading the user with information. For example, the most frequent and general word for 'election' in Arabic is: انتخاب/ات but اقتراع and تصويت are also given as alternatives despite the fact that the former is generic and the latter two are specific. Both the latter words are given the following alternative equivalents in English: 'voting', 'ballot', 'polling', 'vote', and 'poll'. As far as this study is concerned, with reference to the data collected from the selected material, giving alternatives is not confined to the translation but also occasionally in terms of the original English words; usually separated by a slash. For example, in 'qualified/enhanced majority' (entry 9, *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology*, 2014), the choice is given between two participle adjectives matched with only one adjective in Arabic أغلبية خاصة. The term 'election silence' (entry 280, ibid.) is also given the alternative 'pre-election silence' while this is not the case in the translation where only a literal translation of 'election silence' is given صمت انتخابي. Many others are also given alternatives in the original: 'proxy voting/vote by proxy' (entry 123, ibid.) تصويت بالوكالة, 'voter handbook/ guide' (entry 247, ibid.) دليل الناخب and 'electoral calendar/ timetable' (entry 178, ibid.) جدول زمني للانتخابات which is given other different translations in different Arab countries: روزنامة انتخابية *electoral annual book* in

[8] Available at: http://www.cid.suny.edu/publications1/arab/Glossary.pdf. Last accessed: 13 April 2020.

Tunisia and Lebanon, تقويم انتخابي *electoral calendar* in Iraq and برنامج زمني *programme timetable* in Yemen.

4. Translating electoral terms into Arabic

Surveying a number of supporting materials for translating electoral terms from English into Arabic, including dictionaries, glossaries and manuals, shows that in many cases literal translation does work well, as in the case of 'early election' انتخابات مبكرة, or 'boycott the elections' قاطَعَ الانْتِخابات. In other cases, however, it does not make much sense as in the case of literally translating 'swing voters' into ناخبون متأرجحون. In this case paraphrasing it as 'indecisive voters' ناخبون لم يقرروا بعد *voters still undecided* or ناخبون لم يحسموا أمرهم بعد *voters have not decided yet* would probably make more sense. Sometimes Arabic translation of a commonly used expression in English that represents a familiar concept remains vague in Arabic. For example, the literal translation of 'convention bounce' into قفزة مؤتمر hardly expresses the intended meaning as explained in the Glossary of U.S. Election Terms: 'An increase in a presidential candidate's popularity, as indicated by public-opinion polls, in the days immediately following his or her nomination for office at the national convention'.[9]

Moreover, it would probably be helpful to test in an empirical study how many individuals from the public would know what بطاقة الكف, a literal translation of 'palm card' (O'Day 2003: 90), means. In such cases a functional translation would be required to establish a term that defines what a 'palm card' means in the original: 'A standard piece of campaign literature used to describe the candidate and provide a reason to vote for them. This should provide a clear summary of the campaign message' (ibid.: 64).

A functional strategy with an explanation of the term is adopted by NDI *Election Terminology: A Translator's Guide to Frequently Used Terms and Phrases* (2009: 98) for the translation of the term: بطاقة (تعريف بالمرشح) بحجم كف اليد *candidate identification card in the size of hand palm.*

[9] Available at: https://no.usembassy.gov/education-culture/about-the-usa/us-elections/glossary-u-s-election-terms/. Last accessed: 13 April 2020.

Paraphrasing is in fact occasionally used in the material under discussion even when an equivalent exists as in the case of 'landslide win' الفوز في الإنتخابات بفارق كبير *winning the election with a big margin* while a more compact equivalent is also clear enough فوز ساحق *overwhelming win*. In some cases, the strategy of changing the sentence type without changing the meaning gives a compact, efficient and self-explanatory translation while at the same time preserving the original meaning. For example, when changing a positive to a negative in the case of 'voter apathy', which refers to 'a trend among some voters to lack interest in voting', translated into negative لامبالاة الناخبين *voters' indifference*. The opposite is also true: negative to positive, as in the case of 'elected president unopposed' انتخاب رئيس بالتزكية *elected president by endorsement (acclamation)*. However, while here we are dealing with conventional equivalence, in legal translation discourse, Šarčević (1997: 170) draws attention to the fact that it is advisable not to translate negative phrases into positive ones and vice versa:

> In contrast to translators of ordinary language, legal translators are warned against translating negative phrases positively and vice versa. As a rule, if a provision is negative in the source text, it should be translated as a negative provision.

Sometimes, Arabic translations are even more idiomatic than the English original as in the case of 'time for election' استحقاق الانتخاب *eligibility for elections*. At other times, however, the translation sounds obscure and is not helpful even when the strategy of explicitation is used as in the case of translating 'hanging chad' into ورقة الاقتراع المثقوبة المتدلية particularly since 'this term is used specifically within the U.S. electoral system' (NDI Election Terminology, A Translator's Guide to Frequently Used Terms and Phrases 2009: 18). 'Explicitation' is 'when the meaning of a source language (SL) unit is distributed over several units in the target language (TL); when new meaningful elements appear in the TL text', (Klaudy and Károly 2005: 15). For a good example of translating legal terms 'through explanation or explicitation', see (El-Farahaty 2016: 476).

While common expressions in English such as 'bottom-up re-election', used to refer to a known process in UK elections, might be easily comprehended in a western context, its literal translation in Arabic إعادة الانتخاب من الأسفل *repeating elections from the bottom* is hardly as clear as it is in English.

Some terms, when borrowed or Arabised (English sounding Arabic script), such as 'quota' كوتا/*kouta*/, for example, have become better established in Arabic than their translations نظام الحصص المسبقة or حصص نسبية. Others, however, such as 'veto', either فيتو/vito/ or حق النقض *the right to object* are only adequate. A word such as 'logistics' hardly has an equivalent translation but almost always appears in its Arabised form اللوجستيات/allojistiat/ while the common translation for the widely used word 'charisma' صفات قيادية only partially defines the term.

In comparison with constantly updated glossaries, some supporting materials for translating electoral terminology into Arabic define terms without highlighting whether the term is up-to-date. For example, the term 'absentee ballot' ورقة الإقتراع الغيابي, an opening entry in almost all supporting materials, is described in the California Elections Code as 'outdated terminology' as well as 'poll worker', present in almost all electoral lexicons, guides and manuals.[10] Reference to alternative up-to-date versions of both terms is made as follows: 'See vote-by-mail ballot' for the former and 'See election officer' for the latter. In NDI *Election Terminology: A Translator's Guide to Frequently Used Terms and Phrases* (2009), however, the term is 'polling official' and 'polling station officer' while their translations رئيس القلم/ عضو هيئة القلم, in fact, do not exactly explain the nature of these roles. 'Direct Recording Electronic Equipment (DRE)' and 'Optical Scanner' are each described in the California Elections Code as 'outdated voting machine'.[11] In the Elections Glossary of Placer County, the word 'premier' is referred to as the 'old name for ES & S, our

[10] See Appendix A – Glossary of Terms and Acronyms for Santa Clara County Election Administration Plan, California Elections Code. Available at: https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/VCA/EAP/Documents/Amended%20EAP/Appendix%20A%20-%20Glossary%20of%20Terms.pdf. Last accessed: 26 January 2021.

[11] ibid.

ballot counting vendor' meaning: 'Election System & Software (touchscreen voting unit)'.[12]

5. Data analysis

Analysis of the data collected from the various sources listed above, mainly material supplied in the 2012 Libyan election by HNEC (High National Election Commission), IFES (The International Foundation for Electoral Systems) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), shows four main ways of providing alternatives in translating electoral terms into Arabic (two codes: SLASH '/' and COMMA ',' and two lexical items: AND 'و' and OR 'أو'.

Illustrated in tables, each category is presented below:

- **SLASH '/'**

A slash is used to indicate a choice between the translated words it separates. Table One below shows some examples.

Table One: Examples of the use of SLASH '/' to choose between alternative translations

Type	English	Arabic
Slash '/'	Absentee ballot	بطاقات الاقتراع الغيابية/ بطاقات اقتراع الغائبين
	Absolute majority	الأغلبية المطلقة/ الغالبية العظمى
	Accountability	محاسبة/ مساءلة
	Ad hoc electoral districts	دوائر انتخابية خاصة/ مؤقتة
	Adjudication	قرار الفصل في المنازعات/ حكم (محكمة)/ آلية المراجعة
	Advance voting	اقتراع متقدم/ اقتراع مسبق/ تصويت متقدم
	Affiliated	منتسب/ منضم
	Allocation of seats	تخصيص/ توزيع المقاعد
	Appropriation	تخصيص (الأموال)/ رصد الاعتمادات
	Approval voting	تصويت متعدد/ تصويت القبول/ الاستحسان/ الموافقة
	Baseline poll	استطلاع الخط القاعدي/ استطلاع أساسي/ استطلاع أولي
	Citizenship	الجنسية/ الهوية
	Cancellation	الحذف/ الشطب/ الإلغاء
	Code of conduct	ميثاق العمل/ قانون العمل/ قواعد العمل
	Compliance	الإذعان/ المطاوعة

[12] Placer County Elections, Voter Information, Elections Glossary. Available at: www.placerelections.com/uploads/documents/06082010/060810_Glossary.pdf. Last accessed 13 April 2020.

	Corrected voter's list	لائحة الناخبين المصححة/ سجل الناخبين المصحح/ لوائح الشطب المصححة
	Decision of appeal	حكم/ قرار الاستئناف
	Disabled voter	الناخب العاجز/ المعاق
	Election list	قائمة الانتخابات/ القائمة الانتخابية
	Election officer	مشرف/ موظف انتخابات
	Enforcement	ينفذ/ قوة التنفيذ
	Equal suffrage	الاقتراع المتساوي/ التصويت المتساوي
	Exclusion	الاستثناء/ الإبعاد
	Impartiality	تجرد/ حيادية
	Indelible ink	الحبر الثابت (لا يمكن محوه) / حبر الاقتراع
	Partisan	النصير/ الموالي لحزب سياسي
	Personal	خاص/ شخصي
	Queue controller	مسؤول تنظيم الطابور/ الصف
	Voter fatigue	إرهاق الناخبين/ فتور همّة الناخبين

The use of a slash, as explained above, sometimes also exists in the original as in the case of 'alien/ non-citizen' أجنبي/ غريب/ غير مواطن.

- **COMMA ','**

Commas used to separate items in lists are called serial commas. They are commonly used in the data under discussion to give alternative meanings of terms.

Table Two: Examples of the use of COMMA ',' to choose between alternative translations

Type	English	Arabic
Comma ','	Applicable	قابل للتطبيق، المطبق أو المعمول به
	Ascertain	التحقق، التأكد
	Count	يعد الأصوات، يفرز الأصوات
	Declaration	إعلان، بلاغ
	Decree	قرار، مرسوم
	Delegate	يوكل، يفوض
	Forms	الاستمارات، النماذج
	Inclusion	شمل، ضم
	Leaflet	كراسة، نشرة، منشورة، كتيب...الخ
	Notification	إبلاغ، إشعار، إنذار
	Priority	الأولوية، الأسبقية
	Veto	حق الاعتراض، حق الرفض

Other codes such as DASH '–', parentheses BRACKETS '()', and square BRACKETS '[]' are also used, but much less frequently in the data analysed here: e.g. valid vote

صالح – صحيح اقتراع ملزم صوت, hearing of an appeal: (جلسة الاستماع) سماع الاستئناف and convention [إعلان الترشيحات] مؤتمر. In the Glossary of Political, Legislative, and Legal Terms - English Arabic (2011)[13] provided to help translators during the 2012 Libyan election, BRACKETS '()'are used frequently. Usually this is to explain or explicitate, but much less to provide alternatives. Some examples of using BRACKETS for explicitation are given below.

Table Three: Examples of the use of BRACKETS '()' to explain:

Type	English	Arabic
Brackets '( )'	Abstention	الامتناع عن (التصويت)
	Accountable	مسؤول (أمام جهة معنية)
	Accreditation process	عملية اعتماد (المندوبين أو المراقبين مثلا)
	Amend	يعدل (مادة قانونية مثلا)
	Applicants for registration	طلب التسجيل (كناخب أو كمرشح)
	Broadcasting time	وقت الإذاعة (إذاعة برامج دعاية أو توعية مثلا)
	Coalition	التحالف (تحالف عدد من الأحزاب السياسية)
	Ineligible to participate	الأهلية (للترشيح أو للاقتراع مثلا)
	Indelible ink	حبر الاقتراع (لا يمكن محوه) / الحبر الثابت
	Eligibility	الأهلية للمشاركة (في الاقتراع مثلا)
	Jurisdiction	الصلاحية القانونية في مجال معين (جغرافي ومادي)
	Legal framework of an election	الإطار القانوني للانتخابات (مجموعة القوانين والضوابط)
	Liable	مسؤول (أمام جهة أخرى)
	Mark the finger of a voter	التأشير على إصبع الناخب (بحبر الاقتراع مثلا)

- **OR 'أو'**

The word 'or', according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, is 'used as a function word to indicate an alternative'.[14]

Table Four: Examples of the use of OR to choose between alternative translations:

Type	English	Arabic
OR 'أو'	Counting	عد أو فرز الأصوات
	Counting officer	مشرف أو موظف عد أو فرز الأصوات

[13] Available at: http://www.cid.suny.edu/publications1/arab/Glossary.pdf. Last accessed: 13 April 2020.

[14] Entry 1 of 8, available at: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/or. Last accessed 31 January 2021.

	Drawing the boundaries	ترسيم أو تحديد
	Eligibility	الأهلية (للترشيح أو للاقتراع مثلا)
	Invalidation of the election	إلغاء أو بطلان صلاحية الانتخابات
	Majoritarian representation	التمثيل حسب نظام الأغلبية أو الأكثرية
	Mandatory	أمر رسمي أو إجباري
	Observation mission	بعثة الرقابة أو الاطلاع على الانتخابات
	Omission	التغاضي عن أو عدم ذكر أو الانتباه للشيء
	Poster	ملصق إعلاني أو دعائي
	Witness an offence	حضور ومعاينة ارتكاب مخالفة أو جريمة

- **AND 'و'**

The word 'and' according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary is 'used as a function word to indicate connection or addition especially of items within the same class or type'[15].

Table Five: Examples of the use of AND to choose between alternatives:

Type	English	Arabic
And و	Discrepancy	التعارض والتناقض
	Periodic reviewing	مراجعة وتدقيق بشكل دوري
	Layout of a polling station	تصميم وتخطيط محطة الاقتراع (جغرافي ومادي)
	List of districts	قائمة المديريات والدوائر
	Production of a voters list	إعداد وإنتاج قوائم الناخبين

Sometimes two codes such as 'AND' and 'OR' are used at the same time as in the case of 'witness an offence': حضور ومعاينة ارتكاب مخالفة أو جريمة.

The above shows the variety of samples of alternatives given for the translation of electoral terms when translated into Arabic. In dealing with 'terms', since we are discussing choosing from AVAILABLE alternatives not DEVELOPING alternatives, the question is on what basis other than intuition or personal diligence can a translator opt for the best choice among the provided potential alternatives? Or is this based on prior knowledge of the most established term?

Having stated the above, analysis also shows the existence of four types of problems related to dictionaries, glossaries and manuals of electoral terms in the context of

[15] Entry 1 of 2, available at: Entry 1 of 8, available at: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/and. Last accessed 31 January 2021.

choosing between alternatives among those surveyed here: abbreviations and acronyms, standardisation issues, cultural concepts and linguistic aspects that could cause confusion in actual practice. These four problems, illustrated with examples, will be discussed below.

- **Abbreviations and acronyms:**

Abbreviations (shortened forms of words) are sometimes used to mean acronyms (the initial letters of words). For example ARC, among others, is supposed to be an acronym according to the common definition, but is defined in the Placer County Elections Glossary[16] as an 'abbreviation for Alternate Residency Confirmation'. Moreover, abbreviations are much less commonly used than acronyms. They are used with reference to political parties, for example: Dem – (Democratic Party), Lib – (Liberal Party) and GRN – (Green Party) or in other shorter forms of terms such as ID (identification). Abbreviations and acronyms are not common in the Arabic language simply because Arabic does not have capital letters. Experience has demonstrated that it is hard to accommodate this system. With regard to the common options for choosing between alternatives, abbreviations and acronyms are only occasionally kept in their original roman script. Sometimes they are written in the equivalent Arabic letters, in others they are written in their full equivalent wording in Arabic which often appears awkward when repeated within the same text. Some examples are shown below:

- (CEC) المسؤول التنفيذي للجنة الانتخابات المركزية *Central Election Committee Chairman*
- (EMB) هيئة إدارة الانتخابات *Election Management Body*
- (DRE) جهاز التسجيل الآلي المباشر *Direct Recording Electronic Equipment*
- (GOTV) امنح صوتك *Get Out the Vote*
- (ADR) الوسيلة البديلة لحل النزاع *Alternative Dispute Resolution*

The problem, however, arises when they are not accurately translated or additions are unnecessarily added. One example is LRT, meaning 'light-rail transit', a transportation system in the West. Used in the context of the definition of 'literature

[16] Placer County Elections, Voter Information, Elections Glossary: p 2. Available at: www.placerelections.com/uploads/documents/06082010/060810_Glossary.pdf. Last accessed 13 April 2020.

handouts' in the following extract from O'Day (2003: 39), it is translated in the Arabic version into مواقف الحافلات *bus stops* in its first instance and محطة الانتظار للميترو *metro waiting stations* in the second instance:

> LITERATURE HANDOUTS: Your campaign can also hand out literature wherever people gather in large numbers. This could be at markets, factory gates, train stations, LRT stops, etc. ... For example, you may want to hand out a piece of literature about saving a factory at the gates of the factory, or repairing the LRT at an LRT stop, or building a new senior center where seniors are gathered.
>
> ويمكن لحملتك أن توزع الأدبيات في أي مكان يجتمع فيه حشد من الناس، ويمكن أن يكون ذلك في الأسواق وعلى مداخل المصانع ومحطات القطار ومواقف الحافلات وهلم جرا.... فعلى سبيل المثال، ان كنت تريد أن توزع أدبيات عن حماية مصنع، فوزعها عند المدخل الرئيسي للمصنع، أو إصلاح نظام الأنفاق "الميترو"، فوزعها عند محطة الانتظار للميترو، أو حماية مسكن للعجزة والمسنين فوزعها أمام المبنى وهكذا دواليك.

Such an inconsistency can only be confusing. For types of inconsistencies in translating technical terms from English into Arabic, see Saraireh (2001).

Contrary to the norm, not all translations are longer than the original when acronyms are spelled out in Arabic words. For example, 'voter-verified paper audit trail' (VVPAT) is only two words in the translation: وصل اقتراع *voting receipt* (entry 479, *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology*, 2014).

- **Standardisation issues**

Standardisation is an ongoing issue in technical terminology in the Arab world and is a real problem when translating into Arabic. Despite the efforts made, the lack of standardised terms is creating an obstacle in the area of technical translation including legal translation. Despite the fact that many problems related to the definition of electoral terminology have been solved, regional differences remain an issue; the following quotation explains this:

> NDI's *Translator's English-Arabic Guide to Election Terminology* may have left only few stones unturned. Even the most obscure expressions have been discussed and definitions have been attempted. It would be an understatement to say that most Arabic speakers are passionate about Arabic and quick to debate usage, nuance and meaning. Yet another component of the debate is the issue of regional differences (NDI *Translator's English-Arabic Guide to Election Terminology* 2005: Foreword).

In the use of electoral terms, inconsistency is apparent in different Arab countries as shown, at least, in one glossary included in the present study, which is considered comprehensive: *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* (2014) المعجم العربي لمصطلحات الإنتخابات. For example, entry (461) Election Management Body (EMB) هيئة إدارة الانتخابات في صورة لجنة is different in almost all of the eight Arab countries surveyed in the glossary.

Table Six: Different equivalents to Election Management Body in various Arab countries:

No.	Arabic	English back translation
1	الهيئة المستقلة للانتخاب: الأردن	The Independent Election Authority - Jordan
2	الهيئة العليا المستقلة للانتخابات: تونس	The Independent High Electoral Authority - Tunisia
3	المفوضية العليا المستقلة للانتخابات: العراق	Independent High Electoral Commission - Iraq
4	لجنة الانتخابات المركزية: فلسطين	Central Elections Committee - Palestine
5	الهيئة الوطنية للانتخابات: مصر	National Elections Authority Egypt
6	اللجنة العليا للانتخابات: اليمن	High Committee for Elections - Yemen

In Libya it is المفوضية الوطنية العليا للإنتخابات the High National Elections Commission.

Among the 481 entries in the *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* (2014), differences in the equivalent usage between the eight Arab countries included exist in 246 entries, more than half of the entries. The highest number is in Tunisia (123 times), followed by Egypt (120 times), and then the rest: Palestine (90 times), Jordan (85 times), Lebanon (70 times), Iraq (67 times), and the least in Yemen (57 times). There is however no mention of Libya, one of the eight countries supposedly included in the lexicon, where differences also exist. Sometimes differences exist in

all the countries covered by the lexicon as in the case of (entry 257) 'president of polling station', see Table Seven below:

Table Seven: Different equivalents to 'president of polling station' in various Arab countries:

No.	Arabic	English back translation
1	رئيس لجنة الاقتراع والفرز: الأردن	*President of polling and counting committee – Jordan*
2	رئيس مكتب اقتراع: تونس	*Polling station chief* - Tunisia
3	مدير محطة اقتراع: العراق	*Polling station manager* - Iraq
4	رئيس لجنة/ محطة اقتراع: فلسطين	*Chair of a polling station/ station* - Palestine
5	رئيس هيئة قلم اقتراع: لبنان	*Polling station chair* - Lebanon
6	رئيس لجنة انتخاب فرعية: مصر	*Chair of a sub-election committee* – Egypt
7	رئيس اللجنة الانتخابية: اليمن	*Chairman of the Electoral Commission* - Yemen

In some cases, countries have their own specification or geopolitical circumstances as in the case of Palestine. For example, while 'military voting' (entry 121, ibid.) is translated literally into تصويت العسكريين with no problem, in Palestine it is translated into اقتراع افراد الشرطة ورجال الأمن *polling of police and security forces* to reflect the unique situation in Palestine where there is no conventional military system.

In the use of general language in the context of election campaigning such an inconsistency is also noticed. For example, in the 2019 Tunisian general election the word افئدة, a highly emotional Quranic word, was used instead of the more common neutral word قلوب *hearts* in يفوز بأفئدة الناس with reference to the English expression *to win people's hearts*, while the common, almost conventional, equivalent to the expression is a literal translation يفوز بقلوب الناس. For Saraireh (2001: 11) 'the problem arises and becomes serious when inconsistency is mistakenly considered as stylistic variation'. In the same context, paraphrasing is also used, as in the case of 'early election' انتخابات سابقة لأوانها *elections prior to their due time*, instead of translating it into its conventional equivalent انتخابات مبكرة[17]

- **Cultural concepts**

[17] See for example, the Al Jazeera coverage of the Tunisian election on 14 September 2019, نافذة من تونس (2019/9/14). Available at: تونس من نافذة- (2019/9/14) (aljazeera.net). Last accessed: 31 January 2021.

That language is culture is indisputable, but technical language might be different. Legal language, however, is inevitably part of life in a community that involves culture:

> In contrast to other types of LSP[18] translation, such as medicine, science or technology, legal translation tends to involve more culture-specific than universal components. It is to a large degree attributable to the system-bound nature of legal terminology since legal concepts are usually the product of a national legal system (Šarčević 1997: 232).

In the context of 'the cultural embeddedness of legal texts', Kocbek (2008: 59-60) refers to the potential '… risk of introducing in the communication legal concepts which are alien to the cultures of the participants in the communication and may as such prejudice the legal security of the transactions'. The problem concerning the translation of electoral terms with regard to cultural concepts is apparent in the discrepancies between concepts and reality. One ostensible problem is when a term representing a Western concept or act is translated literally without paying attention to the gap between the two cultures as in the case of translating 'door-to-door' (entry 402, *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* 2014), with reference to reaching out to voters in election campaigning, into من باب إلى باب. Campaigning in this way hardly exists in the Arab world.

Such awkwardness is not only at the level of term-to-term translation, but also at the level of translating explanatory notes in manuals. In the context of 'door-to-door' campaigning, the expression 'bad guy' in the following extract from O'Day (2003: 40) shows the difficulty in getting the message across in Arabic translation:

> If the candidate gets bogged down with a voter who wants to talk, it is the volunteer's role to go back and tell the candidate and the voter that they have to keep moving. In this way it is the volunteer who plays the role of the "bad guy," if necessary.

[18] Note: LSP refers to Language for Specific Purposes.

وان وقع المرشح في حيص وبيص مع احد الناخبين وطال الحديث، يمكن للمتطوع العودة واستئذان الناخب في مغادرة المرشح. وبهذه الطريقة يكون المتطوع هو من يؤدي دور الشخص السيء والفظ.

In the English extract, 'bad guy', between inverted commas, has the social connotation of a typical kind of person. Its literal translation does not carry that dimensional meaning. However, a possible alternative equivalent in this context could be المدافع *the defender*. In such cases, Edzard (1998: 54, quoted in El-Farahaty 2016: 485) suggests '… finding an alternative in the target culture that gives the same function of the source culture is the best solution'. In this context, since the translator resorted to a functional translation in the case of 'bogged down' حيص وبيص, another approximate alternative equivalent for 'bad guy' could be قبضاي, a slang word, which is more or less close to 'bouncer' (doorman) in English. In the Arabic translation, two words are used to describe 'guy' الشخص السيء والفظ *bad and rude person*, but still the concept of 'bad guy' in English is not adequately conveyed while at the same time السيء والفظ '*bad and rude*' are not appropriate to describe a volunteer in this context. Moreover, the omission of 'if necessary' in the translation adds to the sharp tone of the preceding description.

According to Biel (2008: 27) 'Having understood the SL concept, the translator should ideally be able to match a corresponding term from the target language system'. As shown in the *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* (2014), this seems to be the case with the other alternatives proposed in a number of Arab countries instead of the literal translation of من باب الى باب *'door to door'*: فرق جوالة *mobile teams* in Iraq, من بيت إلى بيت *from house to house* in Palestine, طواف التماسا للأصوات *circling the petition for votes* in Lebanon. The problem, however, is to what extent this method of campaigning is common in the Arab world. In Libya, for example, knocking on someone's door to seek support would most likely result in an adverse reaction and would be considered an intrusion into people's privacy; an excuse in itself for not voting for the candidate in question.

Another issue that has cultural implications is when giving an alternative that is linguistically gender specific (exclusively male reference). For example, the term

'politician' (adjective) in NDI *Election Terminology: A Translator's Guide to Frequently Used Terms and Phrases* (2009: 104) is initially translated into its equivalent Arabic adjective السياسي but is also given another alternative translation رجل السياسة 'man of politics' (genitive) after a slash which leaves no room for women's inclusion.

- **Linguistic aspects**

While in English participle adjectives, commonly used with nouns, offer a good solution when no other alternatives are available, its equivalent structure in Arabic is sometimes linguistically awkward as in the case of 'expected turnout' مقترعون متوقعون. Moreover, there is no ideal way in Arabic to match what is expressed by one word in English using suffixes and prefixes to customise the meaning of words as in the case of 'malapportionment' (entry 269, *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology*, 2014), for example. The given equivalent is in three separate words سوء توزيع الناخبين. The same applies to 'disenfranchisement' (entry 201, ibid.) حرمان من حق التصويت. However, the cliché 'every rule has an exception' is true here: 'defamation' (entry 115, ibid.) is translated into its one-word equivalent: تشهير. In Tunisia and Yemen it is given two of its more or less synonyms: ثَلْب and قذف respectively.

The same applies to compounds as in the case of 'fundraising' (entry 179, ibid.) جمع التبرعات *collecting donations*.

At the level of semantics, literally translating 'literature drop' into إلقاء الأدبيات hardly expresses the intended original meaning. The word إلقاء in Arabic, particularly when collocating with literature, refers to an eloquent oral expression, which, in fact, contradicts the original meaning expressed in O'Day (2003: 39), to explain what 'literature drop' actually means:

> A literature drop is when volunteers go door-to-door leaving a piece of literature about the candidate at each household. … The volunteers are not talking with voters, so they do not identify supporters, but they can leave a reminder to vote at the supporters' homes just before Election.

In fact, nor does its translation in the Arabic version of the manual (2004: 52) adequately explain what it actually means:

> هو عملية انتقال المتطوع من باب إلى باب ملقياً بعض الأدبيات عن المرشح لكل ناخب... ولا يتكلم المتطوعون مع الناخبين، فهم إذاً لا يحددون المؤيدين، ولكن يمكنهم، قبل يوم الإنتخاب، ترك تذكير للمؤيدين في بيوتهم حتى يصوتوا.

The word ملقياً in the above quotation does not refer to the action of 'physically dropping', which is the intended meaning in the original. Moreover, it contradicts with ولا يتكلم '*do not talk*' later.

Among the obvious strategies common in translating electoral terms into Arabic is to spell out in the translation what is elliptical in the original. Since Arabic is an 'explicative' language while English is more 'implicative' (Hatim: 1997), short terms in English often have longer Arabic translations because of the necessity to sometimes spell out what is elliptical in English and non-elliptical in Arabic. For a study on explication vs. implication in English–Arabic translation, see Al-Qinai (1999). The two following examples explain this common strategy. Step Six in O'Day (2003): 'making it happen' is translated into كيف تجعل الفوز يحدث *how to make the win happen* in its Arabic version. Entry 5 in the *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* (2014) 'authorised presence in polling station' is made more explicit in the translation أشخاص مصرَّح لهم بدخول محطة الاقتراع *persons authorised to enter the polling station.*

The examples below are only few:

Table Eight: Examples of spelling out what is elliptical in English to non-elliptical in Arabic:

No.	English	Arabic
1	Affidavit	إقرار مشفوع باليمين
2	Alphabetical Voting	التصويت وفقاً للترتيب الأبجدي
3	Apparentement	تحالف انتخابي/ الاتحاد الحزبي في الانتخابات
4	Attain voting age	الوصول إلى السن القانونية للانتخاب
5	Blank ballot paper	ورقة الاقتراع الخالية من الكتابة (بيضاء)
6	Boundary delimitation	تحديد حدود الدوائر الانتخابية

7	Butterfly Ballot	ورقة اقتراع بشكل فراشة
8	By-law	اللائحة التنفيذية للقانون (النظام الداخلي)
9	Campaign account	حساب الحملة الانتخابية
10	Campaign funds	أموال الحملة الانتخابية
11	Campaign contributions	مساهمة في تمويل الحملة
12	Challenge (electoral)	الطعن في سجل الناخبين
13	Constituency level	مستوى الدائرة الانتخابية
14	Closed Primary	انتخابات أولية مغلقة
15	Declaration of elected candidates	الإعلان عن المرشحين الذين تم اختيارهم
16	De-legitimise	يتسبب في إزالة الشرعية
17	Disenfranchise	حرم من حق الاقتراع
18	Drawing the boundaries	ترسيم حدود الدوائر الانتخابية
19	Encourage participation	شجع على المشاركة في الانتخابات
20	Enfranchise	منح حق الاقتراع
21	Fair access to the media	الوصول إلى وسائل الإعلام بشكل عادل ونزيه
22	Gender blind	عَدم الالتفات للاعتبارات الجنسانية عدم الالتفات لاعتبارات النوع الاجتماعي
23	Write-in ballot	إضافة اسم على ورقة الاقتراع

Spelling out the meaning through the process of explicitation in translation in most cases results in expansion and definitely entails additions. This takes more space as in the case of 'voter register' (entry 263, ibid.) which is simply سجل الناخبين. The equivalent given in the *Arabic Lexicon of Electoral Terminology* in Egypt, however, is قاعدة بيانات الناخبين المحدثة تلقائيا *voters' automatically updated database*. For a typology of explicitation, see Klaudy (1998).

Among the interesting examples in the Lexicon are when terms are translated metaphorically, a strategy rarely used in technical translation, such as (entry 267, ibid.) 'election campaign spending limit' سقف الإنفاق على الحملة الانتخابية *election campaign spending ceiling* and (entry 212, ibid.) 'equal suffrage' حق الاقتراع على قدم المساواة the *right to vote on an equal footing*.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, one of the results from the survey of the material under discussion here is the fact that there are discrepancies in the use of electoral terms in different Arab countries. This is most likely the reason for the provision of various alternative translations in supporting materials and reference works. The most common code

for separating alternatives is 'slash' while 'comma' comes second. Other codes are also used, but less often, and are sometimes used to explain rather than to choose from available options. Among the lexical items to show alternative translations 'or' is more commonly used than 'and'.

The points discussed in this study show that the area of translation of electoral terminology into Arabic is not fully researched. Most of the supporting materials aimed at helping translators are compiled on an ad hoc basis to serve certain purposes necessitated by the situation at hand (e.g. the 2012 Libyan election). Accordingly, a lot of work needs to be done with regard to:

1. Establishing criteria for choosing between alternatives with regard to the definition of terms: the best and most relevant, but not all options.
2. Choices in translation should be made on the basis of prioritising what is better, most accurate and efficient through evaluating alternatives in accordance with standard uses and consistency.
3. Compiling updated supporting material that caters for the recipient's culture and is gender sensitive.
4. Revising and updating existing dictionaries (particularly electronic dictionaries) and glossaries in accordance with new developments, introducing technology such as electronic touchscreens in election procedures, and changes on the social and political front in terms of, for example, disability acts and political reforms in the light of more democratic practices.
5. Evaluating existing methods for handling abbreviations and acronyms in Arabic for consistency when choosing between available alternatives.
6. Standardising electoral terms in the Arab world using a parallel corpus for standardisation.

'Standardisation' is not to be understood here as being against 'diversity'; in fact, on the contrary. There is no doubt that the specific geopolitical nature of countries should be considered, appreciated, and respected as in the case of Palestine concerning its specific case of demilitarisation in relation to 'military voting' discussed above. A call for the standardisation of terms, when possible, is meant to help pan-Arab cooperation and make life easier, not only for those who work in the

field of translation, but also for all concerned: professionals and the public engaging in the course of the electoral process.

The present survey of translated material from a selection of electoral manuals shows that while messages are accurately rendered through the use of idiomatic language and the selection of proper equivalent terminology, there are also unnecessary additions and occasional omissions that overlook important information. Accordingly, translations of manuals need to be revised, checked and improved.

With regard to the strategies adopted in the translation of the material investigated here, in many cases literal translation works well, but when it does not serve the intended purpose, an alternative should be established. One point which is worth highlighting is that the strategy of explicitation is not always helpful in clarifying meaning and ambiguity sometimes remains an issue.

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Appendix A – Glossary of Terms and Acronyms for Santa Clara County Election Administration Plan. Available at: https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/VCA/EAP/Documents/EAP%20Drafts/Appendix%20A%20-%20Glossary%20of%20Terms.pdf. Last accessed: 31 August 2020.

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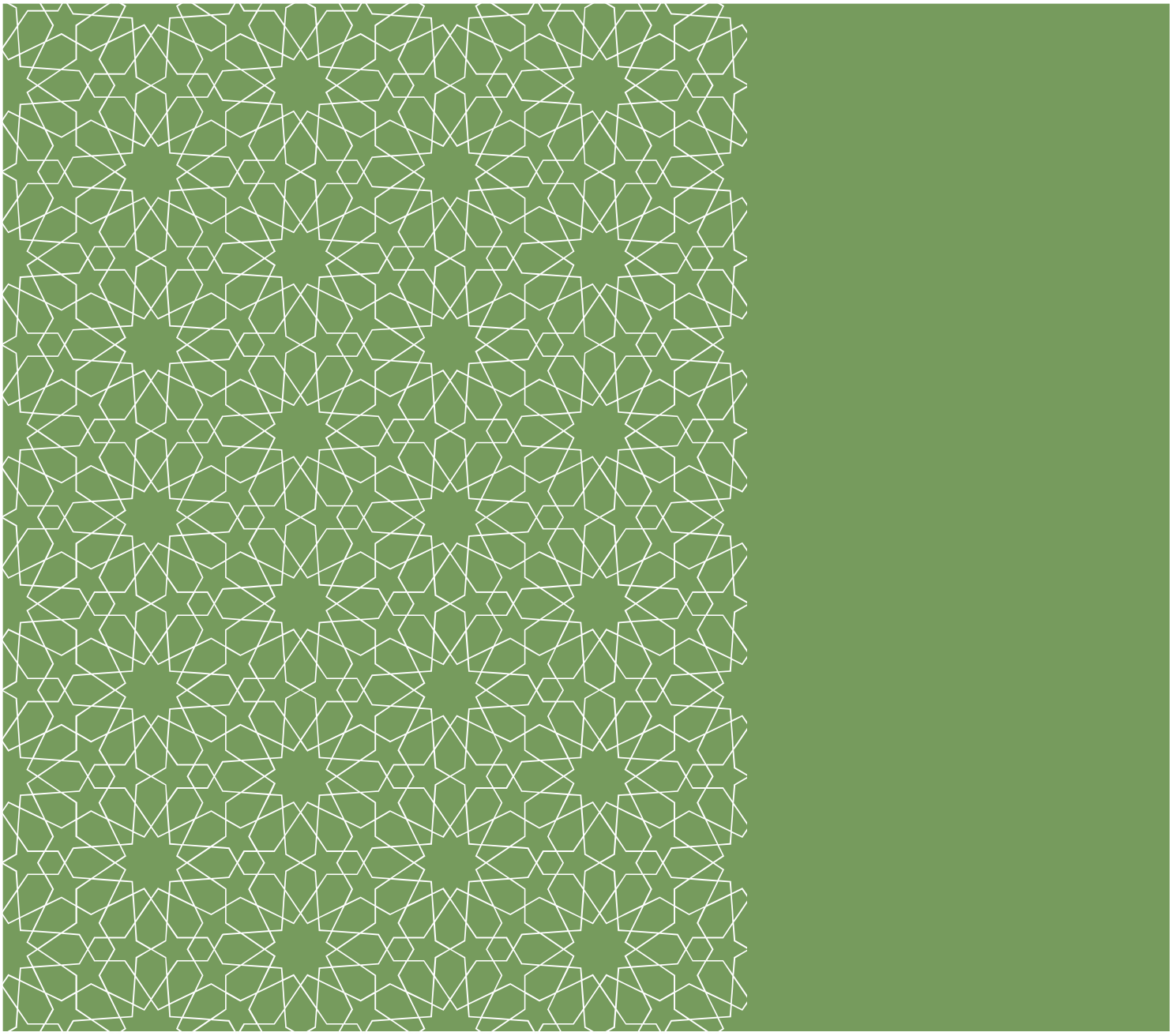
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