

Modality and Ideology in Translated Political Texts

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Introduction

This paper explores the relationship/s between modality and ideology in two versions of the same political text: one in Arabic, the other, a translation of it into English. The main argument springs from the premise that the speaker's choice of modal expressions signals both the *degree* and *type* of involvement a speaker has in the content of her/his message, and consequently her/his ideological stance/s. In this sense, translation becomes a particularly delicate process which requires a high level of precision since any looseness in translating modal expressions can run the risk of presenting a possibly variant, even a radically different ideological stance than that in the original text. As a result, this paper attempts to provide empirical evidence of how looseness in translating modalised expressions does in effect present two different ideological positions in the texts analysed, an issue of extreme seriousness and of potentially grave repercussions in politics. This is done in the light of a revised approach which examines the relationship/s between the two main types of modality (deontic and epistemic) on the one hand, and ideology on the other.

Modality in English and Arabic

During the last few decades, several approaches springing from various perspectives have tried to provide a systematic account of modality in English by defining the term as well as categorising modals in general. These have based their accounts on a number of criteria: formal/syntactic, semantic, distributional, functional, pragmatic, and/or cognitive. Yet each approach has faced its own difficulties and has produced a more or less narrow and positioned account of what modality entails and which expressions to be included under the heading of modality. Their main drawbacks lie in the fact that most approaches have focused either exclusively or mainly on modal auxiliary verbs as the one class comprising, representing and summarising modality in general. Also, most approaches have aimed at presenting modality as a *neat* system, and this resulted in overemphasising one or another criterion which helped towards that goal. With some predominantly 'semantic' approaches, this precision in categorisation often led to an unrealistic view of modality which is not only decontextualised, but is also quite distant from the general intuitions of native speakers. On the other hand, some purely syntactic accounts (and by far the most popular) have viewed modality as a purely grammatical category, while the issue of meaning lay in the background.

Even some of the less restrictive accounts carry internal contradictions. For instance, Palmer's description of modality as an essentially 'semantic-grammatical' category (1990:1) is potentially paradoxical unless 'modality' refers to a very restricted set of modal auxiliary verbs. Even within this set, there are cases where semantic *and* grammatical criteria are of conflicting rather than complementary nature¹, and trying to account for modality within both the semantic and syntactic frames creates a dilemma.

Consequently, in a more inclusive account of modality, neither syntactic nor purely semantic criteria are appropriate. In fact, any practically useful account will have to be pragmatic in the sense that it would account for the possible range of interpretation. Such an account would have to sacrifice 'neatness' for 'inclusion'.

This position is indirectly reflected in Palmer's (1986) position when discussing modality cross-linguistically. Although he has reservations concerning his mentioned criterion (mainly because it lacks a structural foundation), that suggested in his account and which reflects a combination of semantic and pragmatic features is 'subjectivity'. A similar position is adopted by Coates (1983) whose main criterion for categorising modal auxiliary verbs is 'indeterminacy' with its three sub-factors.

These two criteria are explained and justified in the following manner. Firstly, Palmer argues that modality in language is 'concerned with subjective characteristics of an utterance' and could thus be defined as 'the grammaticalization of speakers' (subjective) attitudes and opinions' (1986: 6). It is essentially 'the qualification of the categorical and the absolute as realized [in linguistics] within the code of language' (Perkins 1983: 18). This 'qualification' is the main indication of subjectivity since it represents an involvement of the producer of an instance of language in his/her production. More specifically it is an indication of the producer's point of view in terms of types and degrees of involvement. Secondly, as Coates argues, indeterminacy which is characteristic of all natural languages is of particular relevance to modal auxiliary verbs. Her three different types of indeterminacy exemplify various ways through which modals seem to have more than one sense of meaning in which the same forms are used (1983: 9). Indeterminacy, she argues, lies at the heart of the meanings and interpretations of modal auxiliary verbs and is therefore an indispensable criterion for categorising and sub-categorising such auxiliaries.

These two criteria are essential to point out since the notion of modality in Arabic is different from that in English. At the syntactic level, while there is a relatively neat formal system of modal auxiliaries in English, there are no close counterparts to that in Arabic. The only valid arguments for comparison are therefore the semantic-pragmatic ones since the areas of meaning and notions covered by modality are the meeting points for this category in different languages. Still, that does not imply that the same criteria carry the same weight in all languages. In Arabic, for instance, I argue that the notion of 'indeterminacy' is, although present, less frequent with Arabic modals. Most Arabic counterparts of the English modal auxiliaries are closer to the clearer English paraphrase of these relatively vague terms. Therefore, while this specific set of modal auxiliaries in English can open possibilities for more than one interpretation, their Arabic counterparts rarely do. This adds to the complexity of translating modal expressions and increases the risk potential of misinterpretation.

Consequently, since this predictably problematic area between the two languages, as far as modality is concerned, lies mainly in this set of English modal auxiliaries, this category will constitute the basis of my comparison and the bulk of my analysis. Moreover, in my intention to account for all modal expressions, with special emphasis

on modal auxiliaries in this study, I will be stressing the already discussed semantic-pragmatic criteria to serve as the basis for making the distinctions in the different types of modal expressions. The fact that there is more room for 'indeterminacy' in English makes this notion more fundamental to my analysis.

Where Ideology Fits in

Based on these semantic-pragmatic criteria, modality can be related to the notion of ideology. Ideology, according to Hodge and Kress (1993: 6) can be defined as 'a systematic body of ideas organized from a particular point of view', and this definition places considerable emphasis on the notion of subjectivity. Although the point of view referred to could be the aggregate sum of different sources of presenting reality, the role of the immediate producer's point of view is recognised as the last filter through which ideology is 'organised' and ultimately presented.² Here modality represents one way through which the speaker's point of view can be detected in an utterance. As Perkins (1983: 34) explains, modal expressions can be regarded as 'a realisation of a semantic system which intervenes between the speaker and some aspect of the objective world'. This interesting metaphor of intervention represents modality as some sort of a link, a mediation (or even an obstacle) between the speaker and reality and is thus a carrier of at least part of the speaker's meanings or intentions. In short, subjectivity is regarded as an indispensable notion which is associated with the use of modality, which in turn is associated with ideology.

Moreover the 'engagement' of the speaker in the content of his/her speech is a vague notion. To clarify it, we speak of different *types* and *degrees* of engagement which modality can reflect. This is an area where indeterminacy is the norm, and quite often, it is not in the least a straightforward task to decide on the sense in which modal expressions are used before they can be translated. At the same time, the effectiveness of this indeterminacy works hand in hand with one of the main objectives of ideology as defined by critical linguists. As Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Fairclough all agree, 'ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible' (Fairclough 1989: 85). In this sense, 'hearers can be both manipulated and informed, preferably manipulated while they suppose they are being informed' (Hodge and Kress 1993: 6). Here, through these less visible workings of ideology, modality plays a decisive role. It serves as a linguistic instrument which, in line with their ideological stance, language users can resort to in order to *reflect*, *refract* or totally *obscure* their views of reality. As a result, I argue that a reading of modality in a text can give us a clearer and more accurate idea about where the speaker really stands, at the ideological level.

Based on our semantic-pragmatic criteria, modal expressions in English fall mainly under the two main types or systems of modality. These are the epistemic and deontic which roughly speaking are concerned with 'language as information' and 'language as action' respectively (Palmer 1986: 121). The epistemic system, according to Simpson (1993: 48), is associated with 'the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence' (i.e. subjectivity) 'in the truth of a proposition expressed' and includes different types of

epistemic expressions like modal verbs, modal lexical verbs and epistemic modal adverbs, phrases and expressions. He adds to those a set of perception verbs which, following Perkins, he argues also achieve the same effects. He concludes that explicitly modalised utterances would signal the speaker's 'commitment' to the truth of the proposition in these utterances and would generally reflect (and usually undermine) the certainty and authority of these propositions.³

The second set is the modal system of duty since 'it is concerned with a speaker's attitude [again subjective] to the degree of obligation attaching to the performance of certain actions' (ibid. 47). This includes modal verbs and deontic expressions reflecting this attitude along with generic sentences which express categorical, timeless truths that are generally recognised and which the speaker does not expect to be disputed on, and evaluative adjectives and adverbs, the effect of which being a categorical assertive presentation of events and propositions on behalf of the speaker. Also, certain verbs describing thoughts and feelings related to the senses (*verba sentiendi*) are associated with deontic modality. All of these, along with boulomaic modality (indicating the wishes and desires of the speaker), Simpson argues, tend to have a strong assertive effect especially within literary styles of writing.

Consequently, the following basis for analysis are set. First of all, there are two different systems of modality reflecting the *type* of authority in an utterance. Secondly, each type of modality may vary on a scale determining the *degree* of authority and subjectivity in an utterance. Finally, both these characteristics are crucial in determining the speaker's position or ideological stance. As a result and for practical purposes, the most efficient way of fitting these variables in a working model is through the use of two continua. The advantage of using a continuum for categorising and analysing modal structures is that it gives us a chance to look at not only the *type* of involvement that a speaker has in his communicated message, but also the *degree* of involvement. Under the epistemic system then, the continuum reflecting degrees of certainty would include notions like **possibility, probability, necessity, prediction** and **factuality** ranging from the lowest to the highest degrees. Under the deontic system, the scale of obligation would range from **permission** to **command** including **duty, obligation and insistence**.

What is apparent from the following categories is that I have included those expressions of 'neutral modality' like 'factuality' and 'commands' in the continua. There are two reasons for that. First, I believe that the absence of explicit modality does not render such expressions 'unmodalised' or 'neutral' since they still express the speaker's highest degrees of certainty or obligation. In effect, they do communicate the ideological position of the speaker, and not accounting for them would present an incomplete picture of the degrees of strength and subjectivity of the ideologies involved. Second, this allows me to account for cases where statements of fact are translated as modalised ones. This is where the approach I follow is much more pragmatic than strictly semantic in nature since the goal is to see how different types of modalised utterances function in a variety of contexts of use in terms of strength and consequently, ideological effects.

In Halliday's view of modality as referring to 'the area of meaning that lies between yes and no' (1994: 356), such an analysis would be of paramount importance especially when applied to political discourse. Since language is a highly committing medium of communication, one way for language users to hover in this 'area of meaning between yes and no' is by using modalised expressions. Therefore, it is not in the least surprising to see a relatively higher frequency of such expressions in political discourse, and this is the case in the selected text. This type of foregrounding constitutes the basis for my selection.

The Background of the Text

The text under study is a political letter written by Gibran Tueni, the managing editor of al-Nahar, a leading Lebanese daily newspaper, to the son of the Syrian president at that time, Dr. Bashar Assad. The letter tackles an extremely sensitive political issue regarding the Syrian presence in Lebanon which was an undeclared taboo as far as political discourse was concerned. Indeed, this speech marked the beginning of a similar set of discourses by different prominent Lebanese figures⁴ who reside in Lebanon. The sensitivity of the situation can be inferred from the following brief description. Lebanon is a very small country (about one third the size of Belgium and 25 times smaller than the UK) with an estimated 35 to 40 thousand Syrian troops in it who have been there (in varying numbers) since 1976.

Based on the extreme sensitivity of the issue, one would expect a high level of caution in the use of language and in selecting those expressions in which the room for misinterpretation is kept to an absolute minimum. This is a typical context where a loose translation of modal expressions can present a different ideological position regarding the issues involved and might, in the worst scenario, lead to disastrous consequences.

In order to analyse the effects of a loose translation of modal expressions, I propose to do the following. First, I will start by comparing a sample set of modal expression in the original Arabic text (AT1) with their translated English counterpart (ET) making amendments whenever deemed necessary and explaining these amendments. The sample would be indicative of the different types or patterns of deviation made in ET. Second, I will place the modal expressions in each text on the epistemic and/or deontic scales of modality based on the type of information they convey. The possible variance in terms of where the different sets of modal expressions cluster, under which category in which scale, will help draw a picture of the different types and degrees of involvement the producer (as opposed to the translator) has in the content of his text. This I argue will provide a reading of the ideological-political stance which the producer of the original Arabic text assumes, thus highlighting the dissimilarity between the Arabic text (AT1) and my own translation of it (AT2) on the one hand, and its English translation (ET) on the other. Finally, in the light of our findings, the consequences and implications of these differences are discussed in detail.

A More Accurate Translation of Modality

Comparing the original Arabic text to its English translation, we begin to see some patterns of discrepancy. These fall into three main categories. Modal expressions translated are either *stronger* or *weaker* on each scale, or they are placed on a different scale representing a different system of modality. This discrepancy starts with the first modal expression in AT1, /ɪsməh li/ which should be translated as 'Allow me' but is translated as 'Please forgive me'. Ironically, this first modal is the least accurate translation in the whole text. As far as modality is concerned, 'allow me' is not a straightforward expression. In fact, it can have numerous interpretations which in turn reflect various degrees of power on behalf of the writer. Yet my argument is that these interpretations are, although quite varied, consistent.

Firstly, 'allow me' can be interpreted as a statement of **permission** falling under the least powerful category on the deontic scale. Looking at the mood of the sentence, however, we see the structure of an **imperative** which forms the most powerful category on the same scale. This presents a conflicting situation. Yet considering the fact that the producer of the text does not really wait for permission, (he goes ahead and writes the letter anyway), and considering the lower socio-political status that he occupies (as opposed to his addressee), it seems to me that neither permission (alone) nor command (alone) is communicated in this utterance. This is truly one of the more complex of utterances as far as modal analysis is concerned. However, it is one of the most communicative utterances and the most representative of the writer's ideology comprising many of the essential elements of what to me lies at the essence of political language, if such a category exists. This utterance I believe projects both that *lower socio-political status* of the writer as well as an element of *politeness* under **permission**. But is also foregrounds a very strong position (under **command**) in which the producer of the text considers it rightful for him to be able to express himself and is thus in no way guilt-driven. In this sense it is communicative, forceful and not offensive. This is in sharp contrast with the English translation which is not only weak, but also appears to be guilt-driven, thus foreshadowing the possible offensive content of the letter.

The second modal expression in AT1 is /jəstawʒibu/ which is derived from the verb /wəʒəbə/ or the noun /wəʒib/ meaning 'duty'. This is translated as 'necessitates' in ET. Although the meaning of each appears to be quite close, the controversy is that while a more precise translation of the modal in AT1 falls under the deontic scale, that in AT2 falls under the epistemic scale thus communicating a different type of information and commitment. In AT2, the moment 'requires' or even 'demands' frankness, while in ET, it 'necessitates' it. Here, the first is a more direct call for action.

The next modal expression translated in ET as '...politicians who have *perhaps* told you what (a) you *want to hear*, not what (b) you *should hear*...' suggests the following. Considering the political situation in Lebanon, the message put forward seems that of an implicitly direct relationship between what the addressee *wants* to hear and what he does hear as a result. This suggests the force of his desires which are eventually

transformed into reality. What he *should hear*, however, is in direct contrast with what he wants to hear. His ‘duty’ is to hear them but he does not ‘desire’ that. This is his fault, and it would be amended by the addresser. AT1, on the other hand, presents a different picture. First the verb of desire ‘want’ is absent in (a), and (b) is in the passive form. These are translated as follows: ‘...politicians who have *perhaps* reported to you what *makes you happy to hear*, and not always what *should be reported* to you...’. The effect of this change is that the ones blamed for not getting the information across are the Lebanese politicians rather than the addressee himself. Here, it is *their* duty to report to him the relevant information and not *his* duty to desire what he does not know. It is *their* judgement of what makes him happy to hear that constitutes the basis for what they report and not what *he* wants them to say.

In the second paragraph, similar translations are made. The expression /nɛʃtɛbiru/ in AT1 is translated as ‘believe’ in ET. However, the literal meaning of this Arabic verb is ‘consider’ and not ‘believe’. The verb ‘believe’ reflects some kind of emotional, faith-related commitment while ‘consider’ a logical, rational one. On the epistemic scale, the latter verb would be a much stronger one than the first. While ‘consider’ is almost a statement of **fact**, ‘believe’ is probably that of strong **possibility**.

In the fourth paragraph, we encounter a different type of looseness in translation in the utterance ‘I *must tell* you quite frankly that many Lebanese *feel* that Syria’s presence in Lebanon completely contradicts the principles of ...’. The Arabic text puts forward two different modalised expressions. The first is /ʔʔulu/, properly translated as ‘I *tell* you’; the second, /jɛʃtɛbiru/ again to be translated as ‘*consider*’ rather than ‘*feel*’. Practically speaking, what this means is that while in AT1 the expression is stated as a **fact**, in ET, it is some sort of self imposed **obligation**, or possibly, a socially imposed obligation. Moreover, the Lebanese position in ET is interpreted as a matter of *feeling*, a translation which indirectly puts forward the suggestion that what the Lebanese *feel* is unreliable and can **possibly** go either way; i.e. it could be real or unreal, right or wrong. In this sense, doubt is shed on their very position while in AT1 their position is a logical one. AT1 then presents a completely different picture where the information communicated is almost **factual** since it represents what the Lebanese *consider* to be the case. As discussed above, this is a *decision* based on a rational process.

Similar instances of translation are found throughout ET. Some of the most variant ones are the expressions translated as ‘you *must* understand’, ‘Syria *must* recognize’, ‘we *must* be convinced’ and ‘it (Syrian) *must* deal with us’. In AT1, these expressions are either those of a straightforward statements of fact: ‘you know’, ‘you know’, or a much polite but strong form of request, ‘what is *requested* is that Syria deal with us...’. The differences here have drastically variant effects. While in the first instance in ET there is ‘indeterminacy’ of meaning since the auxiliary ‘must’ can be interpreted as an instance of deontic or epistemic modality, this is not the case in AT1. But generally speaking, these four instances of the use of ‘must’ in this specific context are interpreted as part of the deontic system falling under **obligation**. In the light of this interpretation, the relationship between the addresser and addressee becomes that of the more powerful to the less powerful with the first telling the latter what he must do. The effect produced

here would be offensive to the addressee considering the reversed power relationship. The addresser in AT1, on the other hand, by using straightforward statements like ‘you know’ and a form of request such as ‘what is requested’, is not only being more polite thus preserving the status quo of the power relations, but he is also giving more credit for what his addressee knows for a fact. He is neither informing his addressee nor telling him what he must do in these statements. In fact, these statements serve as the common grounds of knowledge on which other more important requests are based.

After analysing a sample of different types of modal expressions and how these are translated, we can confirm the following patterns in translation, or rather, mistranslation. Mistranslated modals are either a) stronger or b) weaker than the original ones on either scale, or c) they can fall under a different modal system. Therefore, the next step is to see what the overall effects of these translations are and how this makes the original Arabic text and the translated English text so different. When grouping the modal expressions in each text under the epistemic and deontic scales, we get the following picture.

Under the epistemic scale of modality, we notice that modalised utterances in ET are grouped mainly under **possibility** or **necessity** (see table 1). The utterances under possibility predominantly address the Lebanese position with respect to the Syrian presence. The utterances under necessity, on the other hand, chiefly address the issue of what the addressee knows concerning the situation in Lebanon. In either case there is a problem. In the first, the Lebanese position is presented as a weak one, and in the second, the addressee’s knowledge is presented as a matter of conclusion, not fact. What makes this even more problematic is the use of verbs like ‘realize’ and ‘understand’ (which represent internal processes arrived at through exerting effort at the personal level) the effect of which is quite condescending for the addressee when compared to those in AT1 (mainly, the verb know).

possibility (7)	probability (5)	necessity (8)	prediction ()	factuality ()
- politicians who have <i>perhaps</i> told you - we <i>believe</i> that fear can never help in uncovering the truth - What <i>would</i> the Lebanese reaction be following a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon? - How <i>would</i> this affect the	→→→→ →→→→ →→→→ →→→→	- a moment that <i>necessitates</i> the utmost straightforwardness and candor. - You <u>must realize</u> that many Lebanese are not at ease - You <u>must understand</u> that there is bad blood between some Lebanese and the Syrian army, - ∅ that our generation inherited the civil war, but did not initiate it, - ∅ that we are not		

	Lebanese - you should make a simple and honest cost benefit analysis - such a relationship should form the basis of its future policies	- Ø that our generation inherited the civil war, but did not initiate it, - Ø that we are not warmongers, and - Ø that there are no such things as eternal wars and eternal enmities. - a generation that <i>will</i> someday have to shoulder the responsibility of building Syria's future. - Syria must recognize the sovereignty of Lebanese territory... - We must be reassured that Syria will not continue treating Lebanon with a victor's mentality - We must be convinced that Syria has decided to start dealing with free Lebanese politicians - it must deal with us as allies		
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Table 3 representing ET's position on a scale of obligation

It follows then that in Table 4 there are a lot fewer instances of deontic modality than in Table 3. The main reason is that most of them are placed under the epistemic scale. Also, even with those expressions grouped under obligation, only one of them has the addressee as the grammatical subject of the sentence. The effect of this is an avoidance of a direct point of friction through which the addresser would sound too condescending, something which ET does not manage or possibly even try to achieve.

permission (1)	duty (4)	obligation (5)	insistence (1)	command (1)
- Allow me to address you, without knowing you personally, in this straight-forward article ...	→→→→→→ - critical time which the region is going through and which requires/ demands of us the utmost straightforwardness - not always what should be reported - what is requested/ asked	→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→ - You have to know that many Lebanese are not at ease →→→→→→→→→→→→ - We must be reassured that dealing with Lebanon will not be done with a conqueror-conquered mentality. - We must be reassured that Syria has decided to start dealing with free Lebanese politicians	→→→→→	→→→→→

	for is dealing with the mentality of allies			
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Table 4 representing AT2's position on a scale of obligation

Based on an analysis of modal expressions in each text independently, and comparing these to each other, there emerge two very different pictures and positions. The translated text, ET, presents a mixed picture. While it starts weak, with an apology, it proceeds to attack the addressee at a more personal level by both giving him no credit in terms of his knowledge as well as by blaming him directly for the situation in Lebanon and for what the Lebanese politicians do. The large number of utterances under **obligation** present a reversed power relation while most of the informative utterances indicating the Lebanese position is weakly placed under possibility.

The original text, on the other hand, presents a consistent picture. It does not launch a personal attack at the addressee as it opens the possibility for giving the Lebanese politicians part of the blame. A lot more credit is given for what the addressee knows and a lot fewer utterances are placed under **obligation**. All the informative parts that communicate the Lebanese position are placed under necessity or factuality thus highlighting a much stronger position than that in ET. Finally, and most importantly, the first modalised utterance sums up the ideological-political position of the addresser with respect to his addressee and all he represents. As argued above, the possible several interpretative dimensions of this utterance projecting both the lower socio-political status of the writer as well as an element of politeness under **permission** together with foregrounding a very strong position (under **command**) in which the addresser considers it rightful for him to be able to express himself is quite unique. In this sense it is communicative, forceful and not offensive. In short, it is very political.

In the light of these differences, and considering that the translated English text is targeted a specifically American audience, one wonders at the extent of divergence between the Lebanese and the American views concerning the political situation in Lebanon and how it is handled.

The way each text handles the issue presented shows the variance in positions and ideological effects. Although one can argue that both the original and translated texts seem to present a similar ideological stance when it comes to issues of freedom and the importance of independence and democracy, the main difference springs from the way in which these issues are tackled. As argued above, the Arabic text is much more cautious considering the extent of damage that can occur if adopting the more aggressive method of the translated text. The Arabic text is consistent in its positions while the English translation inconsistent. This, in effect, does reflect a variant ideological stance.

Notes

1. An example of such a dilemma is the auxiliary 'can' (in reference to ability) which does not strictly fulfil the criteria of a modal from a semantic point of view (mainly in terms of subjectivity) but is still (and arguably so) treated as a modal auxiliary because it fulfils grammatical criteria.
2. In my opinion, ideology can be better understood when defined at two levels: the first is a matter of perception, definition and organisation of different views and ideas; the second, a projection of these defined and organised views and ideas through language and different ways of life and social interaction. Of course, this is not always a conscious process, and this falls in line with the Critical Linguists' definitions of ideology and its effectiveness mainly through the representation of political views and social relations.
3. I believe that the terms 'confidence' and 'commitment' carry a suggestion that the speaker is quite conscious in communicating his position. Of course this need not be the case, and this is why I prefer to use the term 'involvement' which opens the way for the possibility that the speaker's position is not always that conscious.
4. Such figures include the Maronite Patriarch, Cardinal Sfier and the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, Mr Walid Jumblat.

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T2	T1
<p><i>Please forgive me</i> for addressing you so frankly at this delicate and decisive time in the history of our region -- a moment that <i>necessitates</i> the utmost straightforwardness and candor. You have visited Lebanon several times and met with many politicians who have <i>perhaps</i> told you what you want to hear, not what you should hear about the opinions of many Lebanese regarding Syrian policy in Lebanon.</p> <p>Many of these politicians speak more out of fear of Syria than love. However, we <i>believe</i> that fear can never help in uncovering the truth and in creating the kind of relationship we want. You <u>must realize</u> that many Lebanese are not at ease either with Syrian policy in Lebanon and or with the presence of Syrian troops in our country.</p> <p>As a man of science, you should make a simple and honest cost benefit analysis of your country's policies in Lebanon to find out what these policies entail and what the Lebanese really think about them.</p> <p>I wish that you would ask yourself the simple questions: What <i>would</i> the Lebanese reaction be following a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon? How <i>would</i> this affect the development of relations between the two countries? <i>Would</i> Syria still have any true allies in Lebanon? Has the Syrian presence created friends or enemies in Lebanon during the last quarter century? I must tell you quite frankly that many Lebanese <i>feel</i> that Syria's behavior in Lebanon completely contradicts the principles of sovereignty, dignity and independence.</p> <p>To people of our generation -- the war generation -- Syria's presence in Lebanon has never meant anything more than periodic military and political disputes. Our only knowledge of Syrian policies we got from political elites that Syria helped install in power, and who did more to distort these policies than serve them.</p> <p>You <u>must understand</u> that there is bad blood between some Lebanese and the Syrian army, \emptyset that our generation inherited the civil war, but did not initiate it, \emptyset that we are not warmongers, and \emptyset that there are no such things as eternal wars and eternal enmities.</p>	<p>ALLOW ME to address you, without knowing you personally, in this straightforward article at this delicate and critical time which the region is going through and which requires/demands of us the utmost straightforwardness and candor. You have made several visits to Lebanon and met with many politicians who have <i>perhaps</i> reported to you what MAKES YOU HAPPY to hear, and not always what should be reported about the opinions of many Lebanese regarding Syrian policy in Lebanon.</p> <p>And many of these politicians fear Syria more than they desire it. As for us, we <i>consider</i> that fear can never help uncover the truth and develop the relationship to reach what we want and desire. You have to know that many Lebanese are not at ease either with Syrian methods in Lebanon or with the Syrian military 'presence' in Lebanon.</p> <p>You are a man who believes in education/science. Therefore, all there is to do is perform a simple and honest cost benefit mathematical operation of the Syrian policy in Lebanon, study the reality of this policy, and study the true position of the Lebanese towards it.</p> <p>And if only you ask yourself the simple questions: What <i>will</i> the Lebanese reaction be following a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon? What <i>will</i> the relationship between the two countries be like then? <i>Will</i> there remain any true Syrian allies in Lebanon? Has the Syrian presence created friends or enemies in Lebanon during the last quarter century? I <i>tell</i> you quite frankly that many Lebanese <i>consider</i> the Syrian performance in Lebanon to be in complete opposition with the principles of sovereignty, dignity and independence.</p> <p>Many of our generation -- your generation -- the war generation have known nothing of the Syrian presence except 'disagreement', both military and political. This generation has know nothing except what they it has seen, lived through, co-existed with, and heard from the political class which Syria helped install in power, and which distorted these policies more than served them.</p> <p>You <i>know</i> that there is blood between some Lebanese and the Syrian army in Lebanon. And you <i>know</i> that our generation inherited the war and did not cause it, \emptyset that we are not fans of eternal wars and \emptyset that there are no such things as eternal wars or eternal enemies.</p>

You *must have undoubtedly realized by now* that the Lebanese are utterly devoted to their dignity, liberty, independence, and sovereignty, and that they are understandably angered when they *feel* that 'Syrian behavior' -- threatens these values. This is why they fought, died, were kidnapped, jailed, exiled, or fled.

We are addressing you as a representative of a new, youthful and progressive generation -- a generation that *will* someday **have to** shoulder the responsibility of building Syria's future. We want to tell you that *it is essential* that our Lebanese generation *feels* reassured of Lebanon's independence and of Syria's recognition of this independence. Syria **must** recognize the sovereignty of Lebanese territory and institutions, as well as the civil liberties that we hold sacred, and for which we have sacrificed so much over the years.

We **must be reassured** that Syria will not continue treating Lebanon with a victor's mentality, as just another Syrian province. We **must be convinced** that Syria has decided to start dealing with free Lebanese politicians who truly represent the people, rather than with those who merely submit to its diktat. We *want to convince* Syria that it **must deal** with us as allies, not vassals, and that such a relationship **should form** the basis of its future policies.

And you *know* that the Lebanese hold on to their liberty, dignity, independence, and sovereignty, and *will* revolt when they *feel* that 'Syrian performance' (let us call it such) threatens these values. This is why they fought, were killed, were kidnapped, were jailed, were exiled, or they self-exiled.

We address you as a representative of a new, youthful and progressive generation, which *might* take the responsibility of building Syria's future. We address you to tell you that *it is essential* that our Lebanese generation *be* reassured of Lebanon's independence and of Syria's recognition of this independence and the sovereignty of Lebanese territory and institutions, as well as the civil liberties that we hold sacred, and for which we have sacrificed so much over the years.

We **must be reassured** that dealing with Lebanon will not be done with a conqueror-conquered mentality. We **must be reassured** that Syria has decided to start dealing with free Lebanese politicians who truly represent the people and its history, rather than with those who merely submit to diktat. We *want* Syria *to be convinced* that what is **requested/asked for is** that Syria **deal** with us with the mentality of allies, and that this mentality *forms* the basis of its future policies.

The original Arabic text can be found at:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/nlc/arabic.pdf>