

LOST OR FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Translations' support policies in the Arab world

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Introduction

In the past years, the Arab world's development issues have increasingly been taken to the international level. Matters of economic reform constituted the focus of international attention during the 1980s and 1990s; facing severe financial pressure, state-dominated systems had to undergo processes of opening up; structural adjustment programmes led to partial successes regarding the macro-economic stabilization of most countries. However, neither previous patterns of state control nor current approaches of economic liberalization have led to a comprehensive development push in the Arab world. In fact, economic dynamics have remained limited, political systems have continued to be mostly authoritarian, and societies have not significantly opened up.

After concentrating primarily on the economic issues of development challenges, the dimension of human development has surfaced again in recent years as the cornerstone of the future of Arab societies. Although the countries of the region may be economically better off than the poorer states of sub-Saharan Africa, the situation of the Arab world has been described as a paradox; while there remains poverty in the region, the Arab world today is seen as being richer than it is developed. The Arab Human Development Report of 2002, sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) in Kuwait, identified three deficits that constitute severe challenges to the Arab world's catching up with global trends; a general knowledge deficit has been identified – next to deficits in political freedoms and women's empowerment – as its main obstacle to overall development.¹

However, Arab intellectuals had debated these and other issues of human development at length prior to the publication of the Arab Human Development Report. For people with a more constant interest in Arab affairs, what was stated was not all new. New, however, was its concise and at times polarizing presentation, and new was definitely its international impact. With worldwide attention for Middle Eastern affairs on the rise after 11 September 2001, more than one million copies of the Arab Human Development Report were downloaded from the Internet within twelve months. The report of 2003, focusing on *Building a Knowledge Society*, continued the assessment of the previous year and tried to detail the analysis in a number of key areas. Among them, education was given a central place; access to information and acquiring knowledge also raised the question of the Arab world's intellectual and cultural relations with the outside world.

The new awareness for the need to overhaul educational systems and to establish patterns of teaching and learning based on creativity and opening up to the outside world is, however, not merely an academic issue. It rather reflects the pressure of an overall demographic situation by which an average of almost 40 percent of the population in Arab countries is under the age of 15. This is not a challenge that needs to be dealt with under an economic perspective only; it indicates more fundamentally that the Arab world has entered the stage of a more comprehensive generational change. Inherited societal situations are exposed to the global flow of information that has started touching the lives of young people, in particular through satellite television and the spread of the Internet. Changes in behavioural patterns, values, and attitudes characterize a situation in which programs and ideologies of the past do not attract youth anymore.

In this situation it has become fashionable for almost all Arab governments to promote Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Gaining access to the Internet and achieving literacy in the electronic domain have been identified as strategic tools to re-shape educational systems. In several countries there are numerous attempts to bring schools and universities online, partly in public-private-partnerships. In theory, educational policies see ICT as a tool, while in practice they seem to become more and more an end in itself. Access to *digital knowledge* is one thing; *digital access* to

¹ UNDP/AFESD: Arab Human Development Report 2002, New York: UNDP 2002, pp. 27-29.

knowledge is a different thing. Closing the digital divide without the substance of knowledge production and dissemination undergoing major changes will not lead to any qualitative improvement of education. It is at this point that the issue of translating into Arabic needs to be raised, as contents need to be given new prominence vis-à-vis an ever-increasing concern for tools and techniques. Education is about fostering human capabilities that are the *conditio sine qua non* in building knowledge based societies. Using these capabilities will impact on the situation of research and development, economic growth, poverty reduction, and good governance in the Arab world.

This report aims at highlighting some issues that are considered to be of relevance in the field of translating into Arabic. As a first step, Arabic language issues are outlined in order to shed light on the complex linguistic situation of speakers and readers of Arabic in the vast area between Morocco and Oman. The second chapter deals with the efforts undertaken in modernizing Arabic, in particular in unifying its academic lexicon and style. A third part briefly deals with the situation of the book industry in the Arab world. The emphasis is put here on current methods of bibliographic documentation. More precisely, challenges resulting from deficits in data collection are presented, which impede a proper assessment of both the volume of publishing in the Arab world in general and of translating into Arabic in particular. The fourth chapter gives an overview on some selected translation projects undertaken since the 1950s in the Arab region. It outlines the most important characteristics in terms of content and orientation, in particular with regard to the field of social sciences and humanities. The fifth chapter takes the analysis further into issues related to key issues of translating, while the sixth chapter looks at translation programmes within the context of different publishing strategies. The seventh chapter closes the analysis with a brief presentation of issues related to the distribution and marketing of books. Finally, recommendations are made that may facilitate operational approaches in order to strengthen translations into Arabic and that may serve as a basis to create translation support schemes.

1. Arabic Language Issues

Although constituting one of the strongest factors of Arab collective identity, literary Arabic is not a mother tongue in any Arab country. The language situation in the Arab world is characterized by the principle of diglossia, which, derived from the Greek, does not translate as bi-lingualism, but rather refers to a situation where so-called High (H) and Low (L) varieties of a given language co-exist and are used in different domains. In Arabic, H and L-varieties – that is classical or literary Arabic on the one hand and numerous dialects on the other hand – are used for specific purposes; as a rule, all spoken language occurs in L, while H is used for the domain of writing. In between, there are overlapping areas in the sense that L is usually used to illustrate political cartoons (i.e. in writing), while H is used for official speech, such as televised news. While it is theoretically possible to use the H-variety in domains where the L-variety is required, its everyday use would be considered inappropriate, funny or even ridiculous. Addressing for example a salesperson in a supermarket in literary Arabic (*fusha*) might leave the impression that the customer is making fun of him or her. The diglossia of Arabic therefore does not refer to a situation of standard-with-dialects, as no speaker speaks the H-variety as his or her mother tongue. Rather, a number of L-varieties have to be considered mother tongues, and the H-variety can only be acquired through education as a complementary language system. As a consequence, diglossia in Arabic does not per se prejudice any difference in social status or stratification; all native speakers – from the garbage collector to the university professor – speak L-varieties first. Their capacity to speak the H-variety basically depends on their educational level, and the actual use of literary Arabic depends on whether or not a given domain of speech allows or requires the speaker to do so.

While linguists agree on the primacy of the L-variety as the native language and regard the H-variety as acquired by schooling and education, literary Arabic is conceived by Arab scholars as being the real language; *fusha* is prestigious, and dialects are considered to be corruptions of the H-variety. However, the use of dialects and their survival over the centuries goes back to the Arab-Muslim conquests of North Africa and the Near East; diglossia clearly seems to have been a linguistic principle even in the formative years, so that dialects of Arab conquerors on the one hand and the classical language of the Koran on the other hand co-existed in their respective domains. The primacy given by Arab scholars to literary Arabic in general – and the classical one of the Koran in particular – must therefore be considered as a confirmation of diglossia among Arab speakers; in diglossia in general, prestige is linked to the H-variety, in which key religious texts as well as a rich literary heritage may be preserved while the L-variety may occur – other than in speech – in orally transmitted dialect poetry, for example. The central role of religion in social organization attributed a normative role to the classical Arabic of the Koran and therefore preserved the Arabic diglossia. In fact, were it not for the Koran as the central Arabic language text, the Arabic diglossia may have well evaporated into a comprehensive evolution of Arabic dialects into more stable forms of separate languages (for which Maltese – written in Latin characters – remains an example). The main dialect groups today can be broken down to the Arab Peninsula and the Gulf, the *bilad ash-sham* (or Greater Syria), Egypt, and the Maghreb countries. Of all L-varieties, the Cairene dialect is the most widely understood from Morocco to Oman, as Egyptian films dominate the Arab cinema and soap operas produced in Cairo are shown on television all over the Arab world. While literary Arabic (H-variety) is mainly used in print (novels, magazines, newspapers, non-fiction), movie scripts are written in dialect; therefore, a famous author such as Naguib Mahfouz for example, is considered to have had a much larger impact through the film versions (in L-variety) of his novels rather than directly through his books in literary Arabic. On the other end of the L-variety scale, the Maghreb dialects are not intelligible to native speakers from the Arab East, and it is not uncommon that a Moroccan and a frankophone Lebanese for example converse in French rather than in literary Arabic.

As a result, speaking, writing or reading (literary) Arabic is therefore not the natural extension of speaking (colloquial) Arabic but rather represents a rupture with the linguistic environment people live in. Depending on the level of education, literary Arabic is often incomprehensible for native speakers using mainly a dialect that varies in both grammar and vocabulary. It must be said, of course, that literary Arabic has been undergoing a modernization process (and instead of classical Arabic is now often called Modern Standard Arabic), notably through the development of journalism and new literary genres as well as through the spread of radio and television. Equally important is the impact of foreign languages, of which English and French have over a long time frame been the most important sources. Neologisms in most Arab countries draw heavily on English language substrate, while French has remained a model for the linguistic modernization of the Arab countries of North Africa for the last decades. It seems, however, that dialects as spoken language varieties undergo this modernization process more quickly and more thoroughly than the written literary Arabic, whose lexicon lacks precision and consensus and therefore continues to differ from country to country. The split in the use of dialect on the one hand and *fusha* on the other hand must therefore be regarded as a structural difficulty in the fields of promoting universal literacy; diglossia is defined as a stable situation of H and L-varieties, and given this stability, promoting literary Arabic – and thus promoting reading in Arabic – poses considerable pedagogical, social, and even psychological challenges.

2. Arabization Issues

2.1. Historical Background

While the notion of arabization (*ta'rib* in Arabic) is frequently used as synonymous with translation (*tarjama*), it should be noted that the former reflects a much broader concept and is indeed of wider implications for translating. The initial rationale of arabization was to promote (literary) Arabic in all fields, in particular in education and science as well as in administration and politics. Its purpose has been to provide a modern standard language that enhances the transfer and growth of knowledge among speakers whose mother tongue is (colloquial) Arabic. While a knowledge transfer could be achieved – and indeed was achieved during colonialism – in foreign languages, arabization has aimed at rendering modernity accessible in the H-variety of the language, thus enhancing the efficiency of education, and strengthen the cultural selfconsciousness in Arab societies. Arabization was not intended to isolate Arabic language speakers but rather to create channels of opening up towards the outside world, allowing Arabic to become a language capable of expressing modern concepts and to develop itself into a language of knowledge production.

Arabization became an issue of political debate first and foremost in the Maghreb countries where France – and to a lesser extent Spain – dominated (Tunisia 1881-1956; Morocco 1912-1956; Algeria 1830-1962). The process of social modernization the region underwent up to the middle of the 20th century affected the language situation as well. French in particular came to be associated with everything modern, while literary Arabic was reduced to residual spheres against the background of the use of colloquial Arabic or dialects in everyday life. Similarly, the states of the Arab East had been exposed through British protectorates and mandates to the English language, with the exception of Lebanon and Syria (where French dominated) and Saudi Arabia (that had stayed out of colonial rivalries). Arabization came in the 1950s therefore as a demand to appropriate independence in the linguistic field just like national movements were claiming political sovereignty. In April 1961 the first Arabization Congress took place in Rabat, after Morocco and Tunisia had gained independence and sought to replace French as the language of administration. While the aim was a total linguistic overhaul of state and society, it became clear that this could only be achieved through the education of the next generation for whom the supply of teachers proficient in Arabic was not immediately available. In 1962, Morocco for example opened a teachers training college in Rabat with staff from Egypt and another one in Casablanca with staff from Iraq to overcome this shortage. Algeria, too, imported school teachers from Egypt after gaining independence in 1962.

However, the end of colonialism did not mean that societies were to be merely re-arabized after a period of foreign domination (which in the case of Algeria lasted altogether 132 years). The educational systems as well as the political institutions of the pre-colonial period were weak; it was therefore with very few exceptions impossible to simply return to a previous language situation of Arab societies because crucial institutions in their modern outlook – state, school, army, businesses, etc. – had only had a limited existence before the rise of European powers; colonial modernization of societies (however rudimentary it may have been) had not been accompanied by an updating of the Arabic language both in terms of lexicon and style. In this perspective, arabization is not only of relevance to the Maghreb countries in particular; the need for language modernization rather applies to all Arab countries, irrespectively of the degree of dependency on European powers during the 19th and 20th centuries. Arabization must therefore be seen as a huge linguistic challenge that was at times taken and at times missed by Arab political elites. Arabization as a grassroots project was traditionally seen as a vehicle of achieving democracy and promoting Arab unity; therefore, some go as far as to say that governments deliberately avoided a full scale arabization because of its

implications for wide-ranging societal change that was professed in words but not followed by adequate action.²

2.2. Instruments

As a follow-up to the first Arabization Congress of 1961, the Arabization Coordination Bureau (ACB) was set up in Rabat and was attached as an affiliate institution to the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in 1972. Its tasks included to lead the process of linguistic modernization and to monitor the unification of Arabic terminology in all areas. This was to be done in co-operation with the Arabic language academies of individual countries. The aim was to promote the use of Arabic, most importantly at all levels and for all topics of education, so that literary Arabic would become mutually intelligible throughout the region and its use be increased in public sphere. Of the instruments at the disposal of ACB there are two that have left some marks in the field of modernization of Arabic. The first is the periodical *al-lisan al-'arabi* (The Arabic Language), a scientific journal dealing with Arabic language issues, of which more than 50 numbers were published since its inception in 1964. The second instrument is the Series of Unified Dictionaries, of which the following volumes have been approved by various arabization conferences and published by ALECSO and ACB so far:

Number	Content of Dictionary	Number of Terms	Date of Publication
1	Linguistics	3059	Tunis 1989
	(Second Edition)	1744	Rabat 2002
2	General and Nuclear Physics	6318	Tunis 1989
3	Mathematics and Astronomy	4074	Tunis 1990
4	Music	846	Tunis 1992
5	Chemistry	4535	Tunis 1992
6	Health and Anatomy	2146	Tunis 1992
7	Archaeology and History	3018	Tunis 1993
8	Biology	6596	Tunis 1994
9	Geography	2701	Tunis 1994
10	Commerce and Accounting	8846	Tunis 1995
11	Renewable Energy	1180	Tunis 1996
12 A	Technical Education (Electrics, Printing)	2838	Tunis 1996
12 B	Technical Education (Construction, Carpentry)	3734	Tunis 1996
13	Humanities	4344	Tunis 1997
14	Law	1587	Tunis 1996
15	Tourism	3121	Tunis 1996
16	Earthquakes	1962	Tunis 1996
17	Geology	4623	Rabat 2000
18	Economics	2039	Rabat 2000
19	Petroleum	6089	Rabat 1999
20	Environment	1747	Rabat 1999
21	Mechanical Engineering	2828	Rabat 1999
22	Educational Techniques	1314	Rabat 1999
23	Media	3428	Rabat 1999
24	Arts	1524	Rabat 1999
25	Meteorology	2031	Rabat 1999
26	Water	2204	Rabat 2000
27	Information Technology	3210	Rabat 2000
28	Teledetection	1196	Rabat 2000
29	Navigation	3913	Rabat 2000

² Tahar Labib: *al-bu'd as-siyasi li-t-ta'rib wa-silatu-hu bi-l-wahda wa-d-dimuqratiya*. In: *at-ta'rib wa-dawru-hu fi tad'im al-wujud al-'arabi wa-l-wahda al-'arabiya*. Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies 1982, pp. 97-102, in particular pp. 100-101.

It goes without saying that the Series of Unified Dictionaries constitute a potentially important instrument for the establishment of a coherent terminology of Modern Standard Arabic and thus is important for the monitoring of the translation process from foreign languages into Arabic as well. All dictionaries have their entries in English, French, and Arabic and aim at standardizing a vocabulary that has developed so far firstly in L-variety dialects and secondly within individual countries. For although literary Arabic is in theory shared throughout the Arab world, the lexicon has remained fragmented, as diglossia has been prevailing, foreign language influences have remained manifold, and linguistic cross-border exchange within the region has remained limited.

However, the Series of Unified Dictionaries for different reasons has not yet achieved an overall impact on the use of Modern Standard Arabic. Firstly, editions of around 3,000 copies can hardly serve the entire Arab world, in particular given a weak distribution mechanism that does not target commercial bookstores but is rather limited to the exchange of publications among governmental organizations at the national and regional levels. The online version of some 26 volumes until today enlarges the number of potential users considerably; however, due to a still relatively low Internet penetration rate in the Arab world this potential does not seem to be exploited yet. Secondly, although the terminology is approved by arabization conferences in which all Arab states participate, users in the Arab East resent what is considered as the prevailing Maghreb influence on terminology. Thirdly, some dictionaries at least are considered incomplete, in particular in the fields of social sciences and humanities; between 'modernity' and 'postmodernity' much terminology is missing. Fourthly, the standardization and publication process together with the approval mechanism is regarded as time consuming; given the diglossia of Arabic, new notions enter the spoken language on a daily and much quicker basis. While it is already difficult to replace the use of older terms that vary across the Arab world, it seems to be even more challenging to catch up with more recent vocabulary of everyday life; the word for mobile phone – which in literary Arabic would be *al-hatif al-mutanaqqil* – for example differs from *mahmul* (North Africa, based on French *portable*) to *mobayl* (Egypt), *khilawi* (Jordan), *khilyawi* (Lebanon), *jawwal* (Palestine) and *sayyar* (Yemen).

If any standardization tendencies can be identified, it is rather through the spoken than the written word that they occur. In particular pan-Arab satellite television has opened up the linguistic space in recent years, and it can be assumed that the Arabic used by channels such as Al-Jazeera, MBC and Al-Arabiya will lead to a higher level of standardization of both lexicon and grammar.

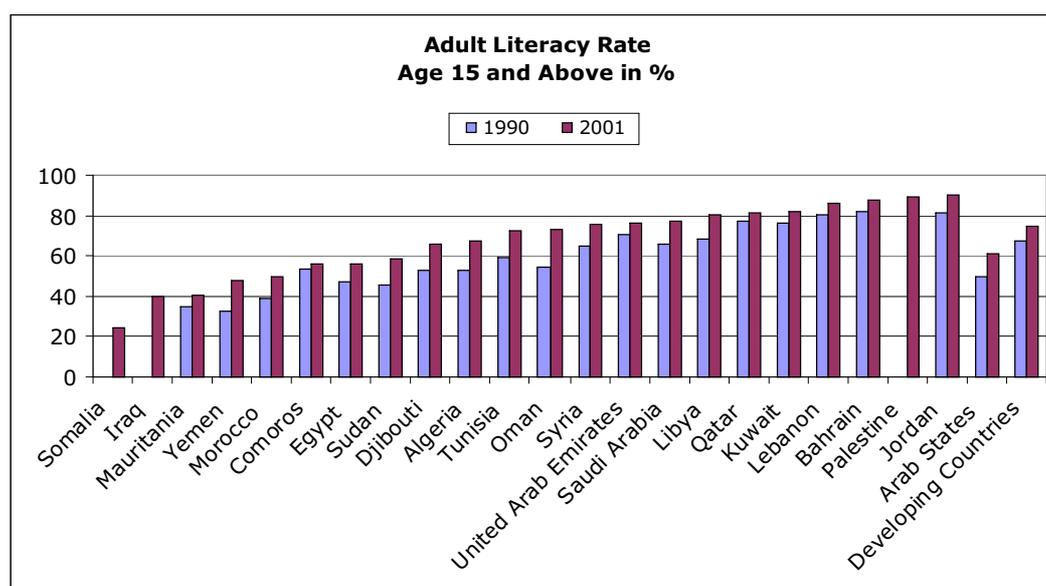
2.3. Arabization and Translation

Shortly after the Department of Culture of the League of Arab States had been transformed into the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization in 1970, the issue of translations into Arabic was raised. A conference was held in Kuwait in December 1973 that called for the co-ordination between translation efforts in the Arab world through the adoption of a regional translation plan. ALECSO created a Translation Unit in 1980/81 whose task it was to promote the institutional and planning framework for a broader translation scheme. Regarding the institutional setup, the idea was to establish on the one hand an institution responsible for training translators and on the other hand an institution in charge of producing translations. The project of a pan-Arab center for translators (Arab Higher Institute of Translation) that was supposed to be located in Algiers did not materialize, while Syria came to host the Arab Center for Arabization, Translation, Authorship and Publication in Damascus, albeit with considerable delay in 1990. In terms of strategic planning, ALECSO carried out several research and documentation projects. Firstly, a series of country studies on the state of translation in the Arab states was commissioned by the Translation Unit. The results were published in two volumes in 1985 (covering Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Syria and Lybia) and in 1987 (covering the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Palestine,

Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, and the two Yemens).³ Secondly, based on a part of the preliminary results of these studies a National Translation Plan was elaborated in 1982, approved in 1983, and published in 1985.⁴ Thirdly, documentation on translators and translation institutions was produced.⁵ However, these regional efforts evaporated when in 1985 the Translation Unit of ALECSO was abolished, and it was not until 1994 that the Arab ministers of Culture meeting in Beirut called upon ALECSO to modernize the National Translation Plan. However, although the studies commissioned in the early 1980s were supposed to produce bibliographies of translations produced over the past ten years in its member states, ALECSO continues to suffer from an inadequate documentation of works translated into Arabic. The result is that the revised National Translation Plan of 1996 remains a rather technical document that leaves regional projects with less than what individual Arab states have at their disposal.⁶

2.4. Literacy and Educational Issues

The political – albeit often rather ideological – emphasis put on promoting Modern Standard Arabic conceals, however, that basic requirements have yet to be met. Given the fact that diglossia makes literary Arabic almost exclusively a language to be written and read – as opposed to dialects used in everyday speech – the literacy rates remain the single most important indicator to measure what impact any arabization effort can possibly have. In this respect, the adult literacy rate of Arab countries (referring to the age group of 15 and above) has increased of the last decade of the 20th century, but remains according to the Human Development Report of 2003 below the average of developing countries as a whole.



Source: UNDP: Human Development Report 2003

In 1990, only half of the population aged 15 and above of Arab countries were literate, and at the beginning of the third millenium the rate increased to slightly over 60 percent. The highest rates are achieved in less populous states, with the larger countries such as

³ al-munazzama al-'arabiya li-t-tarbiya wa-th-thaqafa wa-l-'ulum: dirasat 'an waqi' al-tarjama fi-l-watan al-'arabi. Tunis: ALECSO 1985/1987.

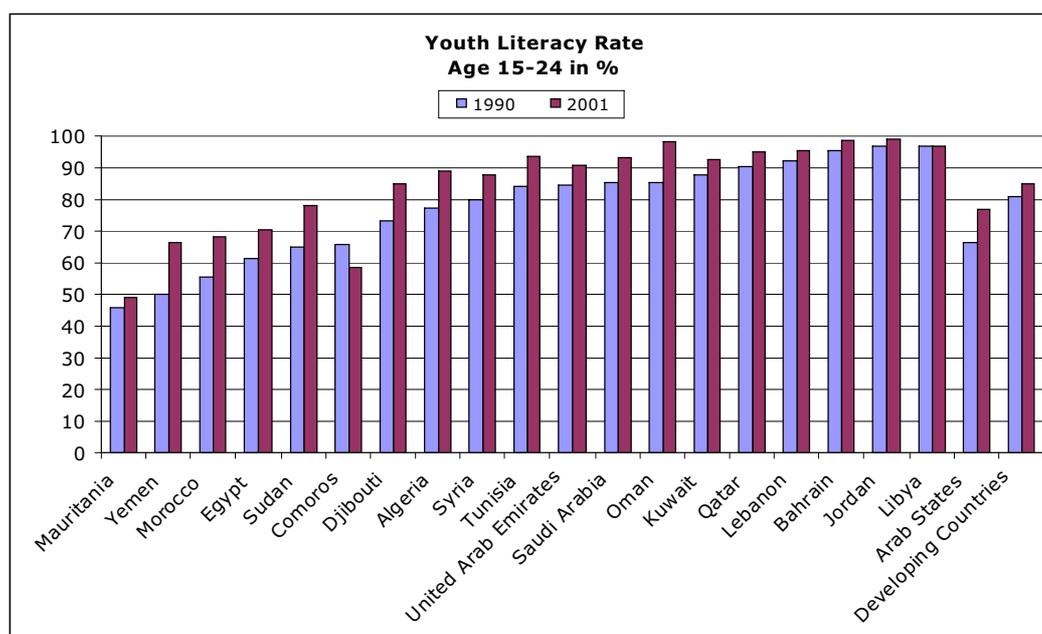
⁴ The term *qawmi* as opposed to *watani* means national in the tradition of pan-Arab nationalism and therefore refers to the Arab nation perceived as a whole; the National Translation Plan should therefore be understood as a regional project.

⁵ al-munazzama al-'arabiya li-t-tarbiya wa-th-thaqafa wa-l-'ulum: dalil al-mutarjimin wa-mu'assasat at-tarjama wa-n-nashr fi-l-watan al-'arabi. Tunis: ALECSO 1987.

⁶ al-munazzama al-'arabiya li-t-tarbiya wa-th-thaqafa wa-l-'ulum: al-khutba al-qawmiya li-t-tarjama. Tunis: ALECSO 1996.

Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Iraq and Yemen having a range of fewer than 50 to 60 percent in literacy rate.

However, given the age structure of Arab countries with their high proportion of youth, the figures improve if the literacy rate is limited to the age group of 15 to 24. Again, the smaller Gulf states – as well as Libya as an oil producing country – reach higher scores, and Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia achieve literacy rates of over 90 percent. The more populous countries lag behind in alphabetisation; for countries such as Yemen, Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria and Syria, the increase in youth literacy seems to be the only factor that statistically improves adult literacy rates as a whole.



Source: UNDP: Human Development Report 2003

Access to Modern Standard Arabic for the sake of reading cannot simply be deduced from quantitative data on literacy; in fact, literacy as such does not necessarily entail a culture of reading. The Arab Human Development Report of 2003 has therefore put emphasis on the need to revise educational strategies with regard to their qualitative outlook. There is consensus that increasing literacy and school enrolment rates do not yet translate into a new culture of education and learning. There are socio-cultural as well as socio-economic factors for this situation; authoritarian ways of teaching that do not promote creativity and independent thinking prevail in public schooling institutions, while quality education is more and more moving into the private sector and thus becomes unaffordable to most of the population in Arab countries. It should be noted against this background that private educational institutions rely to a much larger extent than public schools and universities on foreign languages (English and French), which very often reduces teaching, learning, writing and reading of Arabic to the level of what is perceived as the socially underdeveloped segments of society.

2.5. Case Study: Arabization and Language Attitudes in Morocco

For Morocco, empirical evidence shows that attitudes towards Arabic (Classical Arabic, while in fact Modern Standard Arabic is meant) have changed in a positive way. In a sample of some 120 high school students and 200 professionals (well-trained middle and high functionaries in the Moroccan public administration), arabization has a positive connotation. More than 60 percent see arabization as a basis for Morocco's development and progress (variable 1), and more than two thirds of both students and professionals have positive opinions about the arabization of administration and education (variable 8). The vast majority of the sample considers Classical Arabic to be a language of science (variable 6). However, while this standpoint prevails among the younger generation (66.4 percent in comparison to 61.6 percent among professionals), variable 2 indicates that there may be a gap between this positive attitude on the one hand and a more pragmatic evaluation of Classical Arabic on the other hand; students think for almost a quarter that Classical Arabic cannot meet the requirements of modern life, while this assessment is not shared by the elder generation of professionals.

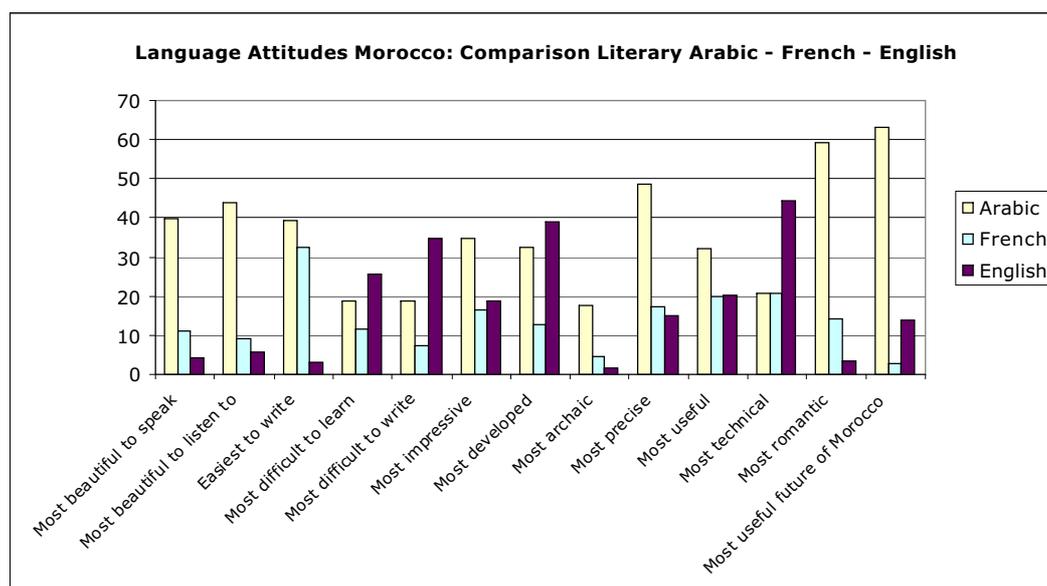
Arabization and Language Attitudes in Morocco					
	Variables	Students		Professionals	
		Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1	Arabization is a basis for the development and progress of Morocco	60.3	16.8	63.0	15.2
2	Classical Arabic cannot meet the requirements of modern life	24.6	54.0	14.8	72.0
3	French is necessary for Morocco	48.4	36.7	43.5	44.0
4	Bilingualism is best for Morocco	54.0	23.4	57.9	30.9
5	Scientific and technological research cannot be carried out in Classical Arabic	27.9	53.3	16.7	70.6
6	Classical Arabic is a language of science	66.4	16.0	61.6	17.5
7	French should be abolished from Morocco	24.0	62.7	24.7	62.4
8	Arabization of the administration and education is good for the future of Morocco	67.2	12.0	69.5	11.8

Source: Mohamed Elbiad: The Role of some Population Sectors in the Progress of Arabization in Morocco. In: International Journal of the Sociology of Language 87 (1991), pp. 27-44, p. 41.

Together with variable 5, where more than a quarter of the young respondents held that scientific and technological research cannot be carried out in literary Arabic, some important observations can be made based on the available data. Firstly, one would assume that the younger generation take a more positive attitude towards arabization than the older generation professionals, which is not the case (variables 1 and 8). Secondly, one would assume that, having gone through a by and large arabized education, the younger generation would hold better opinions about the use and usefulness of literary Arabic. While the general *attitude* (variable 6) among students is one of professing greater *respect* for literary Arabic than among the elder generation, the assessment of its *usefulness* is considerably lower among students than among professionals (variables 2 and 5). In practical terms, the younger generation is therefore – contrary to the logic of arabization – less inclined towards literary Arabic than the elder generation. French remains to be considered necessary (variable 3), with students leading by 5 percent over professionals. More than half of all respondents (variable 4) therefore sympathize with the model of bilingualism, which may seem to raise questions as to the rationale of arabization.

The bilingual situation of Morocco that is typical of the Maghreb states is, however, not static and has come in terms of language attitudes under some pressure from a new and hitherto unknown direction, which is the appearance of English. The following compilation, which excludes the data for Berber, Darija (Morocco's colloquial Arabic) and

some combinations of all languages, shows that literary Arabic reaches the highest appreciation in percentage among both students and professionals.



Source: Compilation based on Mohamed Elbiad: The Role of some Population Sectors in the Progress of Arabization in Morocco. In: International Journal of the Sociology of Language 87 (1991), pp. 27-44, p. 37.

English, however, scores higher results in seven out of 13 attitudinal variables when compared with French. Its usefulness for the future of Morocco is considered five times higher in the sample than that of French. This indicates a shift in attention toward English as a vehicle of modernization; almost 40 percent regard English as the most developed language, and while it may not be appreciated as a language of romance, it enjoys a technical prestige acknowledged by close to half of the sample. On the level of attitudes, English has started replacing French as an international language giving access to modernity. While this does not yet change the relatively stable bilingual situation, a future increase in the use of English may strengthen the relative importance of Arabic and therefore in the long term favor the arabization process.

The example of Morocco that may seem to reflect a language situation typical only of North Africa has deliberately been developed in this part in order to show that the world's global language is gaining prestige even at the frankophone end of the Arab world. In the Arab East, English has either remained or – particularly in the case of the Gulf countries – developed into the language of knowledge transfer and scientific production. Although the situation of bilingualism remains a characteristic of frankophone countries (outside the Maghreb in particular of Lebanon), English has increasingly become a language of mastering knowledge and creating conditions of upward social mobility. Notable exceptions are Syria, where the promotion of Arabic has led to a great decline in foreign language proficiency on a broader level in general and among university students in particular as well as Iraq.

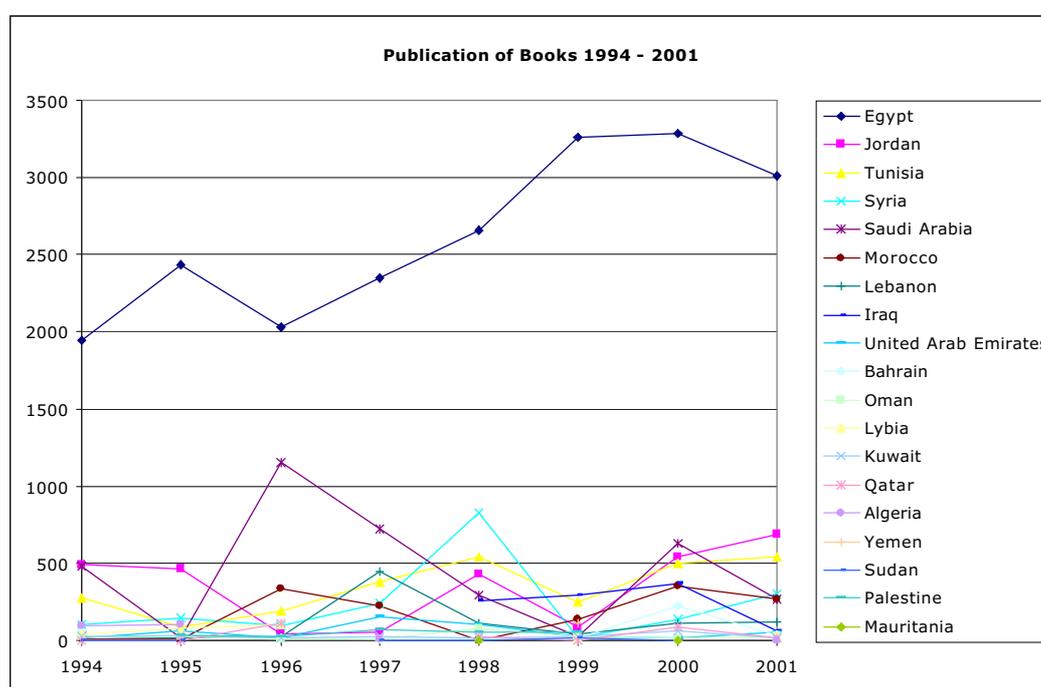
3. Book Documentation Issues

The Arab Human Development Report of 2003 was widely criticized among Arab officials and intellectuals in its presentation of the region's book industry. This concerns in particular the number of publications, both in original writing and in translation. While the assessment of a relative deficit was not questioned (according to UNESCO Arab book production in 1991 was just 1.1 percent of total world production although Arab countries make up for 5 percent of the world's population), numerous voices doubted the reliability of data in absolute terms. The crisis was seen less as one of the book but rather as one of data collection.

The quality of data collection is certainly one of the greatest challenges for the future of governance in Arab countries, and the book industry – as a crucial area in terms of educational policies and as a potentially important sector of economic activities – constitutes no exception. Turning towards regional data available, figures compiled by ALECSO on the basis of national reporting appear as being even slightly lower than data documented by UNESCO. The Arab Bulletin of Publications, published annually by ALECSO in Tunis, puts total Arab book production for the years between 1994 and 2001 as follows:

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number of Books	3647	3514	4163	4690	5403	4395	6336	5227

This amounts for this period to an average of 4671 books per year. Egypt has the largest share in this, accounting for more than half of the publications. While all other countries produce much fewer titles it should be noted that the output per capita in the smaller Arab states is higher than the one of Egypt due to the latter's large population.



Source: Compilation based on Arab Bulletin of Publications, ALECSO, Tunis.

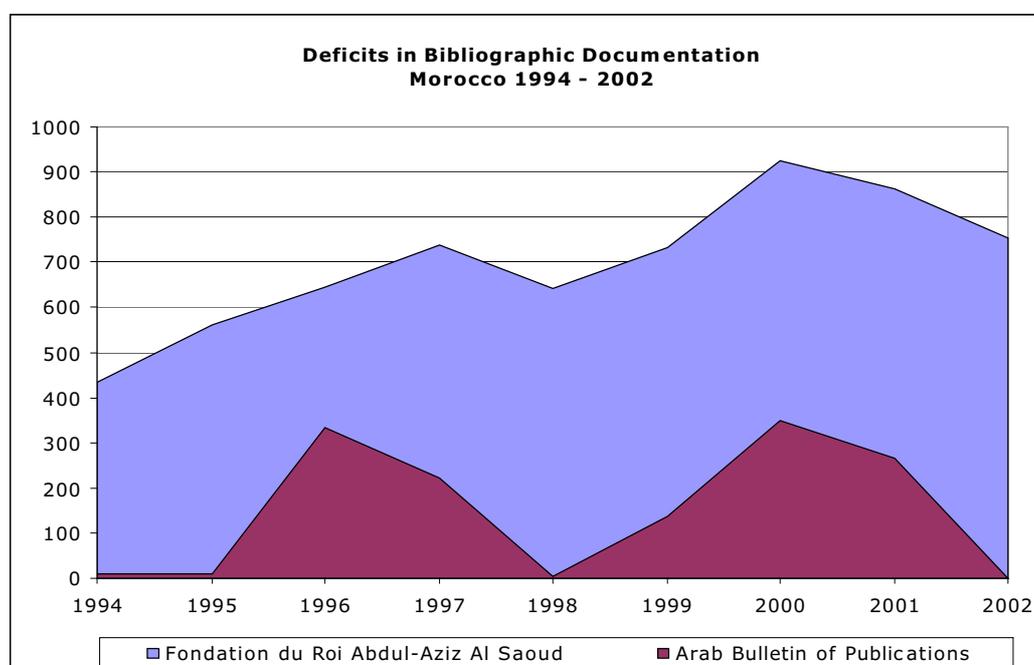
While the relative dominance of Egypt may reflect the reality of the regional book market, the available regional data can be questioned on the basis of statistical material for individual countries. In Lebanon, for example, the Arab Bulletin of Publications has a record of 235 titles for the years 2001 and 2002, while data collected by the Arab Cultural Club – the main organizer of the Arabic language book fair in Beirut – indicate a

total number of 1,576 publications for the same two years. This means that only 14.9 percent of Lebanese publications were properly reported to ALECSO.⁷

In the case of Morocco, which is an exceptionally well documented country thanks to the efforts of the Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud in Casablanca, the figures reported to ALECSO in Tunis only represent a small share of the actual number of publications. For 1998, the record in the Arab Bulletin of Publications does not even reach 1 percent, while higher ratios for other years do not seem to indicate a sustained high level of reporting.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud	432	560	646	739	641	732	924	863	754
Arab Bulletin of Publications	9	8	332	220	3	136	350	265	n.a.
Difference in number of titles	423	552	314	519	638	596	574	598	754
Publications reported in %	2.0	1.4	51.3	29.7	0.4	18.5	37.8	30.7	n.a.

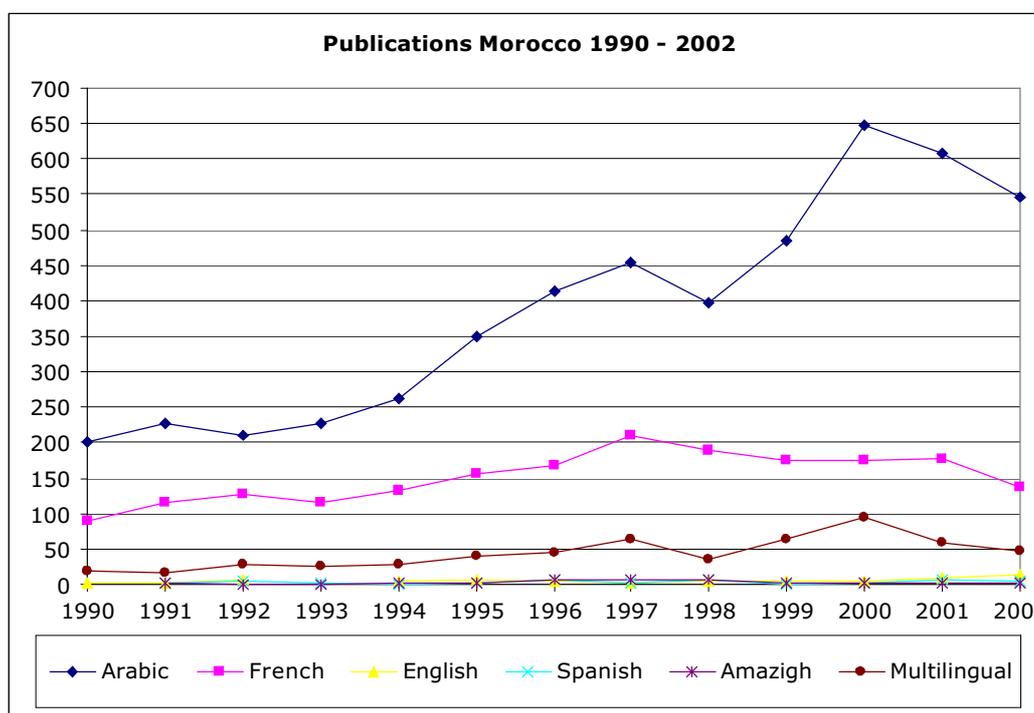
It should be noted that even the figures compiled by the Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud in Casablanca do not pretend to be exhaustive, as the research and documentation center is only concerned with social sciences, humanities, and literary production; exact sciences are therefore missing in the statistics that are based on the National Bibliography of Morocco as well as on surveying the market through the press, catalogues of editors, book fairs and the like. In addition to this, the figures for 2001 and 2002 only represent the number of titles already entered on the database of the Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud, which is due to the delay in the acquisition of the most recent publications and their subsequent processing. The comparison with the Arab Bulletin of Publications shows that the deficits in reporting to ALECSO Tunis are considerable.



Source: Compilation based on data of the Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud, Casablanca and material of ALECSO, Tunis.

⁷ Adnan Hammoud: *an-nashr fi lubnan: waqi' wa murtaja*. In: *al-kitab wa-n-nashr fi lubnan. al-waqi' wa-s-siyasat*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies 2003, pp. 113-190, p. 146.

It is therefore difficult indeed to rely on regionally or internationally released data when trying to draw major conclusions about the situation of the book industry in the Arab world. In fact, when taking a broader timeframe starting in 1990, Morocco seems to have witnessed a real boom in the publication of social sciences, humanities and literary works, starting in 1994/1995. As the figures for 2001 and 2002 are still incomplete, a comparison of the beginning and the end of the 1990s shows that the number of titles published almost tripled from 312 in 1990 to reach 924 in the year 2000. This change is in particular supported by publications in Arabic that account for approximately 65 percent of Moroccan production. From 1990 to 2000, the number of titles more than tripled from an initial figure of 200, reaching 647 in 2000. French language titles almost doubled during the same period from 90 to 175 publications. In addition to this, the number of multilingual works has grown considerably from 19 in 1990 to 94 in 2000, then accounting for more than 10 percent of Morocco’s production in social sciences, humanities and literary works.



Source: Compilation based on data of the Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Casablanca

The examples of Lebanon and Morocco therefore indicate that data collection on the national levels remain crucial for the analysis of the regional situation of the book industry in the Arab world.

4. Translation Projects

As the assessment of the book industry in the Arab Human Development Report 2003 has come under criticism, so have its presentation and its conclusions about the weak state of translation in the Arab countries. Firstly, Arab observers took the call for more translations as an invitation for turning towards English and not towards foreign languages in general; the authors of the report are considered by numerous Arab intellectuals of the politically correct milieu as dependent on the West. Secondly, it was questioned whether the translation of detective stories or entertainment novels would be of any use for the development of Arab societies; according to this point of view, it would be better not to have certain books translated. Thirdly, the issue was raised whether all nations in the world needed translations to the same degree as for example European states, of which Hungary and Spain served as comparators to the Arab countries in the report. Given the general European situation – each nation state has its own national language – translations are required as soon as a Hungarian or Spaniard become mutually interested in their novels, stories, and poetry that stem from the same European cultural background. The Arab reader, however, has access to his or her culturally close neighbours through the shared Arabic literary language that does not require translating. In brief, according to this argument Arab readers should not be expected to be interested in French or American novels as much as Europeans are; they should rather show an increased interest into Arab production, as this is thought to be the equivalent of inter-European exchange. Fourthly, this situation is not necessarily linked with a decline in foreign languages proficiency among Arabs. Despite Arabization efforts certain topics at Arab universities continue to be taught in either English or French. In contrast, Hungarian or Spanish students studying for example medicine would do so in Hungarian and Spanish, thereby contributing to an increase in medical literature translated into their mother tongues. Arab students of medicine would study directly from English and French language sources, thereby keeping the rate of medical translations low while acquiring a higher proficiency in these languages than their Hungarian or Spanish counterparts.⁸

While obviously not all the objections raised with regard to the overall assessment of the state of translations are of the same value, another argument needs to be made with regard to the statistical material presented. The figures published in the Arab Human Development Report 2003 have been circulating for some time without ever having been properly verified. The report gives the number of 175 translated books per year for the period 1970 – 1975 in order to underline the Arab deficit in this field. Hungary, Spain and Israel are briefly referred to as comparators. However, the figure of 175 is mentioned in the Arab Human Development Report 2003 while referring to the Arab region as a whole, while this figure is given in a research paper presented at a translation conference in 1998 as referring to five Arab countries only. This scarce statistical evidence goes back – and this is mentioned in the research paper published in 2000 – to rudimentary figures compiled as it seems for the first time by ALECSO and published in its *National Translation Plan* of 1996.⁹ Although the historical output of the Egyptian and Lebanese book industry of the 19th century – in original writing and in translation – has been more or less studied and documented, there is a clear lack of bibliographic tracking of the translation movement in the Arab world in more recent decades.¹⁰ It is therefore an open question whether the aggregate total of books translated into Arabic since the days of

⁸ For a concise yet polemical assessment of some core items dealt with in the Arab Human Development Report 2003 see Jalal Amin: at-tadlil bi-l-'arqam wa-bi-wasa'il ukhra. In: wijhat nazar (62), March 2004, pp. 20 – 24.

⁹ Compare UNDP/AFESD: Arab Human Development Report 2003, New York: UNDP 2003, p. 67-68; Shawqi Jalal Muhammad: taqir al-mash al-maydani li-wad' at-tarjama fi-l-watan al-arabi. In: at-tarjama fi-l-watan al-'arabi. Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies 2000, pp. 69 – 112, p. 102; al-munazzama al-'arabiya li-t-tarbiya wa-th-thaqafa wa-l-'ulum: al-khutta al-qawmiya li-t-tarjama. Tunis: ALECSO 1996, p. 14.

¹⁰ Jamaluddin Al-Shayyal: ta'rikh at-tarjama wa-l-haraka ath-thaqafiya fi 'asr muhammad 'ali. Cairo: maktabat ath-thaqafa ad-diniya; Latif Zaytuni: harakat at-tarjama fi 'asr an-nahda. Beirut: dar an-nahar 1994; 'Ayida Ibrahim Nusayr: harakat nashr al-kutub fi misr fi-l-qarn at-tasi' 'ashar. Cairo: al-hay'a al-misriya al-'amma li-l-kitab 1994.

the caliph Al-Ma'mun – a contemporary of Charlemagne – amounts to 10,000 books, as has been reiterated over the last decade.

However, the mentioning of Al-Ma'mun comes as an important symbol. In the collective memory of the Arab world, translation is associated with cultural openness, social advancement and political strength. The Umayyads in Damascus and more importantly their successors, the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad, realized the achievements of ancient Greek science and translated most books on sciences as well as philosophical works, so that by the end of the 10th century the knowledge of late antiquity was available in Arabic. The translation movement enriched the classical Arabic language with a lexicon fit for concepts of scientific literature, and it contributed to the creation of the Arabic *koiné* language used across the Muslim world. Furthermore, it underlined the universalism of science, in whatever language – other than Greek until then – it was expressed. As a result, Arabic itself became a language of knowledge that was subsequently sought after by medieval Europe. Likewise, the Arab renaissance of the 19th century (*al-nahda*) went hand in hand with a translation movement, notably in Egypt and Lebanon, at a time when Europe started to expand politically, commercially, and militarily into the southern Mediterranean. The desire of Arab rulers to become equally powerful and of intellectuals to attain modernity initiated activities in the field of translation that were accompanied by the establishment of a modern printing press in particular in both Egypt and Lebanon. The translation movement contributed to the modernization of the Arabic language in both lexicon and style. It sparked creativity among Arab scholars, intellectuals and writers and led to a transfer of knowledge that was considered universal. As is well known, these attempts to modernize from within did not prevent the region from falling into the European orbit, in which it remained until decolonization started after World War II. The decades of independence have been marked by Arab attempts of self-assertion that partly tended towards isolation from the rest of the world. The reference to Al-Ma'mun means that facilitating knowledge transfer through translations should be regarded as a sign of strength, not of post-colonial dependency.

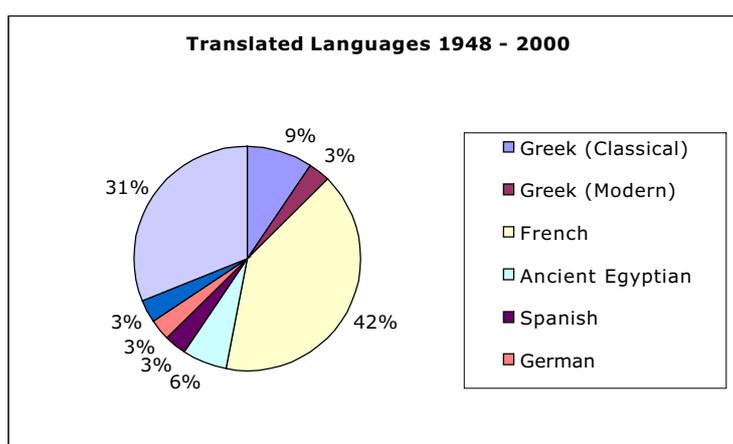
In order to put the new interest towards translating in the Arab world in its proper context, the following outlines the socially and politically most significant projects undertaken in the second half of the 20th century. There are necessarily some *lacunae* in the account that are basically related to a weak degree of documentation of most translation programmes. Sometimes this is based on neglect in archiving material; sometimes a project has entered the stage of history and therefore is not supported anymore by living memory. In other instances, bureaucratic imperfections matter; in particular projects supported by foreign cultural centers and agencies have been handed over for decades from one person responsible to the following one every couple of years. The result is that some documentation may be somewhere but that people now involved in given translation programmes do not oversee the continuum of their own projects over more than some years. Finally, not all translations into Arabic were carried out within the framework of major, well-defined, and long-term programmes.

4.1. UNESCO / Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre, Beirut

Since 1948, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has run a cultural exchange programme in the field of translations known as the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works. The aim of this project has been to support translations of major works of literary and cultural importance into mainly English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. Between 1948 and 2000 some 1,300 titles from more than 80 countries and around 100 languages were translated. For translations into Arabic, Lebanon, which established its National Commission for UNESCO (LNCU) as early as 1948, played an important role. In Beirut, the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre was formed in order to select works for translation, to supervise the editing process and to ensure the publication. Between 1951 and 1998 a total of 22 books were translated into Arabic, and another 10 titles of Arabic originals

were edited in bilingual versions (8 Arabic-French; 2 Arabic-English). The most active period of the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre was throughout the 1950s and between 1980 and 1983, after which its operations seem to have stopped and UNESCO Paris took over translation projects, partly in co-operation with publishing houses in Beirut and Cairo. The reasons for the interruption of activities are most likely to be found in the conditions of the civil war in Lebanon (1975 – 1990) that caused not only material damage to the premises of the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO but also impacted negatively upon the collective memory of the institution. Although LNCU continued to exist during the war period, its archives and documentation facilities were destroyed, and it was only in 1991 that it became operational again (assuming at the same time the role of the national counterpart for ALECSO and – since 2002 – for ISESCO).

While the output of the translation project in terms of quantity may be considered modest, the performance in terms of quality remains one of the outstanding examples of contemporary translations into Arabic. This applies to the selection of titles as well as to the professionalism of translations and the quality of printing. Its lasting impact lies in the translation of some of the classics of political theory, philosophy, and sociology in particular of Aristotle (Politika 1957; Athinaion Politeia, 1967), Bergson (L'évolution créatrice, 1981), Descartes (Discours de la méthode, 1970), Durkheim (De la division du travail social, 1982), Leibniz (Principes de la philosophie ou Monadologie, 1956), Locke (Two Treatises on Civil Government, 1959), Montesquieu (De l'esprit des lois, 1953/1954), Rousseau (Du contrat social, 1954; Origines de l'inégalité parmi les hommes, 1954; Les confessions, 1982), and Voltaire (Zadig ou la destinée, 1961). The selection criteria for choosing these works are according to LNCU difficult to establish, as there is no documentation on this available in Beirut. However, it appears that there was a clear intention to transfer knowledge about the foundations of European political thought into Arabic, in particular from the enlightenment period. French outweighs by far all other languages translated, which is not only due to the prominence of this language in the era of enlightenment but reflects also the traditional orientation of Lebanon towards France at that time. Furthermore, French has kept its status as an intermediary language, as is the case of the two volumes on 'Sacred and Secular Texts of Ancient Egypt' that were translated into Arabic based on the French version, while the translation of Leibniz is French in its original.



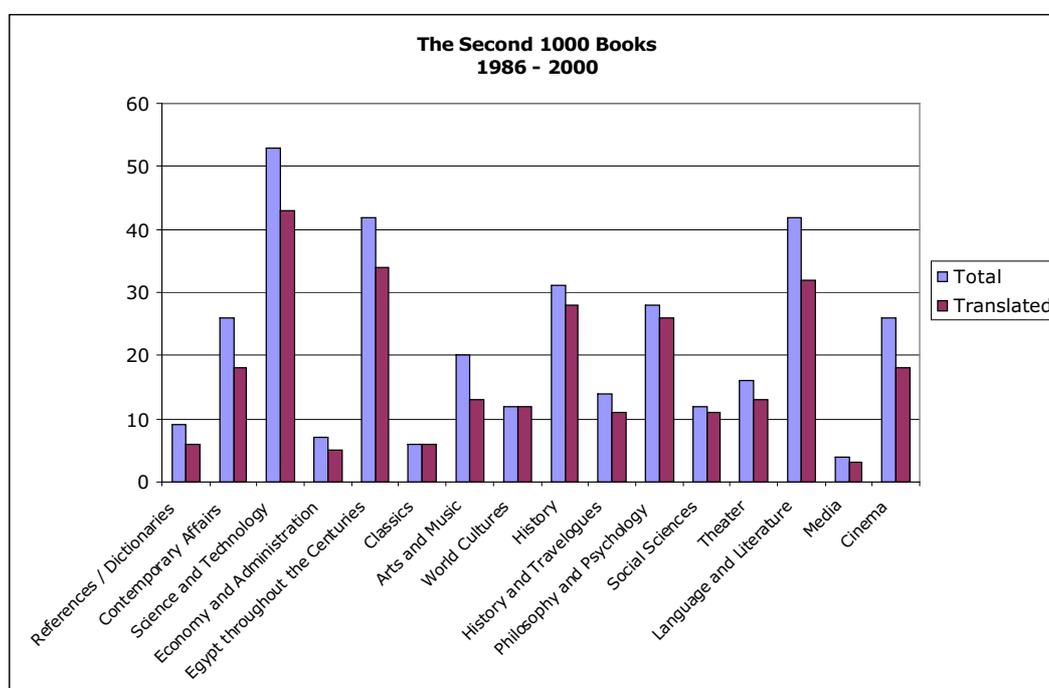
Source: UNESCO

4.2. General Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo

With the creation of the General Egyptian Book Organization (GEBO) in 1971, the nationalization process of the publishing sector begun under Jamal Abdelnasser in 1960 reached a final stage. The state dominance in publishing was just one expression of a socialist approach that identified the state as the leader of economic and social

development. Educating the masses was a policy priority, and it was GEBO’s function to provide books that would disseminate knowledge among peasants, workers, and students – and that would at the same time allow their mobilization in favour of the government. During the period in which GEBO came to dominate the Egyptian publishing sector, private businesses established prior to that survived only in small numbers. The economic liberalization initiated in 1974 by Anwar El-Sadat allowed private sector publishing houses to be re-established; *dar al-shuruq* is for example such a re-founded private publisher, and its owner and director, Ibrahim El-Moallem, plays a leading role in Egyptian and Arab professional associations of publishers. However, although the scene has opened up over the last thirty years, GEBO remains the heavyweight of the Egyptian book market.

With the project *The Second Thousand Books*, GEBO initiated a general education project that at the same time must be regarded as a translation programme into Arabic. Based on the data available since its inception in 1986 until the year 2000, the following gives a comparison between the total number of books published during this period (361) and the titles translated into Arabic (286), almost exclusively from the English language.



Source: Compilation on the basis of GEBO data.

The single largest category according to this GEBO classification is formed by publications on science and technology, which, however, account for only 14.6 percent of the total output. Most other categories can be roughly summarized as falling into the broader categories of social sciences and humanities. Foreign languages and literatures, history, contemporary affairs, philosophy and psychology as well as cinema have reached more than twenty titles. When compared with other translation projects, the geographical focus clearly goes beyond Egypt and the Near East, as general history publications for example still constitute a substantial number when compared with the high interest in Egyptian history (that comprises the Coptic and Muslim periods but focuses basically on ancient Egypt). Being the major Arab film producing country, the share of cinema related publications and translations is worth noticing.

4.3. Higher Council for Culture, Cairo

Founded in 1956 as the Higher Council for Arts and Literature – the first of its kind in the Arab world – under the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, this body came to

assume two years later responsibility for social sciences as well and was affiliated to the Ministry of Culture upon its creation in 1980, after which it was called the Higher Council for Culture (HCC). The change was not only one in name but equally in function, as HCC was supposed to take over planning tasks for the cultural policies of Egypt. Operating since 1982, its activities initially included the holding of conferences and seminars, while publishing tasks gained importance over the years, in particular when HCC was entrusted with the *National Translation Project* adopted in 1995 (which is not to be confused with the *National Translation Plan* for the Arab regional level by ALECSO). The general aim of the project is to translate into Arabic contemporary publications in the fields of social sciences and humanities, as well as in literature and arts. In addition to this, the National Translation Project covers creative works that constitute the heritage of humanity. The programme prides itself as translating directly from foreign languages that have so far been translated through intermediary languages. While English clearly dominates as an original language, the following table shows that there is a clear opening up towards other languages, whose translators are identified by name on the Arabic versions published.

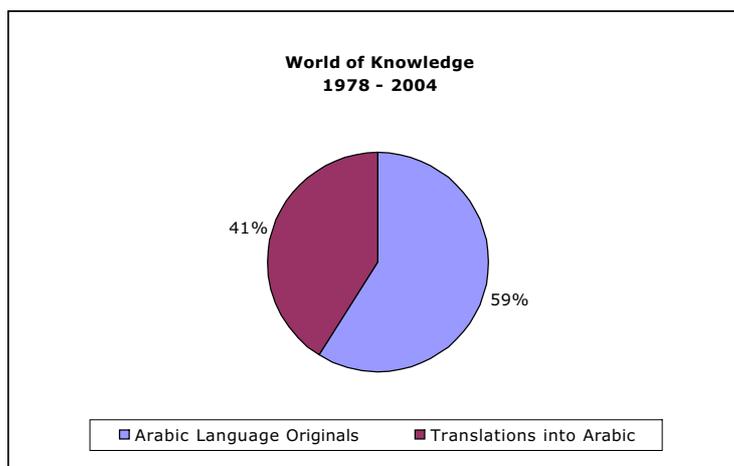
National Translation Project 1995 – 2002	
Translated Language	Number of Books
English	285
French	60
Spanish	53
Persian	43
German	14
Russian	13
Urdu	10
Greek	8
Chinese	5
Hebrew	5
Turkish	4
Italian	3
Hausa	3
Polish	2
Syriac	2
Portuguese	1
Czech	1
Armenian	1
Hieroglyphic	1
Ethiopian	1
Total	515

In terms of content, almost half of the titles published by the National Translation Project deals with foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics. Other areas covered to a large extent are social sciences (76 books), history, geography and biographies (68 books) as well as philosophy and psychology (56 books). Arts account for 24 titles, generalities for 3. Exact sciences are represented by only 20 titles, which indicates that this is not a focus area of this translation programme. With regard to Persian, the focus on literature is even above the average; thirty titles cover literary production of past and present. Among the works translated are for example Rumi's *Mathnavi* and his *Divan*, but the classical titles make up only 10 books. Modern classics and contemporary authors account for 20 titles translated from Persian into Arabic. The remaining few books are Iranian travelogues of the early modern period and three titles dealing with contemporary affairs, notably the role of women, the history of the secret service (Savak), and political currents in Iran.

4.4. National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait

The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature was established by the Emir of Kuwait in July 1973 and given the mandate to create an atmosphere in which intellectual and cultural creativity could be promoted through appropriate means of communication. The creation of the council thus came shortly before the oil embargo accompanying the October war of 1973 led to an unprecedented rise in oil revenues of the petroleum exporting monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula. Besides sponsoring cultural events in the fields of music, theatre, arts and film, NCCAL has developed over the years a particular interest in the promotion of publishing and reading. It took over two series of publications founded prior to its establishment, which are the bi-monthly *ibda'at 'alamiya* (Global Creativities, founded in 1969 as *al-masrah al-'alami*, which translates as Global Theatre) and *'alam al-fikr* (World of Thought, a quarterly periodical first issued in 1970 targeting the non-specialized reader). However, NCCAL is best known for its series *'alam al-ma'rifa* (World of Knowledge) established in January 1978 and producing basically one book per month as well as to a lesser extent for its bi-monthly periodical *al-thaqafa al-'alamiya* (Global Culture) that specializes – as the only one of its kind in the Arab world – in the translation of articles in science and humanities.

While the periodical is the expression of a proper translation project, the book series *World of Knowledge* reflects a programme of general education. Its aim is to create a knowledgeable, scientific, and enlightened public opinion through the popularization of contemporary culture and making the same accessible to Arab readers. Between January 1978 and January 2004, a total of 299 titles were published, of which 123 books were translations, most of them from English language publications.



Source: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait

The overwhelming majority (95 titles) of translated books published in this series are related to topics of general knowledge that include a substantial number of sociological and philosophical works. 12 titles deal with translations on Arab and Muslim culture, 8 with literary works of foreign languages, 2 with music, and 6 with exact sciences, including medicine. While other translation projects show a higher ratio of self interest (that is a greater number of books on Arab or Muslim civilization are translated from foreign languages into Arabic), *World of Knowledge* gives priority to the outside world with regard to the books that appear as translations in the series. It therefore constitutes an important contribution to books on social sciences and humanities in Arabic.

4.5. Arab Organization for Translation, Beirut

For most publishing institutions, translations constitute only a part of their overall activities that are, in the case of the General Egyptian Book Organization, much more

substantial than the segment of translations. Over decades therefore, Arab intellectuals have lobbied governments and private institutions to create an organization that would specialize in translating into Arabic on a regional level, in particular after previous activities undertaken by ALECSO were stopped or failed to produce sustainable results. The Arab Organization for Translation (AOT) was established in December 1999 as an international non-governmental organization. Its creation was largely promoted by the Center for Arab Unity Studies (CAUS) in Beirut that undertook much preparatory work, leading to the public launching of the idea of an Arab Organization for Translation in the framework of a major academic conference in this regard sponsored by CAUS in May 1998. The general task of AOT is to make the translation from and into Arabic in different fields of knowledge more dynamic, in order to introduce modern scholarship into Arab culture and to respond to the needs in particular of higher education and scientific research. In addition to this, the Arab Organization for Translation is held to stimulate demand for works translated from foreign languages and to elaborate a plan for the promotion of translation into Arabic of books and periodicals that are considered to be important on an international scale but that have hitherto been neglected by other publishing houses due to their low profitability. The translation and publishing policy of AOT is determined by its Board of Administration that is composed of important regional personalities, while operations are carried out under the responsibility of a Director General in Beirut.

AOT has a rather normative approach in the field of translations as such; the focus is on the quality of the Arabic language versions. So far, eleven books from various areas have been published.

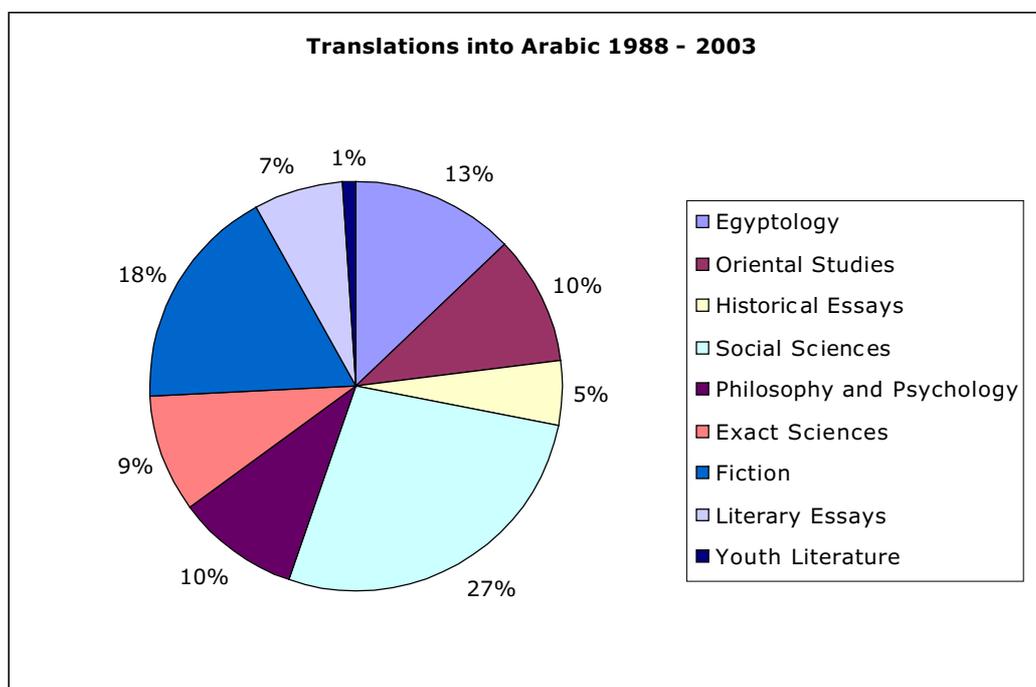
Author	Title	Original Publisher	Original Language
Henri Poincaré	La science et l'hypothèse	Paris: Flammarion 1923	French
Joel de Rosnay	L'aventure du vivant	Paris: Seuil 1989	French
Anne Reboul / Jacques Moeschler	La pragmatique aujourd'hui. Une nouvelle science de la communication	Paris : Seuil 1998	French
Dimitri Gutas	Greek Thought, Arabic Culture	London: Routledge 1998	English
Mansur Olson	Power and Prosperity	New York: Basic Books 2000	English
Robert M. Solow	Growth Theory	Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000	English
Richard C. Lewontin	It Ain't Necessarily So: The Dream of the Human Genome and other Illusions	New York 2000	English
Claude Hagège	L'homme de paroles	Paris: Fayard 1985	French
Eric Wolf	Europe and the People without History	London: University of California Presse	English
Frank Lechner (editor)	The Globalization Reader	Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 2000	English
Preston Smith (et alii)	Developing Products in Half the Time	New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold 1991	English

Given this limited number, the profile of the translation programme in terms of content is still difficult to grasp. For the time being, social sciences and humanities clearly dominate the activities of AOT, and works are directed towards a learned or learning public; AOT is not a general education project.

4.6. Taha Hussein Translation Project, Cairo

Since the middle of the 1980s, the Department of Translation and Interpretation of the French Center for Culture and Cooperation in Cairo has been engaged in the translation towards Arabic. Since 1990 the program has been run under the name of Taha Hussein Translation Project, which basically constitutes a publication support program that is funded by the Sous-direction de la Politique du Livre et des Bibliothèques of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as by the Direction du Livre of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. The main aim of the program is to translate scholarly works and fiction published in French into Arabic. At the same time, the project includes translations from Arabic into French, notably literary works and titles on contemporary affairs, albeit to a lesser extent.

Regarding translation into Arabic, a total of 174 titles were published between 1988 and 2003 (including titles that are to appear shortly), of which 49 are in the field of history (Egyptology, oriental studies, essays), 47 in social sciences, 45 in French literature (fiction, essays, youth literature), 17 in philosophy and psychology (including psychoanalysis), as well as 16 in exact sciences.



Source: Centre Français de Culture et de Coopération, Cairo

In terms of percentage, the translation programme gives a clear priority to works of humanities and social sciences, which account for almost two thirds of the translations. Fiction, literary essays and youth literature make up 26 percent, while exact sciences are represented with only 9 percent of the publications translated. In terms of content, however, there is a high concentration on works related either to ancient Egypt or to the past and present of the Near East. While translating is usually related to reflecting on others, it here appears that the focus is rather on Egypt's and the region's self.

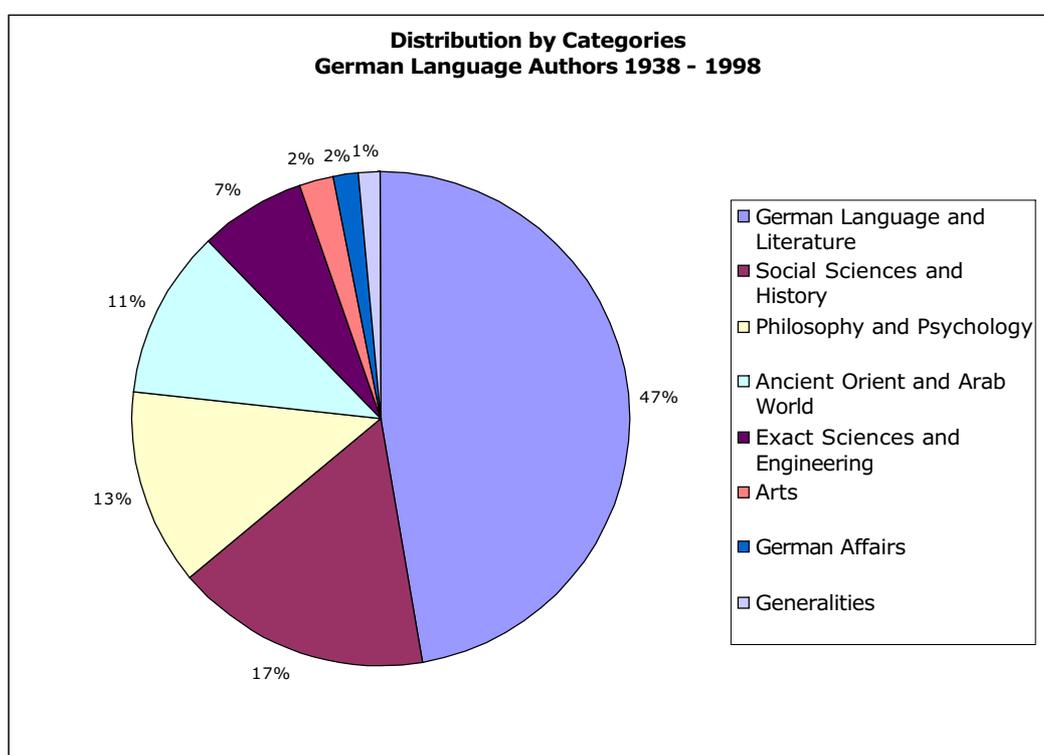
It should be noted that the picture is far from being complete. Although the center in Cairo has a co-ordinating function for the whole of the Arab countries – the French embassy in Cairo is the only one to have a separate Department of Translation and Interpretation – the publication practice among French cultural centers has been quite decentralized. Attempts to review and document the total output of French translating support programmes are currently under way. However, preliminary studies suggest that

in terms of content the relative shares as they appear in the publications in Cairo may be typical of the overall situation.

4.7. German Language Authors

Translations from German into Arabic have been sponsored by various parties, among them Inter Nationes, the Goethe-Institut (the two were merged in 2001), public and private publishing houses in Arab countries, as well as by state run agencies of both the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union. This variety makes it impossible to view German language authors (that also include a number of Austrian and Swiss writers and scholars) as a target of a particular translation programme; there were rather several initiatives with different orientations. For the period between 1938 and 1998, a total of around 1,000 titles translated from German into Arabic have been documented in a bibliography prepared by the Goethe-Institut in Amman. While this compilation is certainly not complete, it gives nevertheless an overview of the results of a translation movement over several decades.

German language fiction makes up almost half of the titles available in Arabic, with a large number of translations for works by Heinrich Böll, Bertolt Brecht, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Hermann Hesse, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann and Friedrich Schiller, to mention only the most important ones. The share is almost twice the number of works published under fiction, literary essays and youth literature within the Taha Hussein Translation Programme of the French Center for Culture and Co-operation in Cairo. Social sciences and history account for around 17 percent of translations from German; a large part covers writings by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, for which the editorial work was carried out by *dar al-taqaddum* in Moscow during the Soviet period. An almost equally large share have works on philosophy and psychology; in this category, a limited number of German language key authors have been made available in Arabic, such as Sigmund Freud, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Edmund Husserl, Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein.



Source: Compilation based on Wolfgang Ule (Editor): Deutsche Autoren in arabischer Sprache. Amman: Goethe-Institut 1998.

A tenth of translated publications cover studies on the Ancient Orient, the history of the Arab world (including travelogues by German authors), and Islamic studies; the share is similar to the French programme carried out in Cairo albeit that the latter has an additional and more substantial specialization in Egyptology. German orientalist translations into Arabic include some classics such as for example Carl Brockelmann, Ignaz Goldziher, Theodor Nöldeke, Joseph Schacht and Julius Wellhausen. The prominence of this section suggests that the other's view on Muslim culture and history continues to be of interest to Arab readers of certain specializations. In contrast to an almost 90 percent focus on social sciences, humanities, and literature, exact sciences, engineering and manuals on vocational training constitute only 7 percent of the volume of translations from German; this figure again corresponds to a similar share of this category in the French programme.

Institutionally, translations into Arabic have mainly been channelled through the government agency Inter Nationes in Bonn that launched a cultural magazine targeting the Arab world (*fikrun wa-fann*) as early as 1961 and began a translation programme into foreign languages in 1974. During the last three decades, a total of 4,000 books were translated from German into some 45 different languages, covering novels, poetry, non-fiction and academic books. Arabic has traditionally been a target language although it does not appear to have been a major one. This has remained true over the last years of the translation programme that became part of the joint activities of Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes after their merger in 2001. One would assume that this year with its September 11 would have sparked a wave of translation into Arabic in the following years at least; however, despite the increased interest in cultural exchange with the Arab countries in particular as well as with the Muslim world in general, there has not yet been a considerable increase in the production of Arabic translations from German. What seems to be undergoing change is the share of works of fiction on the one hand and non-fiction titles (including academic books) on the other hand; whether this indicates a shift in priorities remains to be seen.

Year	Total of Titles Approved for Translation	Approved for Translation into Arabic	Share of Fiction	Share of Non-Fiction
1998	232	7	6	1
1999	231	5	5	0
2000	211	6	2	4
2001	243	8	4	4
2002	266	11	5	6
2003	308	8	3	5
2004 (first half)	181	1	0	1

Source: Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes

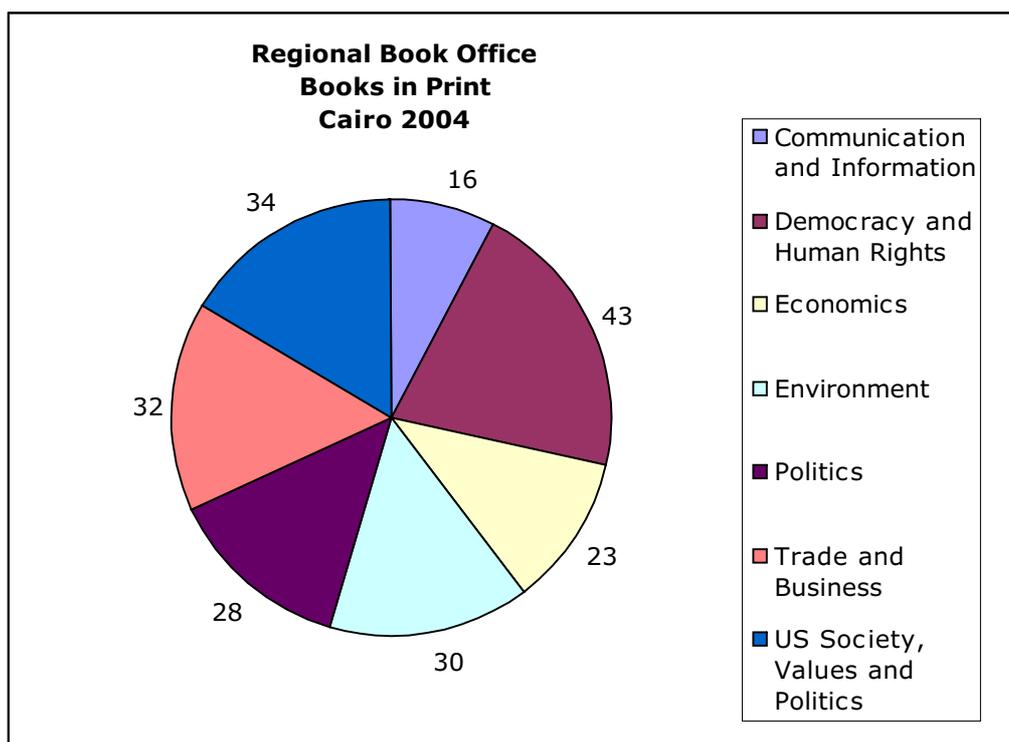
In addition to this traditional translation programme, the Federal Cultural Foundation together with the Goethe-Institut and the Frankfurt Book Fair has initiated a new Internet based project (litrix.de) to promote translation of German language titles. In terms of titles published, Germany continues to be a net importer of literature at a ratio of 2:1. The basic idea of litrix.de is that for language reasons literature from Germany does not receive the necessary degree of attention, also and in particular among the publishing business community. The Internet portal therefore firstly offers sample translations of German contemporary fiction and non-fiction into English as well as into the language of the Frankfurt Book Fair's annual focus country or region. As the Arab world is the guest of honour in 2004, Arabic has been added for this year to the languages used on litrix.de in order to familiarize Arab publishers with the output in books made in Germany. Secondly, grants are being made available for translations into the main language of the focus year; therefore, litrix.de will exclusively provide funding for translations into Arabic during 2004.

4.8. United States Translation Projects

The United States was among the first countries to sponsor translations into Arabic. As early as 1952, *Franklin Publications* was incorporated in New York as a non-profit company whose task it was to support translations of American works into foreign languages. Named after America's first publisher, Benjamin Franklin, it was initially funded through the United States Information Agency (USIA), and the Arab world was from its inception a prime target of publication activities. The aim was to familiarize Arabs with American thought and culture and thus to overcome what was regarded as Arab ignorance and resentment of the West. Furthermore, people in Arab countries should be enabled to develop a modern view of the world and within this to define their place and their roles. Emphasis was put on issues of political, social, and economic modernity, and for this purpose a range of authors from antiquity to enlightenment as well as contemporary writers was translated into Arabic. Franklin Publications opened its first field office in Cairo in 1953; on the Arab level, branches in Beirut and Baghdad followed, and in addition to this Franklin established offices in Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The background of the project was in some way linked to the cold war and its perceived or assumed repercussions in the Middle East as well as South and South-East Asia. Nevertheless, it succeeded in forging partnership relations with local publishing houses, notably in Egypt. The formula according to which *Franklin Publications* – renamed in 1964 *Franklin Book Programs* in order to avoid giving the impression of being a publishing house itself – worked was to secure translation rights from the American proprietor of copyright and to provide funding for the translating, while local publishers in general had to finance the actual printing costs. This approach was considered to replace practices of full-scale subsidizing by a business development approach; the idea was to support – in the Arab world and outside – the local book industry so that this sector would achieve some degree of sustainability. By the middle of the 1960s, financial support for the *Franklin Book Programs* decreased, and it is not clear whether this was due to rivalry over competencies with USIA or simply to an overall shift in policy priorities. Over a shorter period, Franklin managed to receive support from other sources but in 1978 it was dissolved. While there is a living memory among intellectuals in Arab countries regarding the output of the *Franklin Book Programs*, there is hardly any possibility to survey the translations achieved over the period of some quarter of a century, namely from 1952 to 1978. Neither Arab booksellers nor US embassies in Cairo or elsewhere seem to have proper documentation on publications that were carried out within this project, as more than 25 years have passed by since its termination; the archives of *Franklin Book Programs* are kept at the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscripts Library of Princeton University.¹¹

By the second half of the 1980s, a new *Arabic Book Program* was set up at the US embassy in Cairo that runs the so-called Regional Book Office with a second branch based in Amman, where activities seem to have started in 1986. Once again, the objective of the programme was to promote books by American publishers in a variety of fields. The degree of co-operation between the two locations is at present not entirely clear; while Cairo works with Egyptian publishing houses, Amman does so with Jordanian publishers. In the documentation there is some overlapping, so that it is difficult for the time being to attribute a certain title to the activities of one of the two branches. In terms of content, the 206 available titles at the Cairo Regional Book Office hardly show any interest for fiction; poetry is completely absent, and the same is the case for exact sciences.

¹¹ Copies of the title lists were requested from Princeton University; it is hoped that they can be incorporated into this study at a later stage.



Source: US Embassy, Cairo

Social sciences and humanities are therefore dominating the *Arabic Book Program*, albeit in a rather technical way. Out of 43 titles dealing with democracy and human rights, more than half deal with issues of a less philosophical rather than a practical kind, that is how to successfully conduct fundraising, how to set up by-laws for non-governmental organizations, how to set up non-profit boards, and how to conduct board meetings the smart way. Classics such as Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* appear to be the exception. The same goes for most items in the fields of economics, trade, business, and politics.

4.9. Arab Publishers and Foundations

A great part of publications sponsored by Arab or foreign public sector institutions is carried out in co-operation with private publishing houses across the Arab world. In recent years, however, there has been a rise in translations into Arabic undertaken on an individual level of private publishers, and it seems that private Arab foundations are increasingly stepping into the field as well. As will be shown later, publication and translation strategies vary between public sector and private sector projects. Some publishers, like the Arab Scientific Publishers in Beirut for example, have identified a market niche in the translation of computer literature, in particular of Microsoft user manuals. Others – and this applies to a large variety – focus rather on titles of fiction, novels and poetry from European languages in particular. In the field of social sciences and humanities there is until now only a limited yet seemingly growing number of publishing houses engaged in quality translations.

The *Arab Cultural Center* (al-markaz al-thaqafi al-'arabi) in Casablanca and Beirut for example has a fair ratio of Arabic language originals and translations with regard to overall publishing. During the period from 1986 until spring 2004, a total of 302 titles was published, of which after all 33 were translations into Arabic. Five of them are books by the well-known Moroccan sociologist Fatema Mernissi (dealing with gender issues in the Muslim world) and were originally written in French, two of them are works by Mohammed Arkoun, a well-known contemporary Muslim thinker, who – originally from Algeria – lives in France and writes in French. The rest of the translated books are

equally ambitious and demanding titles in the fields of philosophy, sociology and anthropology, mostly works by French scholars such as Paul Ricœur, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Régis Débray, Jacques Lombard, as well as works in linguistics (Roman Jakobson). The publishing house has recently come to include translation from Italian into Arabic, in particular works by Umberto Eco.

Another well-established publishing house with a good number of translations is Dar Al-Adab in Beirut; it has brought out translations into Arabic of Edward Said's works, next to books by Roger Garaudy, Régis Débray, Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse, Albert Camus, and Marguerite Duras. Over the years it has thus become a prime publisher of social sciences, in particular in left-leaning works. In addition to this, Dar Al-Adab has published European, Japanese, and American fiction, both contemporary and modern classics. In many ways, Dar Al-Farabi, also located in Beirut, has a similar orientation with a similar profile in terms of areas covered; philosophy, psychology, economy, sociology, history, politics, and literature. In the 1980s, Dar Al-Farabi published some works by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir I. Lenin, and Fidel Castro, while shifting to Ernesto Che Guevara in the following decade. Other books are translations of works from left-leaning essayists to, though recently, Friedrich Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, published only in 2003. A good number of translation of poetry as well as narrative fiction is part of the publishing programme; authors here range from Bertolt Brecht to Pablo Neruda and Nazem Hikmet as well as from Nikolai Gogol to Amin Maalouf and from Anton Chekhov to Joseph Conrad. It is possible that at least part of the translations of Dar Al-Farabi were financed in the past through translation programmes, although this does not become evident based on the documentation available. Finally, Dar Al-Talia is considered one of the prestigious left-leaning publishing houses in Beirut that since its foundation in 1959 has kept a focus on both social sciences and to a certain degree on translations. Like Dar Al-Adab and Dar Al-Farabi, philosophy, sociology, and psychology are prominent areas of publishing; most importantly, more than a dozen works of Sigmund Freud were brought out in Arabic by Dar Al-Talia.

While these four examples refer to publishing houses that have left their traces in the history of Arab publishing, more recent start-ups see their market niches less in literature, in social sciences or in humanities but rather in contemporary affairs. The developments of recent years have led to a situation, in which books dealing with everything American seem to have become a profitable segment of the market for some private publishers. Unlike projects on more academic titles, contemporary politics bears the potential to become a self-sustainable part of the book market, which means that it is a segment, in which subsidies are considered as not necessary. *Intercultural Books* (al-hiwar al-thaqafi) in Beirut has produced a number of translations into Arabic, such as Hillary Rodham Clinton's *Living History* as well as books on American history as well as foreign policy and, of course, September 11. The focus here is less on standard works in the fields of social sciences and humanities but rather on books related to current affairs.

With some publishers both from Maghreb countries as well as from the Arab East being relatively advanced in the field of translations, a new phenomenon has appeared in the growing activity of publishers in the Gulf states, notably in Saudi Arabia and to a lesser degree in the United Arab Emirates. Here, the overall increase of the book industry has led to a growing number of titles translated into Arabic. The reasons why Gulf publishers have turned towards translations are probably similar to the ones of publishing houses in the traditional book producing countries of the region when it comes to content; Arabic originals alone do not fulfill the demand side of Arab readers. However, in addition to this argument there is another dimension related to the economic discrepancies between publishers from the Gulf states on the one hand and almost all other countries on the other hand. It seems that the stronger financial capabilities of publishers in the Gulf enable them to take greater risks or engage in higher initial investments, which is reflected positively in their dealing with translations, too. For in contrast to the publication of Arabic originals, translations require an even higher financial input, which

publishers in the Gulf are not only willing but also – in contrast to less capitalized publishers in the low and medium income countries of the Arab world – more able to bear.

In Saudi Arabia, Obeikan Publishers has added to its Arabic originals more than a hundred titles translated – as the available data suggest – exclusively from English language publications. As of 2003 / 2004, the areas cover business administration and marketing (41 titles); economics, globalization and statistics (16 titles); education and psychology (20 titles); history and biographies (20 titles); medicine (9 titles); political science and military affairs (6 titles) as well as astronomy and information and communication technology (7 titles). In the field of history, two main interests seem to prevail; one regarding works on the history of the Muslim world by foreign Islamic studies specialists, another one focusing on personalities from the anglophone world, with autobiographies of George Bush sen. and Britain's John Major as well as a biography of Nelson Mandela. Social sciences and humanities in the academic sense can hardly be found, except for some translations in the field of history that are of a particular interest to Saudi Arabia. However, this program shows that some topics have become areas of interest to general readers or at least to the informed ones, which is probably indicative of some change book markets in the Gulf but also elsewhere are undergoing. In this same respect, translation projects in the domain of children's books have been set up in parallel; among them is the series *Secrets of the Animal World* (Garth Stevens Publishers) as well as dozens of easy-to-read editions of other English language series translated into Arabic for younger readers. Again, this seems to indicate that the reading public in Saudi Arabia is looking for material hitherto either not seen, not wanted or not considered necessary.

Also based in Saudi Arabia is Jarir Bookstore, which represents a chain of superstores (with branches in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait), specialized in computer and office supplies that has recently moved to adding a substantial translation programme to its book section. For the period from 2003 to February 2004, close to 400 books translated from English into Arabic were available. Almost half of the titles deal with issues of self-improvement regarding the workplace, memory, family relations, and treatment of others. Some 25 percent of the publications cover business administration, human resources development, time management, sales and marketing, and finance, with the rest of the publications focusing on computer topics and health. The area of social sciences and humanities is thus not covered at all. Given the high ratio of religious literature in Arabic in Saudi Arabia, the appearance of a wave of how-to books – not only at Jarir – seems to reflect a new and interesting market situation, in which some private publishers see opportunities; with very few exceptions it remains the role of the public sector to heavily invest – or subsidize – publications in social sciences and humanities. This is for example the case of the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, which – next to housing the National Library, the Institution of Culture and Arts and the National Archives of the United Arab Emirates – has been funding publications as well, among them translations that are of social, historical, and political importance.

More explicit in its direction of translation is the Gulf Research Center (GRC) in Dubai, a private think-tank sponsored by the Saudi businessman Abdulaziz Sager. Although the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) in Abu Dhabi has produced a substantial number of both English and Arabic language publications – the latter being partly translations – a lack in Arabic language titles of a less regional and more global outlook has been identified by GRC. Focusing on the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Iran, Iraq, and Yemen, GRC has built an Internet based resource portal that is designed to provide subscribers with political and economic analyses of a regional orientation based on international standards. In addition to this, GRC has therefore commissioned the translation into Arabic of reference works, such as the Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science and The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations. Furthermore, GRC has signed translation agreements with the International

Institute for Strategic Studies in London and with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. Both accords allow GRC to translate a wide range of publications of these two institutions into Arabic. The aim of this programme is to generate positive political change in the Gulf countries by leaving self-referential circles and making internationally recognized publications available to a broader public of Arabic language readers.

In addition to publishing houses that have already undertaken numerous translations, in particular in the field of social sciences and humanities, new projects have been initiated by a number of private publishers as well as organizations that have an academic and non-profit rather than a commercial profile. The Tunisian publishing house Dar Muhammad Ali is currently considering expanding its activities with regard to translations, provided that subsidies are being made available, as the titles projected do not suggest that their publication would be commercially viable. The translation project has been given the title *adwa'*, enlightenment (literally: lights), as built on the French *lumières*. The basic idea is to deal with what has been called the 'philosophical issue' of Arab countries from different angles of experience worldwide; Arabic readers, in particular among university students, should be enabled to approach major philosophical questions on a step-by-step basis, for which the plan suggests to translate some 25 booklets of the well-known series 'Que sais-je' of Presses Universitaires Françaises from French into Arabic. Translation here does not only serve to enrich the Arab library as such but is also expected to spark creativity among the young generation.

An institution with strategic interests in translating into Arabic is the *Arab Foundation for Modern Thought* (Fondation Arabe pour la Pensée Moderne) that was established in Geneva in 2002 and went public only recently in Beirut in May 2004. The foundation operates under Swiss law and has as its financial basis a capital of 100,000 CHF, donated by a Libyan businessman. Its aims are to encourage research in humanities and social sciences along the lines of critical thought and humanistic orientation. As its future instruments, the foundation has identified the publication of studies and research as well as encyclopaedias into Arabic. Its founding members are well-known Arab intellectuals and scholars from different countries; the Egyptian scholar Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid is its first president. The foundation plans to establish an operational basis in Beirut in order to start working according to its by-laws in the fields described. In terms of translation activities, work has already been undertaken to establish a list of books to be translated from different European languages into Arabic.

5. Translating

5.1. Translators

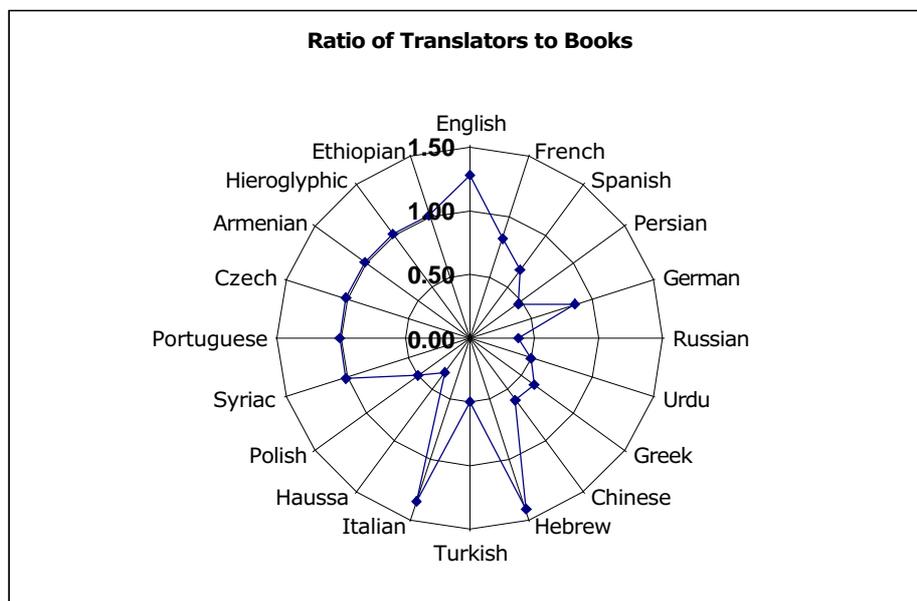
Translators play in translation programmes a crucial role that very often goes beyond their pure translating work in the narrow sense. They are also important intermediaries when it comes to the identification of what is lacking in the sphere of Arabic language publications on the one hand and of what is worth of being translated from foreign languages. As there are no comprehensive surveys on the profile of translators in the Arab world, some general remarks of a more qualitative character shall be made here.

Although it cannot be said with certainty, most translators working in the publishing sector have probably not received a training that would specifically designate them to work in the domain of translation. While demand for interpreters seems to be more important in the Arab world, the market for translators of books – in fiction, social sciences, humanities, and exact sciences – is much smaller. Translators often have a university degree in one or more foreign languages, of which English and French are the most common ones. Proficiency in these or other languages is, however, not always accompanied by an equal mastering of the Arabic language, which is caused by the situation of diglossia and the methodology of teaching Arabic in most countries of the region. In addition to this, many translators lack a professional specialization in disciplines other than foreign languages. At the same time, there are translators who are proficient rather in Arabic, or who are specialists in given areas of academia rather than in foreign languages as such. The result is that the profile of translators in terms of their studies and professional training is a rather mixed one.

Given the various channels through which people become translators in Arab countries – foreign language proficiency, Arabic language specialists, disciplines of higher education in particular – it can be safely assumed that only a small proportion of translators are professionals in the strict sense that they earn their living exclusively or in the first place through translations. Translators – in contrast to interpreters – usually work in the fields of academia, journalism or in the wider spectrum of non-governmental organizations, with the exceptions of the Arab Center for Arabization, Translation, Authorship and Publication in Damascus and the Al-Ma'mun Center in Baghdad, whose working conditions under the present circumstances in Iraq are unknown. As a rule, translators in most Arab countries must be considered free-lancers in their translating activities. They are usually recruited by publishing houses for a particular project, which in general is one specific book. Very often it is the translator who initiates the translation and sells this project to the publisher. This is reportedly also partly the case of the larger translation projects undertaken by the General Egyptian Book Organization and the Higher Council for Culture. Some programmes must therefore be considered as the outcome of some elements of central planning on the one hand and the dimension of offer on the part of the translators on the other hand. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach are obvious; as intellectuals and academic teachers, translators observe the scholarly production in foreign languages as well as their local situations. The translator therefore accomplishes a translation usually in two steps, the first one being obtaining the commitment of a publisher, the second one being the actual translation work. This leads on the one hand to some degree of innovation and originality in the selection of works to be translated. On the other hand, the risk of this approach is a situation of 'anything goes', which may end up with larger translation projects losing their clear profile.

It is because of – rather than despite – the pluralism of recruitment mechanisms for translators that new languages have been incorporated into translation programs. The following shows the ratio of translators to books of the *National Translation Project* undertaken by the Higher Council for Culture in Egypt. The value 1 equals one translator per book of a given language, which is the case for Syriac, Portuguese, Czech, Armenian, Hieroglyphic and Ethiopian. Values lower than 1 indicate that there is less than one

translator per book of a given language, which applies to eleven out of the twenty translated languages. Only for three languages – Hebrew, Italian, English – the number of available translators exceeds the number of books translated into Arabic.



Source: Based on data of the Higher Council for Culture, Cairo

The ratio with regard to Portuguese, Czech, Armenian, Hieroglyphic and Ethiopian reflects the one book / one translator principle, as only one publication based on each of these languages was carried out. This underlines the policy of the Higher Council for Culture to promote translations from languages other than English, but it also seems to suggest that translating from these languages is not yet driven by a sufficiently large number of translators who would create their market within given translation projects. Languages for which the ratio of translator to books is lower than 1 seem to be promoted even more, as fewer translators shoulder more publications. However, while this may be true for some, this does not necessarily apply to all languages. While the working knowledge of Chinese on the one hand for example may well be underrepresented in Egypt, French on the other hand is probably not; the latter has traditionally played an important role in Egyptian intellectual life. Therefore, the low ratio of translator to books for French could also indicate the presence of a well-established group of translators for this language or even explain an oligopolistic situation of vested interests by a limited number of professionals. The rather high number of Spanish translations seems to reflect the strategic approach by the Higher Council for Culture regarding the widening of the language scope; the same most probably applies to Persian, of which more books were translated than from all European languages – other than English, French and Spanish – taken together, with a quite low ratio of translators to books.

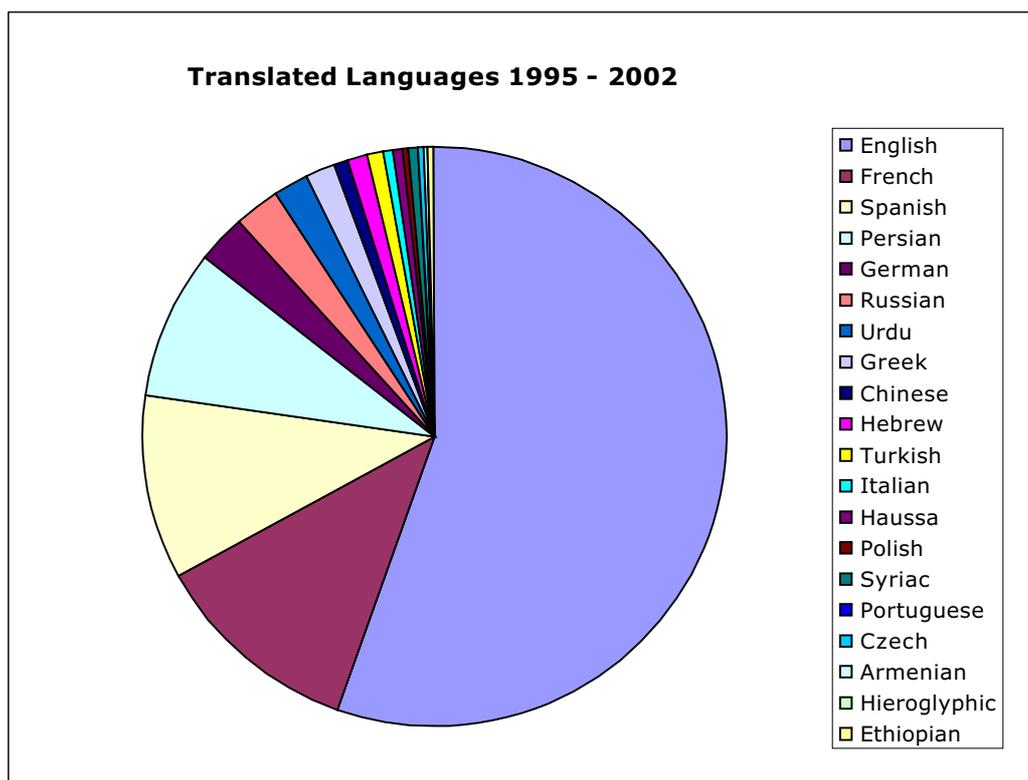
Salaries or – more commonly – fees or honoraria for translators vary widely across the Arab world, depending mainly on three factors, firstly on country specific income levels, secondly on the degree of linguistic difficulty of a given publication, and thirdly on the sponsor of individual translation projects. Regarding the discrepancies in income between Arab states, low-income countries are generally also low-cost countries when it comes to translation. In Syria, Egypt and Iraq for example, the remuneration per page can be as little as 5 EUR, while Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan are to be found at the more expensive end of the scale with average rates of 10 to 20 EUR per page with details depending on the language to be translated. Publishers in high-cost countries such as the Gulf states regularly make use of translators in cheaper countries in order to carry out projects. The Gulf Research Center in Dubai for example has contracted a group of 16 translators, of which only four are based in the city-state, while the remaining twelve carry out

translations from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Sudan, and Egypt; this kind of division of labour may reflect a shortage in local translators (given the small population of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates) but it is also linked to established translating expertise elsewhere as well as it is related to differences in costs. With regard to linguistic complexities and difficulties, post-colonial patterns in Arab countries as well as an attitude that asks for the usefulness of learning a particular foreign language have led to a situation where the supply of translators is particularly abundant for English and French. Remuneration for these languages is therefore lower than for other European or – worse – for non-European languages, for which translators are less numerous. For practical as well as for financial reasons therefore, English and French are not only important original languages but also serve as intermediaries when it comes to the task of translating from other languages. The phenomenon of mediated translation is widely spread in the Arab world and is used even for languages for which translators should be in principle available, such as German, for example. (The Arab Cultural Center, for example, translated texts by Martin Heidegger on Georg Trakl and Friedrich Hölderlin based on the French version; at least it has indicated so, while other translations are carried out through intermediary languages without appropriate reference.) The complexity of a translation also rises when more than one language needs to be translated, and be it only in form of quotations or references in additional foreign languages; charges per page can go up to 25 EUR, especially when ancient languages such as Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic need to be translated. Finally, the element of sponsorship of individual projects determines translation fees. While public sector publishing houses are known to have very tight budgets, prestigious private companies are likely to be charged more by translators. This trend grows even stronger when it comes to foreign donors, who are even in low-cost countries expected to remunerate above the level of what would be locally acceptable.

5.2. Scope of Languages

As shown above, the early UNESCO translation project carried out by the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre was marked by a 42 percent domination of titles translated from French into Arabic. This is maybe partly due to the frankophone background of Lebanon (which in the 1950s was more important than it is today), but it can also be attributed to the choice of titles from the age of enlightenment, in which French was the leading language. However, French has traditionally been heavily translated into Arabic, and it appears as if the project of the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre constitutes a balancing link between the historical translation movement that favoured French and the new situation after World War II, which saw a rapid shift towards English.

When subtracting translation programmes sponsored by foreign cultural centers (such as the French in Cairo for example) that focus exclusively on their national languages, the more recent larger translation schemes are almost entirely dominated by the use of English in their choice of translated languages. The Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature has very few titles in its *World of Knowledge* that hints at an original language other than English. The same is the case for *The Second 1000 Books* of the General Egyptian Book Organization, which, however, shares with its Kuwaiti counterpart deficits in documentation that makes the exact quantitative assessment difficult. The *National Translation Project* of the Higher Council for Culture is dominated by a focus on English as the primary original language; however, as has been shown above, the situation regarding the scope of translated languages has changed since the beginning of the project in 1995. Indeed, it seems that one of the reasons for initiating a new major translation programme in addition to the one administered by GEBO in Egypt was a re-orientation towards languages other than English. Regarding the publications that appeared between 1995 and 2002, English accounts for more than 55 percent, which is much more than the 12 percent of translations from French originals but much less than in other translation projects.



Source: Higher Council for Culture, Cairo

In contrast, Spanish reaches more than 10 percent, but what is really new is the focus on what has come to be called the South-South-translation; Persian occupies with over 8 percent the fourth rank, overtaking German and Russian, which are traditionally well translated languages into Arabic. Translations from Urdu and Hausa fit into the strategy to promote exchange by translating from other languages of the developing world. Hebrew seems to have received particular attention in recent years. When combining the observations made above regarding the availability of translators with the scope of languages covered, it seems that the *National Translation Project* has demonstrated that a new translating policy can indeed bring a qualitative change in the linguistic orientation of a programme. Persian for example was initially translated with one title per year from 1995 until 1997; with the first major increase in the total output of the translation project in 2000, this number rose to nine; the bulk of books translated from Persian – more than twenty – was published in one year only, namely in 2002, when the second significant increase in total production of the *National Translation Project* occurred. While this reflects the adherence to a strategic orientation by the administrators of the programme, it also shows that these new approaches are still vulnerable with regard to their sustainability.

For smaller translation projects run for example by private publishing houses or even by the Arab Organization for Translation, an opening up towards other languages is stated as an objective, but this largely still remains to be achieved. The translation programme of the Gulf Research Center in Dubai for example focuses exclusively on English language titles, assuming that the latter – for the domain of political science and international relations – is already the *lingua franca* of whatever needs to be expressed on a global scale. Other publishers have started going beyond English or French in their publication policies; Italian and German have for example been targeted by the *Arab Cultural Center* (Casablanca/Beirut), Dar An-Nahar (Beirut), and some others. However, as the quantitative output has remained rather limited so far, it is difficult to assess whether this constitutes a strategic orientation – which obviously is the case of the *National Translation Project* in Cairo – or whether these are exceptions that are less driven by

offer than relate to demand due to donor priorities. In contrast, South-South-translations have not yet become a priority, although publishing houses to translate also from Turkish and Persian.

It should be noted that for some Arab countries Russian was a widely translated language until the disintegration of the Soviet Union; due to difficulties in documentation, this segment of translation projects has not been given its weight throughout this study. The reasons for translating from Russian into Arabic were, given the circumstances of the Cold War, political, but this does not mean that all publications served propaganda purposes or that the choice of books to be translated was determined by mere ideological considerations.

5.3. Quality of Translations

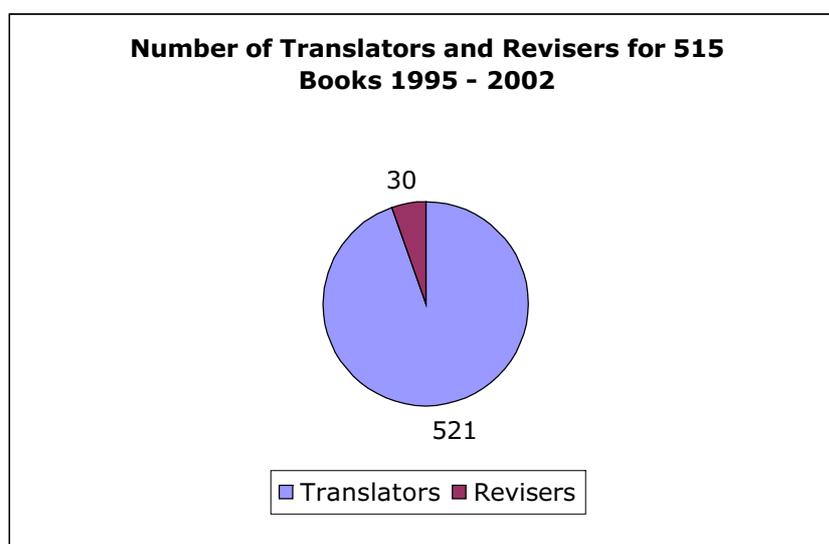
The quality of translations differs from one project to another as well as within the individual programmes. The works translated since the 1950s into Arabic within the framework of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works are of very high standard in terms of accuracy, consistency and readability. All translations have been properly revised according to the rules laid down by both UNESCO as well as the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre. All books were translated from their original language, except for the two volumes on ancient Egypt that were translated from the French intermediary version. The titles of the original works were preserved in the translation and printed – together with the name of the author and the translator – in Latin characters on the back covers of the Arabic versions. As a rule, the Arabic texts were properly edited with appropriate references; indexing, however, is missing. The general conclusion therefore is that the works remain of important value; they combine scholarly professionalism with the language proficiency of what one could call the old generation.

Of similarly good quality are the publications undertaken by the Arab Organization for Translation. AOT for example usually entrusts university professors with translation projects and thus strives to have specialists in disciplines who at the same time master the original language of a given book as well as Arabic. Before being published, AOT hands over the manuscript of a translation to an equally qualified reviser whose task it is to control terminology and meanings. An editor finally checks grammar and structure before a translation is being given into print. One has to bear in mind, however, that AOT has so far not translated from languages other than English and French. Publishing houses that have done so, have so far at least partly chosen the way of mediated translations, using the two latter languages in particular. This applies even to publications of more prestigious publishers such as the Arab Cultural Center, Dar Al-Adab, Dar Al-Farabi, and Dar Al-Talia. It seems doubtful whether all books from languages other than English or French were translated from their respective originals. Some translators are known for not mastering for example German, which clearly suggests that an intermediary language was used for translating; references as to which language was actually used are not always clear, and although translations may be by and large correct, it certainly makes a difference whether or not the original language was used.

Other translation programmes that are less demanding seem to have focused on quantity rather than on quality, and this is reflected in the weak documentation of their translation work. Taking for example the list of publications of the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature for its *World of Knowledge*, it is almost impossible to retrace the original title and language of a given book translated into Arabic without actually having the book at hand. For translated books published prior to June 1985, only the name of the translator (and sometimes that of the reviser) is given, while the name of the author is missing. Difficulties in recognizing working languages and – very often – original titles (from catalogues) arise also for a great number of the publications

undertaken by the two Egyptian organizations. One has to stress, though, that the documentation of the *National Translation Project* handled by the Higher Council for Culture is by far better than that of the General Egyptian Book Organization. For the latter it is again extremely difficult and very often impossible to recognize the original work based on the translation of the title as well as given the fact that proper names are sometimes given in a way in Arabic that they cannot be recognized, too. In many instances, the character of a large translation project suggests that there are constraints both in terms of timeframe and in terms of funding; acting under this dual pressure, it seems that publishing houses sometimes compromise on the quality in order not to cause delays that would result in even higher work load in the time ahead.

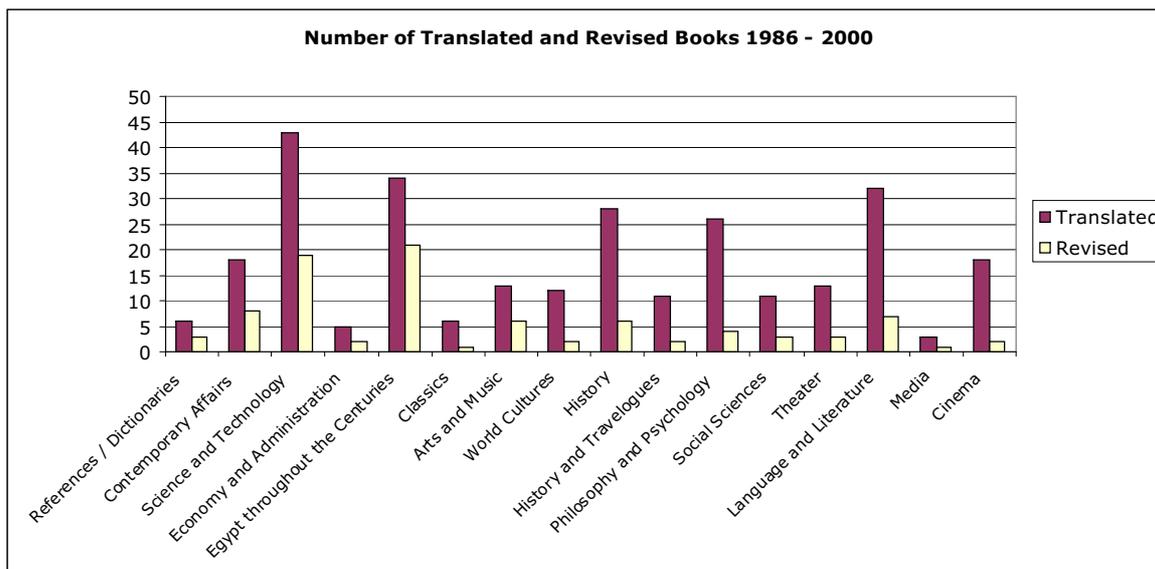
It can be deduced from some data that there is rising awareness for the necessity of quality control at the *National Translation Project* run by the Higher Council for Culture in Cairo that has the merit of having released figures about the personnel involved in the translating, reviewing, and editing process.



Source: Higher Council for Culture, Cairo

As the graphic demonstrates, the number of revisers is in no positive correlation to the number of translators. The ratio of 521 translators to 515 books published between 1995 and 2002 reaches 1.01; this means that there is a relation of roughly one translator per book. The ratio of 30 revisers to the total of books translated during this period is, however, only 0.05, which means that one reviser is in charge of reviewing more than 17 books in the series. This indicates at least that there are deficits in quality control, even though individual translations may be perfect even without being revised.

However, as this cannot be taken for granted, an additional systematic evaluation of the quality of individual translations of different programmes needs to be carried out. This applies also to works where the name of a reviser appears, as the mentioning of a name does not necessarily mean that the translation has indeed been verified. This is an argument made by some observers regarding the output of *The Second Thousand Books* by the General Egyptian Book Organization. The quality of GEBO translations is in general lower than the one of the publications prepared by the Higher Council for Culture; yet, according to available figures (and names, indeed) the ratio of revised to translated books is much better at GEBO (although the number of revised publications remains well below the number of translated titles). The answer to this contradiction seems to be partly in relatively low revising standards and partly in the fact that not all books that are marked as revised have actually been worked over by a corrector; even revisers whose names have been printed on given publications sometimes affirm not to have seen the books and not to have undertaken any proofreading or corrections.



Source: Compilation on the basis of GEBO data

6. Publishing

6.1. Public and Private Sector Strategies

Wherever the state has been involved in publishing, political considerations have been prevalent. The UNESCO project clearly had a focus on enlightenment literature, which in the 1950s seems to have been considered crucial for the development of Arab societies. The translation of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* for example came at a time when some Arab nations had just entered the stage of state-building and others were about to gain independence. The works translated by the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre can be regarded as a support programme for strengthening liberal political thought in this period for both Lebanon and the Arab region. The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature in Kuwait initiated a publication series in general education in the 1970s, when the oil producing states of the Gulf were becoming richer by the day while remaining socially and culturally underdeveloped in the perception of most other Arab countries that took pride in their educational heritage and social achievements. The regionally well-distributed series *World of Knowledge* – with print-runs of some 40,000 copies that reach bookshops and stationeries across the Arab world – must therefore also be considered a politically ambitious attempt to turn Kuwait into an educator. The General Egyptian Book Organization in its numerous series of publications has followed political priorities ever since. When Egypt was struck by Islamist terrorism at the beginning of the 1990s, a series entitled *Confrontation* (al-muwajaha) was initiated. Its stated purpose was to fight extremism and terrorism by enlightenment literature of the Arab *nahda*. In 1993 alone, a total of 36 publications were literally thrown on the market at the symbolic price of 0.50 EGP (then approximately 0.15 USD) in order to make works of Egyptian enlightenment – both of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries as well as of contemporary writers – accessible to the masses. The *National Translation Project* undertaken by the Higher Council for Culture in Cairo since 1995 started at a time when the discourse about a clash of civilizations sparked the discourse on the need for dialogue among cultures. Translating became a political priority in education, going far beyond previous efforts that were part of the general educational project called *The Second Thousand Books* that GEBO had started in 1986. Public sector strategies therefore usually follow political priorities that do not correlate to business interests.

In contrast to this, private publishers follow a clear business oriented strategy. While very few publishing houses manage to maintain a clear profile in terms of the content of publications they offer, most of them follow the trends of what is perceived as the demand of the market. This seems to be done by some kind of intuition, as there are almost no readership surveys carried out in Arab countries. To put it less esoteric, publishing strategies follow the common sense approach that what has sold until now will, with certain adaptations and improvements, sell in the future, too. This seems to be the reason why classics, in particular religious ones, are being re-edited over and over again; business-wise they are considered safe. Accordingly, private publishers who launch new titles and unknown authors take higher risks; it is not uncommon that publishers make authors pay for printing their writings instead of remunerating them for their work. That innovation in Arabic remains limited is partly due to the fact that what appears to be unconventional publications requiring a certain educational level in Arab countries are rather read in foreign languages, English and French in particular. This trend is sustained by Arab authors writing in foreign languages, as they target an audience that goes beyond the Arab world. Fatema Mernissi in Morocco usually writes in French, and her books are marketed not only in North Africa but also in France. Mohammed Arkoun, French though but of Algerian origin and writing mainly on the relationship of modernity and Islam, writes in French, too, and like Fatema Mernissi's works his books are at a later stage translated into Arabic for the purpose of marketing strategies in Arab countries. The same applies to works by Aziz Al-Azmeh that are mostly written in English and later on translated into Arabic. As a result, publishing strategies of

the private sector take into account that translations into Arabic have begun to be appreciated by readers and that they be able to re-gain market shares from foreign language readers or create a new segment for those who either cannot or do not want to read foreign languages.

6.1.1. Choice of Topics / Book Selection Process

Following their basic strategies outlined above, public and private sector publishers identify rather general topics that fit into either the general framework of a given publication series or the area that is supposed to be most rewarding on a commercial basis. With regard to translations, the catchword of the larger programmes is opening up towards ideas from beyond the Arab horizon. Hence, a rather vague multitude of topics is chosen, as everything and anything translated relates to the outside world. Depending on the degree of institutionalization, books are selected for translation in a process in which administrators and experts are involved. This is the case of *The Second Thousand Books*, the *National Translation Project* as well as of the publications of the Arab Organization for Translation and the series *World of Knowledge*. As more and more has been marked for translation, the range of topics has become much broader in the last two decades or so than for example in the early days of the UNESCO sponsored project by the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre, where the focus was on political philosophy of the enlightenment period. Needs seem to have been defined more precisely in the past than they are at present. The orientation of the larger programmes has therefore rather shifted to one of general education. The prevailing attitude in the design of translation projects is that it is good to know about the outside world rather than that it is necessary to promote the transfer of knowledge in certain areas to confront development issues in the Arab world. Needs are not sufficiently defined in terms of what could be called an objective demand.

In contrast to this, various support programmes of foreign co-operation agencies have a set of topics largely structured by a supply attitude. The most obvious case is maybe the translation activities of the Soviet Union in previous decades that aimed at disseminating the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin in order to liberate the working masses, irrespectively of whether or not this corresponded to an actual demand. Foreign language fiction is another supply driven category where the demand side is not entirely clear; the French, German, American and other cultural centers want to familiarize Arab readers with their national literatures and thus promote cultural exchange. In the same line the translation of Islamic studies and books dealing with the history and culture of the Middle East and North Africa are to be found; this seems more clearly to be related to interests in Arab countries. Finally, books on social sciences and humanities occupy an important place in the choice of topics. As is the case of the public sector projects in Arab countries, the aim is to promote the general ideas of enlightenment through the selection of books that cater for the needs of contemporary Arab societies. As a rule, selection processes are institutionalized and experts from Arab countries participate in setting priorities. That was also the case of the *Franklin Book Programs*, which, given the cold war situation of the 1950s and 1960s, led to contention between the administrators of the project on the one hand – co-operating with local advisors in Cairo and elsewhere – and government officials of the United States Information Agency on the other hand. Very often, university professors and others working in higher education institutions are involved in the identification of titles to be translated, as they know from experience about shortcomings and deficits of books available in Arabic. As foreign translation support programmes are heavily subsidized as well, commercial aspects remain underrepresented. Even though the actual production of a book is typically carried out by a private publishing house, translations thought to be responding to a specific demand in Arab societies remain under-distributed. Under an optimistic assumption, an Arab scholar who was involved in selecting a title (and maybe in translating it) undertakes direct distribution and marketing among his or her students at university; even if an edition consists of only 2,000 to 3,000 copies, the book can be considered to have some impact

in terms of readership when it is used in seminars. Under a pessimistic assumption, books that were carefully chosen are not in need to be distributed and marketed, as their production costs were entirely subsidized; the pressure to actually sell them evaporates and as a result, many translated books remain in the publishers' warehouses or in storage rooms of foreign embassies.

The situation is different when it comes to private publishing houses, as they need to succeed commercially. As a rule, many companies have come to adopt a mixed strategy when selecting books for publication and translation; bestsellers are used to indirectly finance more demanding works that are not commercially viable. The question of whether or not a publication project is a business risk rather than an opportunity is usually resolved by the publisher himself or herself. The book selection process is far less institutionalized than in public sector projects and is often reduced to individual common sense, based on the personal experience that private publishers have earned by running bookstores themselves, often over decades as family businesses. Against this background, foreign language fiction does not seem to constitute a top priority in the choice of topics to be translated. This is probably related to the fact that this segment of the book market is already being taken care of by foreign co-operation agencies in the context of subsidized publishing. Exceptions to this are bestsellers in foreign languages as far as knowledge about them reaches readers in Arab countries. Umberto Eco for example has reached readers in Morocco, Lebanon and elsewhere by the intermediary language of French; this has prepared the ground for the launching of his works in Arabic, of which the Arab Cultural Center in Casablanca has brought out Baudolino in 2003. In the field of social sciences and humanities books are usually being identified for translation in the context of the mixed strategy of bestseller / slow seller. Private publishers adopt a more conservative attitude with regard to the number of books to be produced in this category. In the same sense, they also assess the demand situation more thoroughly in order to minimize risks. Even if the numerical output in the translation of social sciences and humanities remains limited, this selection process promises to be more sustainable than the public sector approaches. Translations in this market segment are as a rule better distributed, as the wish and the need for commercial success remains predominant.

There is one major category of books that nevertheless largely remains outside these different approaches, namely reference works. For the public sector in Arab countries, the production of encyclopaedias, specialized dictionaries, and lexicons is too costly, too time consuming and too abstract, given the fact that they have to operate more flexibly according to short-term priorities. Foreign governmental co-operation agencies as a rule have difficulties in committing themselves to long-term or even medium-term projects; firstly, their budgets are usually approved on an annual basis; secondly, the production of reference works tend to require institutional funding, from which most donors refrain. Private publishing houses – as for example Librarie du Liban – for their part have limited their activities in this field to specialized dictionaries, as their production corresponds to a certain degree of usefulness among a wider circle of professionals. The translation of major reference works usually goes beyond what can be covered by the bestseller / low seller strategy, although it seems that some publishers such as Editions Oueidat in Beirut have been able to do so for a variety of reference works, ranging from translations of Larousse dictionaries on environment and health to encyclopaedias on the general history of civilizations, European history, psychology, and philosophy. The only shortcoming regarding the latter ones is that in the field of social sciences in particular, translations of dictionaries and encyclopaedias alone are very often not sufficient; they rely on a basically European substrate that does not sufficiently take material from outside Western countries into consideration.

6.1.2. Legal Aspects

Publishing in the Arab world was exposed to numerous obstacles over the last decades due to legal systems that in some cases were highly flawed. Firstly, policies aiming at establishing state-dominated economies led to an increase in legal uncertainty. In the publishing sector, private initiative was not promoted anymore; on the contrary, nationalization strategies such as Egypt's under Jamal Abdelnasser contributed to the destruction of private publishing structures to the benefit of public sector companies and organizations. The respect for private property, intellectual and other, could not always and not in all countries be taken for granted by innovators. Secondly, in so far as the print and media sector of a given Arab country has been regulated by law, a ministry of information or several intelligence organizations have usually been responsible of carrying out preliminary censorship; one of the reasons why Lebanon became to be the Arab world's most important printing house (though not necessarily its greatest reading room) was its relatively liberal situation with regard to publications that, once printed, found their way by suitcase trade or smuggling into other Arab countries where certain books were banned by authorities. While the censorship regulations in the Arab world are quite transparent, this situation does not promote innovation either. Thirdly, Arab countries have a weak record in their respect for the international standards of copyright, and this is maybe the single most important legal issue affecting the state of publishing in the Arab world today.

While national legislation does exist in a number of Arab states, it is the shared Arabic language that requires that copyright standards be enforced on a regional level. In this respect, the traditional international instrument has been the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works of 1886, to which as of July 2004 only 15 Arab states were parties.

Country	Year of Membership
Tunisia	December 1887
Morocco	June 1917
Lebanon	September 1947
Mauritania	February 1973
Egypt	June 1977
Bahrain	March 1997
Algeria	April 1998
Jordan	July 1999
Oman	July 1999
Qatar	July 2000
Sudan	December 2000
Djibouti	May 2002
Saudi Arabia	March 2004
Syria	June 2004
United Arab Emirates	July 2004

Source: WIPO

While Tunisia and Morocco became parties to the Berne Convention while under French protectorate, Lebanon was the first independent Arab country to join the Berne Convention in 1947. In spite of this, Beirut has for years been known as a major Middle Eastern center not only of printing, but also of piracy. Books published either in Lebanon, in another Arab country, or even in Europe or North America have frequently been reprinted by Lebanese publishers without permission of the copyright holders. Obviously, the mere membership in the Berne Convention over decades does not mean that national law enforcement agencies take necessary measures to sanction copyright abuses as they occur. More than half a century after Lebanon's joining the Berne Convention, publishers in Beirut have come to recognize that the disadvantages of not adhering to international copyright standards outweigh the earlier advantages of piracy; Lebanese publishers therefore have started to demand more copyright protection, as piracy originating in

countries other than Lebanon have had a negative impact on the Lebanese publishing sector during the last years. In this context it is significant that until the late 1990s, only Mauritania and Egypt joined the Berne Convention (the latter most probably in the context of its open door economic policy that put an end to the centrally planned economy in 1974), while all other countries stayed outside. Notably publishing houses in Syria have openly circumvented copyright protection agreements, and former Lebanese transgressors blamed Damascus for not adhering to international standards; it is only in June 2004 that Syria became a party to the Berne Convention, although – and the long-term membership of Lebanon is a striking example itself – this does not mean that Syrian authorities will enforce its regulations. More recently, piracy in books has shifted eastwards again¹², and Iran, although not an Arab country, has been targeted by Arab publishers as a source of piracy in Arabic language publications. Iran still is neither a signatory state to the Berne Convention, nor has it acceded to the World Trade Organization (WTO), whose Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of 1994 has increasingly come to supplant the central position of the old Berne Convention.

The TRIPS Agreement, negotiated during the Uruguay Round from 1986 to 1994 and signed in Marrakesh in April 1994, introduced for the first time intellectual property standards into the global trade system. Countries that wish to benefit from the multilateral trade provisions of WTO need to adopt the TRIPS Agreement as well, which in turn refers to the most important rules of the Berne Convention; it is therefore probably not by chance that a wave of Arab states started acceding to the latter starting in 1995, shortly after the transformation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into the new WTO. The following list shows the Arab WTO member states as of April 2004.

Country	Year of Membership
Bahrain	January 1995
Kuwait	January 1995
Morocco	January 1995
Tunisia	March 1995
Djibouti	May 1995
Mauritania	May 1995
Egypt	June 1995
Qatar	January 1996
United Arab Emirates	April 1996
Jordan	April 2000
Oman	November 2000

Source: WTO

In addition to these states, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, and most recently Libya, are for the time being observer governments at WTO, and their eventual accession to membership will require the implementation of intellectual property rules in order to nationally comply with the acquired international standards. The ambition and prospects of gaining WTO membership has therefore become an incentive to deal with intellectual property rights in general and issues of copyright protection in particular. Even if the mere adoption of the TRIPS Agreement does not necessarily mean its immediate enforcement, the implementation process is monitored by WTO and thus greatly increases pressure on governments to improve intellectual property protection. Failing to do so will put in jeopardy the benefits of WTO accession, which countries trying to integrate into the global economy cannot afford.

¹² Piracy in Lebanon, however, seems to have shifted to software, music CDs, movies, and computer games, according to a recent study of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). Piracy rates in music rose from 42 percent in 1999 to actually 70 percent, and the Lebanese government is being accused of not enforcing the protection of copyrighted products against street vendors and shopkeepers.

Finally, copyright issues are not only crucial for the functioning of the publishing sectors in Arab countries in general; they are also of great importance in the field of translations. While the translation into Arabic of books in the public domain entails fewer legal complications, Arabic versions of contemporary foreign language authors need to respect copyright rules and procedures. Against the background of a rather weak legislation and an even weaker law enforcement, translations of foreign books into Arabic were often carried out in the past without acquiring necessary authorization. Publishing houses that do respect copyrights usually ensure that they receive a licence for publication in Arabic covering the entire Arabic speaking region, and as a rule, foreign publishers prefer to deal with one publisher for a given language. The reason for this is that the shared literary Arabic – notwithstanding linguistic variations – makes it logical to do regional marketing for translated titles, as the market size of the entire Arab world is more important than the one of a small individual country such as Lebanon. However, given the weak regional distribution mechanisms as well as deficits in book monitoring and documentation, unfair competition does still regularly arise, when a publisher at the other end of the Arab world pirates a costly translation undertaken by the licensed publisher and starts local distribution in a third country. Sometimes such a situation occurs by neglect, while on numerous occasions this must be considered a business strategy. Many private publishers – Obeikan and Jarir in Saudi Arabia, but also the Arab Organization for Translation in Beirut – have come to regularly print the cover of the original foreign language version on the back of the Arabic publication in order not only to show what the original title is (sometimes there are divergences with regard to Arabic) but also as a proof that they have properly obtained the copyright. Improved co-ordination mechanisms among public and private sector publishers as well as cross-border co-operation among Arab countries could help to avoid either the duplication of translation work or the exploitation of the imperfect market situation under form of piracy. However, it seems that intentions – in particular among private sector publishers – to improve transparency remain very limited at present, as this would dilute the principle of business secret.

6.1.3. Printing Quality

The printing quality of books varies widely from one country to another as well as between public and private sector establishments. The government-run printing presses in Egypt are of a rather weak quality in terms of paper, print, and binding as well as with regard to cover design. The paper they use is normally not acid free and therefore age rather quickly. Most books are produced in paperback. Translated books do not escape this rule; *The Second Thousand Books* as well as – albeit to a lesser degree – the *National Translation Project* do not suggest in their outward appearance that these publications are particularly worth of being bought and read. The reasons for this are to be found in the public sector situation; production costs have to be low, as the aim of these projects is not to generate income but rather to fulfill a policy priority of providing reading that is not costly. However, there is also a great degree of neglect in the production of books in general and in thus in that of translated titles, too. While paper, printing and binding may remain of a poor quality, there is no reason why editing and typesetting should be carried out without due attention. This applies not only to the mentioned Egyptian projects but also to the equally state subsidized series *World of Knowledge* of the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature. Although these books are made of far better material than the parallel Egyptian projects, they share some weaknesses with regard to the editing and printing processes.

Public sector publications bear all the marks of inconsistent editing and superficial proofreading, if any. While this is already true for many Arabic originals, it applies even more to translations, in particular when they necessitate an attentive treatment of references, footnotes or dual terminology (Arabic plus any other given language original in order to achieve precision of meaning). Most commonly, the variation of small and capital letters in European languages is not respected when being reproduced inside an

Arabic text, and an editor who is not well-trained may probably not even notice this, as the Arabic alphabet does not know this differentiation. Secondly, English appears to be influencing proofreading of passages, titles, references or footnotes in particular in French and German. When there is similarity between French and English words, very often the latter is chosen although the part of text is supposed to be in French. Typically, German 'sch' is replaced by English 'sh', and so forth. Names frequently take their English form, for example French 'Jacques' or 'Jean' become 'Jack' or 'John', or German 'Wilhelm' becomes William. Thirdly, Arabic language phonemes often interfere; there is no /p/ in Arabic, which makes that names or words containing this letter in a foreign language are being reproduced using /b/ instead; Pierre Bourdieu thus sometimes becomes Bierre Bourdieu. Similarly, there are phonetic interferences based on dialects; the letter /g/ that does not exist in *fusha* takes Arabic /j/ in Egyptian publications because Cairene pronounces it as /g/, whereas publishers in Lebanon and elsewhere use /gh/ to transliterate /g/. It is therefore not astonishing that due to a sub-optimal editing and proofreading process nearly all books produced by public sector publishers contain numerous misprints, as typesetters may add to existing mistakes their own ones.

In contrast, private publishing houses throughout the Arab world generally strive for higher printing quality; this correlates, of course, to higher prices. The paper used by private publishers in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, the Gulf countries, Tunisia, and Morocco is generally of a good quality, and so are the printing, binding, cutting as well as design of book covers. So-called *turath* literature, that is classics of Arab and Muslim heritage such as the Koran, medieval theological treatises, and famous reference works as for example the Arabic dictionary *lisan al-'arab* by Ibn Manzur are usually well produced and marketed in hardcover. Other books are mostly produced in paperback, which is also the case of publications translated from foreign languages. Private publishers usually spend more efforts on proofreading, typesetting and printing, but editing in particular of translations continues to be underdeveloped along the lines outlined above. This is regularly the case for references that are not always adapted to the Arabic language version. If for example a footnote quotes anybody from Immanuel Kant to Karl Marx or from Thomas Jefferson to Pierre Bourdieu, one would expect the editor to look for their respective works as far as they are translated into Arabic. This is not always the case; in fact, it seems to be the exception rather than the rule. As a result, the neglect for reference editing as well as for indexing techniques does not provide incentives for the user to continue reading.

6.2. Aid-Funded Publishing

Publishing in Arab countries has traditionally been a domain of foreign aid. This applies to both European and North American funding as well as to publications sponsored by other Arab or Muslim parties. Throughout the Arab world, however, foreign funding has become, over the last two decades or so, synonymous with Western financing; in some countries this has developed into a politically sensitive issue, in particular in Egypt but also in Jordan, where activities by donors from Europe and North America are seen with much greater suspicion than similar ones by Arab or Muslim actors. This applies to the entire chain of development co-operation, and the field of publications constitutes only one point in this respect. Western governments in particular, but also non-governmental organizations, are widely believed to follow agendas that are not in line with what local populations aspire to.

However, before it comes to foreign funding, the first ones to provide aid to publishers are generally Arab authors themselves. Given the background of the printing profession of most publishers, even nowadays many books are subsidized by their authors within the range of 2,000 to 3,000 EUR rather than being entirely financed by publishing houses. Publishers are very conservative in bringing out books completely at their own risk; as a book – in particular by a so far unknown author – does not guarantee its market success, entrepreneurs want to cash in first before eventually rewarding the

author in case his or her book sells well. Publishing books is therefore very often an operation similar to printing business cards or office supplies, and this is something the printer needs to get paid for. Some publishers therefore even bring out books knowing that they will not sell for obvious reasons of literary quality, choice of topics or on other grounds.

This way of financing does not seem to affect translations into Arabic. Rather, the greatest volume of subsidized publications appears to be government sponsored translation programmes, such as the Egyptian *The Second Thousand Books* and the *National Translation Project*, the Kuwaiti series *World of Knowledge* as well as others that have not been fully documented. Public sector programmes finance translating, printing, marketing and distribution through the state budget. While the total financial volume of a given translation project may be known to some, the government sponsored production chain remains largely below transparency. No reliable estimates can therefore be given as to the actual costs of a particular book title. Likewise, it is difficult to obtain information about production costs of translation programmes that were undertaken in the past, such as the one carried out by the Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre in the framework of the UNESCO project or the Franklin Book Program initially sponsored by the United States Information Agency. Documentation of the former project is not available in Beirut due to war damage, and the latter has been filed in archives at Princeton University.

Regarding the operational translation programmes of today, it has become a trend among donors to only partially provide funding for the publication of books. The reason for this is that embassies, cultural institutes and other organizations of international co-operation almost exclusively deal with private publishers that are supposed to follow a business agenda anyway. Therefore, it is rightly assumed that publishing houses should have their share in the production costs. The tendency is therefore nowadays that translations proper are being funded, while the printing, marketing and distribution are not. This seems to be the case of translation grants provided by various European embassies in the Maghreb countries as well as in the Arab East, while the Gulf appears to have stayed outside of funding mechanisms. However, publishers as well as translators use upcoming projects to look for various financing instruments; double funding is therefore a practice that is quite common, in particular with regard to foreign non-governmental organizations and embassies in the region. This situation is usually caused by a lack of donor co-ordination, due to which actors in the field of development co-operation do not know about their partners' and colleagues' activities. Furthermore, double funding is sometimes achieved by targeting a local donor – a cultural institute for example – while at the same time approaching other institutions of international co-operation in Europe or in North America. If this is done in a transparent way, it is very often translators who benefit from an increase in funding. A publishing house that wants to bring out a given title anyway usually has a budget to pay for the translator at the lower end of the honoraria scale; additional funds therefore often lead to an increase in the translators' revenues, and this is supposed to strengthen their commitment towards the project and thus the quality of translation.

In practical terms, there are two basic types of calls for proposals. The first one is that a foreign donor decides on a list of titles to be published and requires publishers to bid for the publication; this is the case of the *Arabic Book Program* at the Regional Book Office of the US embassy in Cairo. The second one is that funding is announced and that publishers – or translators – are invited to suggest titles; this seems to be more common among European institutions. It is clear that in both approaches the available budgets are at some point fixed. Translation costs are on the average calculated on the basis of 200 pages at the equivalent of 15 EUR per page; printing costs for 2,000 to 3,000 copies are usually in the range 3,000 to 5,000 EUR, depending on the quality of paper, the material of the cover, the use of multi-colours as well as binding and cover design (which sometimes includes calligraphic work). The translation support programme of litrix.de

has set the amount per book at a maximum of 6,000 EUR; by and large this reflects the average of what other projects use as planning figures as well. In the end, however, a lot depends on priorities in terms of content and in terms of quality; milestones in social sciences and humanities often go far beyond the average 200 pages translation volume and therefore require much more funding than the average would allow. It is nevertheless not uncommon that donors commit themselves to this kind of projects when it is deemed necessary.

6.3. Co-ordination Issues

Publishing in the Arab world is documented in the *Arab Bulletin of Publications*, which is published by ALECSO in Tunis. The period reported for is usually only available for reference with a delay of about two years, which makes that publications of 1999 are only reported and published in print in 2001. According to information provided by the librarian at ALECSO, the years 2000 and 2001 are being printed at present, while 2002 has been finalized as a manuscript. There are plans to switch to electronic documentation by 2005, which would be both more cost and time-efficient. The bulletin uses a standardized breakdown into categories that follow the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) system.

Arab Bulletin of Publications UDC System	
000	Generalities
100	Philosophy and Psychology
200	Religions
300	Social Sciences
400	Languages
500	Natural Sciences and Mathematics
600	Technology (Applied Sciences)
700	Arts
800	Literature

The material is based on compilations carried out by the National Committees of the ALECSO member states, and as the examples given for Lebanon and Morocco above show, additional efforts are needed in order to achieve completeness of documentation. The problems of bibliography are basically those of data collection, and it is clear that the National Committees of ALECSO rely on data provided by national entities, so that the challenge of data collection is basically handed over to the bodies in charge of bibliographic documentation there (Legal Deposit, National Libraries). However, not all books are reported by the publishers to the national registration bodies.

With regard to translations in particular, this general situation does not change. As bibliographic records on translated works do not constitute a separate category in any national documentation, any research on translations into Arabic is extremely time consuming. It basically requires the consultation of up to 22 national bibliographies, for each year and each classification. As these records are rarely complete, the existence of translations cannot with certainty be verified. As there is no reliable and quickly accessible corpus of information about works already translated, so is there no tool to search for translations into Arabic projected by publishers. A book may therefore have been translated and published or could be projected for translation and publication by two or more publishers in either different countries or even in one and the same country. Given the interest in translation activities in recent years, the absence of a translation database enabling co-ordination must increasingly be identified as a deficit and regularly leads to duplications and infringement of copyright. Copyright instruments could of course constitute a tool in the planning process of translations, as applying for licenses and granting translation rights would enable both original and Arab publishers to track the status of a given work. However, these mechanisms have been and remain weak. Firstly, they do not apply to texts that are in the public domain and therefore can be

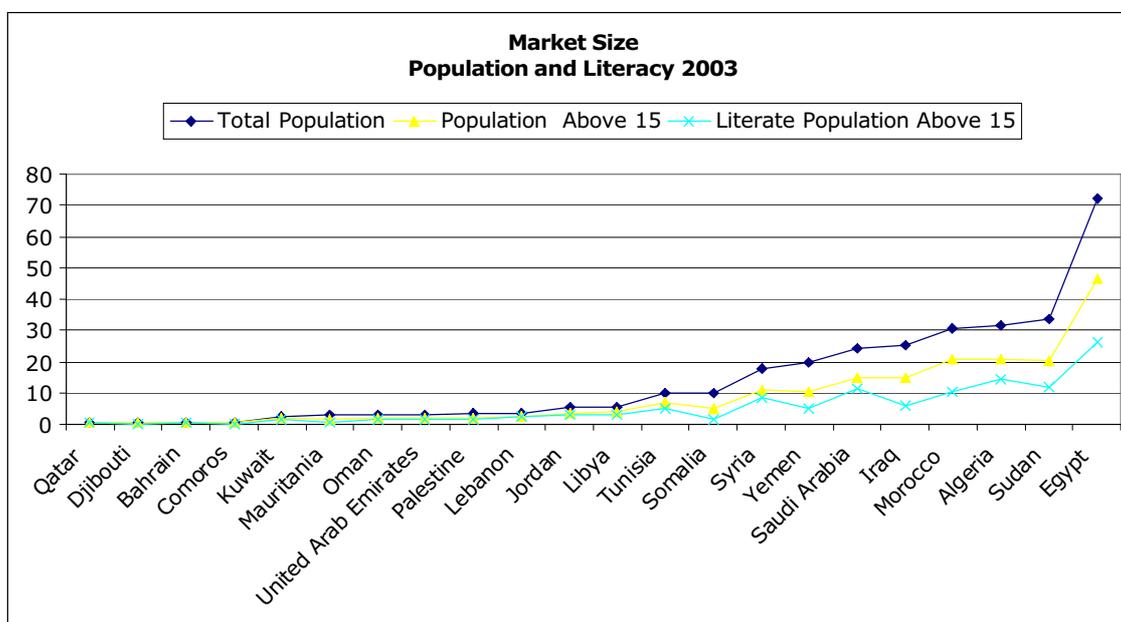
freely translated and published; secondly, with regard to protected works respect in the Arab world for the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works has been and remains low.

7. Marketing and Distribution

7.1. Market Identification and Market Size

Although Arab publishers theoretically have access to a large market based on a shared literary language, markets continue to be by and large identified on national levels and thus remain fragmented. This is not only due to the fact that distribution is a major challenge in the publishing chain, with customs regulations and censorship issues impeding the expansion of book markets. Rather, national book markets have not yet witnessed a significant takeoff either and this is largely related to the situation that the reading public in individual countries is not sufficiently large. According to comparative analyses put forward by Shigeo Minowa on the societal context of book publishing, and confirmed in the case of Egypt by Stefan Winkler, it is the volume of readership that ultimately determines the dynamics of publishing, not income situations, technological innovations or marketing instruments. Economic factors do, of course, count but – as a rule – the share of the book industry does not follow the growth rate of the gross national product if the conditions of a sufficiently large population, high literacy rates and increased educational standards are not met. Where the latter three factors come together, economic obstacles to the marketing of books diminish, as mass production becomes possible and prices for books decrease. A given economic growth rate in situations where the soft factors of human development remain stagnant does not translate into an improved book industry ratio.

The total populations of Arab countries for 2003 stands at around 307 million, of which some 191 million are above the age of 15 and would therefore constitute the reading public under ideal literacy conditions. However, with an average adult literacy of 60.8 percent, the Arab market on a regional level is downsized for this age group by almost 40 percent.



Source: Compilation based on United Nations Population Fund 2003 and Human Development Indicators 2003.

Accordingly, the actual market size on the Arab level for the age group 15 and older drops down to roughly 115 million people according to literacy rates available for 2001. As previously indicated, higher literacy levels are mostly to be found in the less populous countries of the region, in particular in the smaller states of the Gulf as well as in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon. While these countries can be considered to meet the condition of literacy, the size of their populations must be regarded to small in order to

incubate a flourishing book industry. The five most populous countries of the Arab world – Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, Iraq – constitute for the same age group almost 123 million people, of which almost 50 percent have to be subtracted from the potential market size due to illiteracy. At the same time, the literacy divide between small and big states correlates to discrepancies in the levels of income. Not only do the more populous countries lose large market potentials due to illiteracy, they also show a weak reader access ratio, which is the indicator measuring the relation between average book price and per capita income. The smaller Gulf states in particular combine higher literacy rates with higher income; their reader access ratio is relatively high, but the countries are too small in terms of population to develop dynamic national book markets. The more populous countries face the dual problem of low literacy rates and lower income, so that their reader access ratio is low; prices for books remain high in comparison to per capita income. The larger population size does not constitute the qualified mass that is critical for the establishment of dynamic publishing sectors. It goes without saying that an unequal income distribution within the bigger countries further exacerbates the situation.

The only country that has consistently managed to circumvent the problem of population size and taken advantage of the regional market the shared literary Arabic provides, is Lebanon. Technological advantages and professional experience may explain this in part, but more importantly the liberal climate with regard with regard to private entrepreneurship as well as concerning censorship must be considered to have played a decisive role. This seems to have given Lebanon some priority for example vis-à-vis Egypt that in the 1950s was at least as developed as Lebanon then was. However, the Cairo book industry came to be dominated by public sector publishing houses since the 1960s, and profit making dropped off the agenda. Therefore, the under-exploitation of the regional market also has to do with varying focuses of both public and private publishers across the region. This applies to Arabic language originals as well as to translation projects. The two major programmes undertaken by the General Egyptian Book Organization and the Higher Council for Culture target the Egyptian market more than the regional one. The *World of Knowledge* series by the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature defines its market rather on a regional level; obviously, Kuwait is too small a market to deserve attention in the book sector. Therefore, print-runs of 40,000 copies per book are circulated all across the Arab world, largely following the distribution mechanisms of newspapers and magazines that for some reason are more widely circulated than books.

In particular private publishers from all Arab countries have increasingly realized that the real chances for growth are to be found in re-defining their markets along regional lines. The Lebanese practice of past decades has therefore become for others a model to emulate. Egyptian private publishers can develop freely again, and countries that lacked the technical expertise and the professional experience in the publishing field have caught up enormously, the best example being probably Saudi Arabia. Regional marketing supposes, however, that publishers develop new concepts for their products, in particular with regard to target groups, promotion activities, pricing, and distribution systems.

7.2. Target Groups

Publishers in general do not sufficiently define the target groups of their publications. The profiling of readers or maybe more importantly: of potential readers has remained underdeveloped. There is a large amount of books on topics of general interest; offers targeting a specialized reading public are much more limited, and the hypothesis can be brought forward that the latter is the more dynamic segment of the market, most probably consisting of readers who turn towards languages other than Arabic for reading due to an insufficient offer in high quality books. With regard to the public sector translation projects, the dominating aspect of general education certainly leaves not much room for manoeuvring. The prevailing philosophy here is to make people from all

walks of life reading. In how far this is being achieved, is an open question. There are no empirical studies on the impact of given publishing and translation programmes. This lack in precision is not only true for productions by Arab publishers but also for projects sponsored by foreign donors. Translations funded by international co-operation agencies remain under-distributed even on a national level, that is before the challenges of regional marketing (customs, distribution, censorship) are being felt. Works translated from French into Arabic in Cairo or from English into Arabic in Amman – in print-runs between 2,000 and 3,000 copies – very often do not find their way to the readers and remain stored in the warehouses of publishers or in the storage rooms of embassies. The most common argument brought forward to explain this situation is that 'Arabs in general' do not read. While this may be true in a very broad sense, there remains, however, a segment of the population that does read, and at the regional level this may well be a market important enough to be addressed. Therefore, in particular if one accepts the general assessment about a weak reading culture, the need for clearer targeting becomes all the more imperative. Politically motivated translation projects that are set to target 'Arabs in general' will certainly miss their aim, for targeting everybody in the end often means reaching nobody. It is therefore necessary to conduct surveys on readership issues in order to find out what people read if they read and why people who could read do not read. This ultimately decides also on the success or failure of high caliber publications such as the books published by the Arab Organization for Translation, which identifies its target group maybe more precisely than others; for even among university students and scholars, reading habits have remained largely unknown.

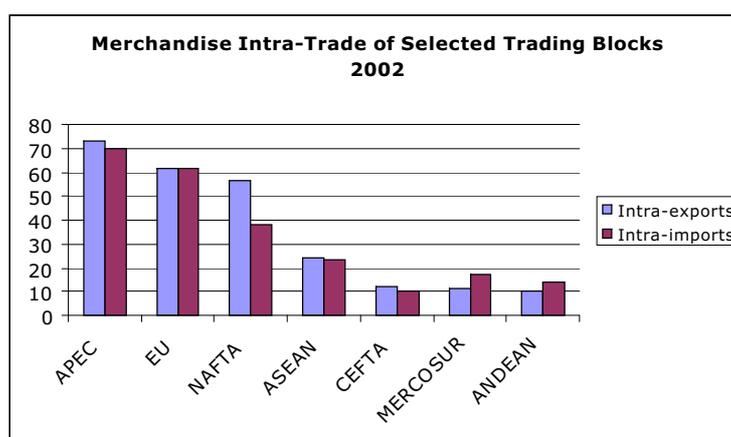
7.3. Pricing

As outlined above, Arab countries have a weak reader access ratio, which basically means that the average book price is too high in relation to the per capita income across the region. While the ratio in some countries like the Gulf states is above the Arab average, the more populous countries that would constitute the backbone of the book market in terms of population size clearly suffer from insufficient purchasing power. Book prices are most likely to fall if increased literacy on a larger scale provide a readership big enough to enable publishers to shift to mass production; according to international comparisons, the educational factor has a potentially stronger impact on price levels of books than economic growth and a rising per capita income as such. The regional orientation of the Arab book industry therefore has developed into a substitute to inadequately limited local markets; it is through targeting readers on the regional level that the readership base for books is conveyed to expand. However, this has not yet led to a decrease in prices for books in general and for translations in particular. The reason for this is a kind of *effet pervers* of the average local conditions encountered by publishing houses on their national markets; because of the fact that the local market is limited, business in substantial figures has to be conducted outside. There are, of course, financial factors related to transport and customs in particular that add to the costs of a given book when sold outside its country of production. Nevertheless, it seems that many publishers try to take advantage of outside markets in order to increase prices rather than to translate lower production costs into better conditions for retailing in general. This applies not only to private publishing houses but also to those of the public sector. A book of the Higher Council for Culture priced at 6 EGP in Egypt by the end of 2003 was marketed in third countries at twice its equivalent in USD. Other titles were priced even three times more expensive on the regional level when compared to domestic prices in Cairo. This discrepancy has one obvious reason; books of the public sector are heavily subsidized in Egypt, and Cairo cannot afford to extend its subsidies to third countries. However, it seems that the adjustment in pricing sometimes goes beyond proportions and thereby effectively limits a strategy of high volume marketing; when looking at pricing for Egyptian public sector books, it almost seems as if export revenues are needed in order to maintain a subsidized situation in Egypt. In contrast, private publishers are more transparent in their regional pricing; many companies calculate on the basis of USD equivalents, which makes sense given the fact that most of the

currencies of the Arab East and the Gulf – though not the Moroccan dirham and the Tunisian dinar – are primarily pegged to the USD; the latter is therefore a reference currency in regional trade. However, in terms of commercial culture, marketing on the regional level is still regarded as the prolongation of national business practices. Taking into consideration the persisting challenges at the national level – inadequate definition of target groups; insufficient promotion – results in third countries remain below their potential, as it is mainly through exploiting different levels of income between Arab states that the book trade flourishes, not by creating new market volumes in terms of a significantly expanded readership.

7.4. Distribution Systems

The regional trade in books is greatly hampered by the weak degree of Arab economic co-operation and integration in general. Attempts to liberalize inter-Arab trade were started as early as 1953, when the League of Arab States agreed on regional co-operation regarding trade and transit in particular. Other agreements followed, notably the Arab Common Market of 1964 that stipulated the establishment of an Arab free trade area and customs union, which has never been seriously implemented. The same is true of sub-regional instruments such as the Treaty of Marrakesh of 1989 which was supposed to lead to a free circulation of people, goods, and services among the Maghreb countries (Union du Maghreb Arabe, UMA). The Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) initiative of 1997 as well as the Agadir Convention between Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan have equally not yet significantly affected the trade among Arab states. The average of inter-Arab trade has remained throughout the years at around 8 percent of total Arab trade. This is less than what other major trading blocks achieve in regional trade.



Source: World Trade Organization

The reasons for this are manifold. Firstly, there are politically motivated trade barriers; protectionist tendencies are still strong. Secondly, the high differences in income between Arab states as well as in income distribution in individual countries play an important role. Thirdly, the costs of trade are high, which applies in particular to the areas of transport and communication. Fourthly, production in the Arab world covers similar sectors that do not promote product complementarity between different states. The result is that the export base of Arab countries is not sufficiently diversified.

Against this general background, the commercial circulation of books remains very limited, too. Although the common language does constitute a basic element of product complementarity, which other sectors lack, books are a commodity difficult to trade across the region. In addition to the factors that limit inter-Arab trade mentioned above, the issue of censorship comes in as an important obstacle to the distribution of books. A country like Lebanon may have liberal attitudes towards books but faces problems when exporting to countries such as Syria or Saudi Arabia where books need to be revised by

censors prior to import or even transit only. In other countries there are hurdles with regard to exporting books; in Egypt, for example, there is a Muslim censorship carried out by religious scholars before publications are allowed to be exported. Different phenomena of censorship are prevalent in almost all Arab countries, and procedures are inefficient, time-consuming, and often linked to giving bribes, which taken altogether constitute a major obstacle for the trade in books.

A second important issue is that there is no distribution company specialized in the regional trade with books, which is not the case of newspapers and magazines that are more easily marketed across the region. The reason for this seems to lie in the structure of Arab publishing businesses. While a publisher in other parts of the world practices a profession distinct from the printer and the bookseller, many publishers in the Arab world have a printing background. The printer-publisher identity is complemented by the combination publisher-bookseller; most publishers run smaller or larger bookstores where their books are on sale. Bookshops other than the publisher's own are only insufficiently integrated into the marketing of books. It can be said therefore that distribution in both its local and its regional dimension is not yet conceived as a separate business.

There are, however, some options for Arab publishers to deal with this unfavorable situation. Although it is difficult to assess their quantitative volume in terms of regional trade, book fairs all over the Arab world seem to constitute the first and most important mechanism of book distribution in the region. Their rationale is to compensate for the lack of a constant supply of books through permanent distribution by annually bringing recent and older publications in large numbers to the main trading places, of which Sharjah and Abu Dhabi (in the United Arab Emirates), Cairo, Beirut, Casablanca, Jeddah, Tunis and Damascus are the most important ones. These book fairs are open to the public and therefore serve as retailing more than as wholesale operations on a business-to-business level. It goes without saying that the obstacles outlined above continue to apply to book fairs as well. In Cairo, for example, non-Egyptian publishers regularly complain that their publications are regularly being kept at customs or censorship authorities during the book fair, which makes participation of publishers in this book fair a high risk business. Organizers of other book fairs – such as the one in Jeddah, important to Arab publishing houses in terms of the high purchasing power – inform their participants which titles are not being accepted for marketing in Saudi Arabia and thereby hinder publishers from properly doing business.

Secondly, book distribution is being organized through marketing between publishers in one country and public sector distribution agencies in another country, of which the *Al-Ahram* network, grown out of newspaper publishing, is a good example for Egypt. In Jordan, the *Jordan Distribution Agency* had similar functions; since its recent privatization its business seems to have improved, not only in the field of newspapers and magazines but also in the book segment. Publications by Arab regional organizations – such as ALECSO and its affiliates, for example the Arabization Co-ordination Bureau – do not remain outside weak distribution mechanisms. ALECSO for example distributes the *Arab Bulletin of Publications* as well as numerous interesting studies and documentations mainly through the National Commissions in the individual member states. In addition to the participation in book fairs, ALECSO co-operates with public sector distribution companies for the regional marketing of its publications (like, for example, with *Al-Ahram* in Cairo).

With regard to the distribution of translations and neighboring areas, the challenges to distribution are no different from the general situation. The works published by the *Commission Libanaise pour la Traduction des Chefs-d'Œuvre* are – although some of them were published half a century ago – still on sale; however, it is extremely difficult to find these publications outside Lebanon, and in Lebanon the only sales point seems to be the *Librairie Orientale* in Beirut. The translation programme undertaken in the

framework of *The Second Thousand Books* of the General Egyptian Book Organization is hardly available outside Egypt, and the same is the case for the *National Translation Project* of the Higher Council for Culture in Cairo. Although distribution in Egypt does not seem to be an issue, marketing outside Egypt hardly takes place outside the mechanisms of book fairs across the Arab world. An important exception in this context is the series *World of Knowledge* as well as the magazine *ath-thaqafa al-'alamiya* of the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, as distributors and sales points for fifteen Arab countries as well as for the United States and the United Kingdom are indicated in detail in a list printed at the end of each book. This allows also the purchase of previous publications of the series for the period going back to 1991 through local distribution offices. Other translation projects of smaller scale again face the general distribution obstacles; the works translated with support of the French Center for Culture and Cooperation in Cairo usually appear in Egyptian publishing houses that in turn assume the role of distributors as well. The same is the case for the Arab Organization for Translation that basically co-operates with publishing houses for the entire chain of editing, printing, and marketing. Distribution schemes here are only as strong as the capacities of individual publishing houses contracted to carry out the publication of a translation. An alternative instrument was developed by the Arab Cultural Center, a publishing house that was founded in Casablanca in 1958 and that opened a branch in Beirut in 1978 in order to improve both production and distribution. This constitutes an important experience in regional publishing, as the exchange between the Maghreb and the Arab East is still limited; the geographical stretch of the Arab Cultural Center is so far the only example of a sustainable publishing activity of regional character, if one deduces Arab off-shore publishing based in Europe. In fact, this mechanism has led to marketing and distribution agreements between the Moroccan publishing houses; *Editions Le Fennec*, a publishing house in Casablanca that produces Arabic and French language books co-operates with the Arab Cultural Center for the distribution of its publications in the Arab East.

7.5. Electronic Commerce

Electronic Commerce has only very recently become an issue for the marketing and distribution of books in the Arab world, as overall commercial transactions via the Internet have remained limited so far. Two factors are considered to determine this situation, which is firstly the low degree of Internet penetration in the region and secondly underdeveloped online payment facilities, in particular through the use of credit cards. Behind these immediate reasons there is, of course, a variety of factors that needs to be taken into account.

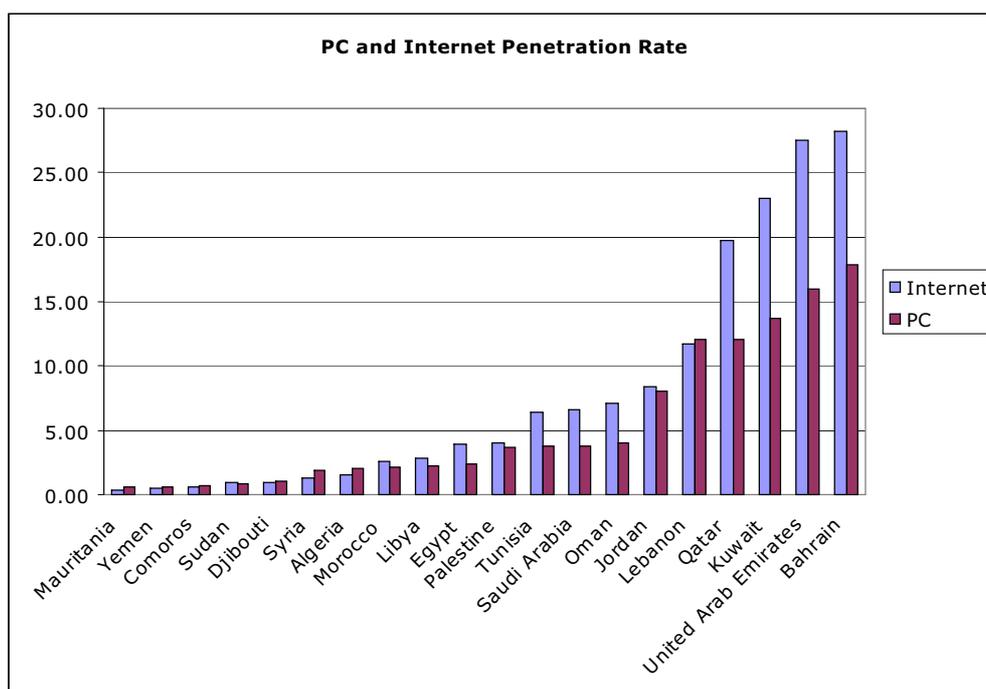
The relatively weak use of the Internet is to a large extent due to the limited basic access to personal computers in the region, which is, of course, a major condition for the spread of the Internet. This situation is influenced by economic factors; comparatively low income levels as well as unequal income distribution make it difficult for large segments of Arab societies to afford a personal computer and to cover connectivity and maintenance fees (which partly explains the success of Internet cafes in the Arab world). Likewise, educational issues are behind a rather limited use of personal computers and subsequently the Internet, as high illiteracy rates prevail in some countries of the region. In addition to this, English continues to be a condition for mastering hardware and software, and deficits in foreign language proficiency therefore continue to limit access to the Internet, despite an increase in Arabic language content.

The data compiled by the International Telecommunications Union for 2003 indicate that the Arab Gulf states have the highest penetration rate for personal computers (as percentage of total population) and are by far advanced vis-à-vis notably the more populous countries of the lower income category, such as Egypt, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen, where the rate oscillates between roughly one and two percent only.

Country	PCs in % of Population
Comoros	0.58
Sudan	0.61
Yemen	0.74
Algeria	0.77
Mauritania	1.08
Syria	1.94
Morocco	1.99
Djibouti	2.17
Egypt	2.19
Libya	2.34
Palestine	3.62
Oman	3.74
Jordan	3.75
Tunisia	4.05
Lebanon	8.05
United Arab Emirates	11.99
Kuwait	12.06
Saudi Arabia	13.67
Bahrain	15.92
Qatar	17.82

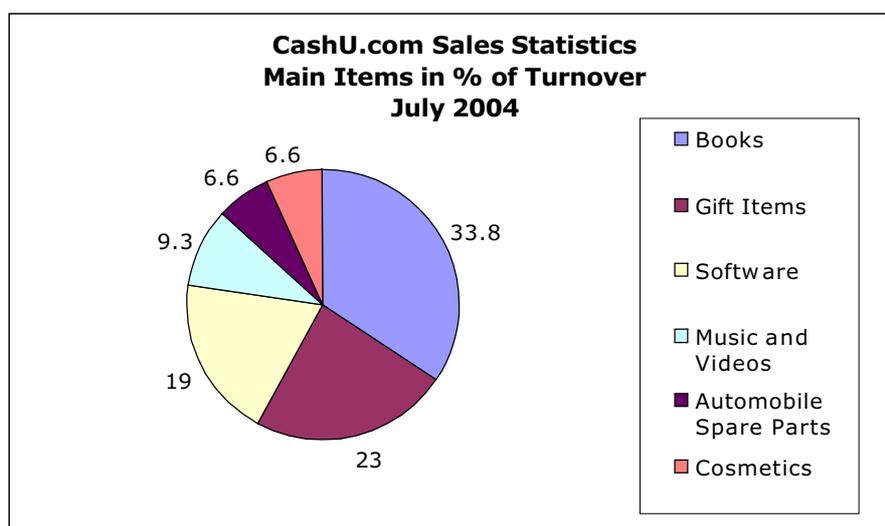
Source: International Telecommunications Union (May 2004). Data for Iraq and Somalia are not available.

However, the entire Arab world has – since the late 1990s – consistently shown high growth rates in the ICT sector, and given the inadequate data collection throughout the region, the available statistics may give a distorted picture. This seems, for example, to be the case of the data available at this stage for Jordan, Tunisia, and Lebanon. The same can be said about the rate of Internet users in Arab countries, that regularly exceeds the rate of PC users with exceptions regarding some low-income countries (Mauritania, Yemen, Comoros, Djibouti) as well as a country like Syria, where access to the Internet has so far been a highly politicized issue. In general, the rate of Internet users is constantly increasing, and in particular for urban areas much higher access rates to the Internet can safely be assumed.



Source: International Telecommunications Union (May 2004). Data for Iraq and Somalia are not available.

With the increasing use of information and communication technology in the Arab countries, electronic commerce is set to gain importance, as the issue of inadequate online payment facilities has been partly resolved with the introduction of alternative Internet payment systems, of which cashU.com runs the leading payment device (cashU Card). Marketed throughout the region since July 2002 by maktoob.com, a company running an Arab Internet portal and an online community of some 3.5 million members based in Amman, Jordan, the card is paid for in advance (in values ranging from 10 to 300 USD or local equivalent) and allows purchasing on the Internet by circumventing the issues of credit facilities that most people in the region do not have (as only a small number of consumers in Arab countries have bank accounts) or do not want to use (for reasons of transaction security). CashU.com distributes its prepaid cards to consumers through Internet cafes, stationeries, post offices, and an express mail service (Aramex); in February 2004, its clients base was made up of some 10,000 users and 200 merchants, who are targeted by cashU.com to add the online payment facility to their websites. According to company information, the growth rate stands at about 1,000 subscribers and 40 online retailers per month, and the transaction volume of the first year of operation amounted to over 1 million USD. While this figure may be modest, it is worth noticing that books top the list of items traded with cashU.com payment.



Source: Compilation based on company information

There are currently some 18 online bookstores using the cashU card, of which most are Arab and three are major international companies (amazon.com; barnesandnoble.com; krause.com). However, sales of Arab companies in the book sector so far account for only 20 percent of books purchased through cashU.com, while the three international companies have a share of around 80 percent in the purchase of books by users of cashU.com. The financial volume of trade in books on the Internet therefore seems to favor foreign language books, not publications in Arabic. However, Arabic books are in general less expensive than international publications; therefore, the ratio of 20:80 in terms of financial transactions does not necessarily translate into the same relationship with regard to the absolute figure of titles purchased online. What the figures do show is that reading in foreign languages remains an important feature of reading (or at least purchasing) habits and may reflect a deficit in Arabic language books.

It should be noted that recent development of electronic commerce in books has taken place in a situation where delivery problems, custom regulations and censorship issues still pose obstacles. Delivery by normal surface and air mail – state-run in all Arab countries – may be cheaper but can take anything from 4 to 10 weeks. In contrast, the preferred private express mail (Aramex) delivers within 2 to 7 working days but is, of course, more expensive. Custom practices hamper cross-border trade as well, not only in

terms of custom fees but also regarding time consuming and often tiring procedures. Censorship finally remains an important issue, as a book that is permissible in one country may be banned in the country of destination; it is highly likely that a book not supposed to enter a given country be confiscated rather than being returned to the online bookseller, with the consumer taking the financial risk. Online bookstores therefore regularly warn that they cannot be held responsible for censorship systems in the country of destination.

7.6. Electronic Publishing

While electronic commerce in books has – albeit at a low level – gradually improved in recent years, electronic publishing has not yet become a tangible issue for Arab publishers. There are some twenty publishing houses with an online presence, but electronic publishing has so far been extremely limited in quantity and not user friendly in terms of quality. This situation does not seem to be related to software problems. According to company information, some publishing houses are currently considering adding e-books to their products, but it does not seem that this shift is imminent. Likewise, the three major online bookstores (gargoor.com, neelwafurat.com, e-kotob.com) do not offer any electronic publications.

In contrast, some Arab regional organizations have started making their publications available online, for example the Arabization Co-ordination Bureau in Rabat, whose Series of Unified Dictionaries has only poorly circulated in print across the Arab world. Likewise, ALECSO in Tunis is planning to go into electronic publishing. For institutions that basically follow not-for-profit policies, Internet based publications are a more timely and a less expensive alternative to hardcopies.

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