AL-HIJRAH. ARABIC, ITALIAN, AND ENGLISH MIGRATION TERMINOLOGY IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE[1]

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This paper discusses, from a qualitative and quantitative corpus-based perspective, the features and challenges in comparable terminology in the field of migration in Arabic, Italian, and English. More specifically, it examines terminology related to the migration process, migration agents and socially related issues such as marriage and adoption, taking into account linguistic, social, and cultural obstacles in identifying suitable translation candidates when applying European law to languages that do not share similar juridical frameworks and social practices. The aim of the paper is to identify common linguistic issues and their root causes and to present best practices for adequately covering of this terminological area.

Keywords: migration, lexicon, translation, Italian, English, Arabic.

АЛ-ХИЏРА. АРАПСКА, ИТАЛИЈАНСКА И АНГЛИСКА ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЈА ОД ОБЛАСТА НА МИГРАЦИЈАТА ВО СПОРЕДБЕНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА[2]

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Овој труд ги разгледува, од квалитативна и од квантитативна перспектива, заснована врз корпус, карактеристиките и предизвиците на споредбената терминологија од областа на миграцијата, на арапски, на италијански и на англиски јазик. Посебен акцент се става на терминологијата што се однесува на миграцискиот процес, на субјектите вклучени во миграцијата, како и на општествено релевантните области, како што се бракот и посвојувањето, земајќи ги предвид лингвистичките, општествените и културните пречки што се појавуваат при утврдувањето соодветни преводни еквиваленти, во контекст на примената на европското законодавство на јазици коишто не поседуваат слични правни системи и општествени практики. Целта на студијата е да ги идентификува заедничките лингвистички потешкотии и нивните изворни причини, и да предложи најдобри практики за сеопфатно покривање на оваа терминолошка област.

Клучни зборови: миграција, лексикон, превод, италијански јазик, англиски јазик, арапски јазик.

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[2] Овој труд е замислен и развиен преку колективната соработка на сите автори, вклучени во проектот Language on the Fly, под раководство на Изабела Кјари. Авторите заеднички придонесоа за дизајнот и за имплементацијата на истражувањето, како и при анализата на неговите резултати. Поглавјата §1, §2.2, §2.4, §3.2 и §4 се напишани од Изабела Кјари; поглавјата §2.1 и §2.3 од Алма Салем; поглавјето §3.1 од Маха Бадер.

1 Migration terminology in a translation perspective

Migration is a phenomenon that has always characterized human communities. Terminology associated with migration can vary deeply depending on the specificities of the phenomenon in different areas and of the administrative and legislative framework they are inserted into. The need for a closer examination of the interlinguistic aspects conveyed by migration terminology emerges particularly at the international level, where analyses often concentrate exclusively on European languages and rarely include a thorough comparison between the terminology of countries that are *targets* of migration and those that are *sources* of migration (Chiari 2021; Chiari, Bader, Salem and Squillante 2021). The present article is part of a broader research project aimed at building a comprehensive glossary of migration terminology within the European Union, both at institutional and country level. The project begins with European cases, and its first prototype focuses on the Italian management of migration. Its objective is to provide explanations and glosses for the key terms used in Italian migration management, encompassing the EU administrative and legal framework, the Italian national framework, and the concrete practices implemented at regional and local level. As part of this study, particular attention has been given to identifying core migration-related terms in Arabic, one of the most significant languages of migration to Europe over the past fifteen years. To this end, we examined Arabic corpus data alongside Italian and EU-level terminology, evaluating possible translation equivalents and semantic correspondences. Since parallel multilingual EU materials including Arabic are not available, the comparative analysis has been conducted using Italian as the primary reference language, with English serving exclusively as a glossing tool.

This paper therefore concentrates on issues related to the interpretation and translation of migration terminology, highlighting structural, cultural, and social differences between the Italian–EU context and Arabic-speaking contexts. It does not aim to provide a full lexicographical or etymological account of Arabic terms; rather, it focuses on present-day usage and the challenges that arise in contemporary migration management and multilingual communication within the European Union.

Central aspects in this respect are: polysemy of the migration lexicon that is also connected with common language usages that are not shared in technical-scientific contexts; divergences in social practices and their relative legislative background in countries that are distant from a social, religious, cultural and administrative point of view. Thus, the migration lexicon is particularly stratified and far from technical terminological fields that tend toward greater monosemy. In the following paragraphs we will examine some significant examples among keywords in the field of migration that pose challenges in translation and that show how languages are confronted with the complexity of the underlying systems that need to be connected. Translating from Arabic into English or Italian can be a challenging task, especially in the context of migration. As the translator must be fully aware and fully informed about the cultural or religious differences among the speakers of these languages and what these differences may be reflected on the legal position regarding the topic of migration (Lounes Cherif 2012; Tex 2016; Mahmoudi 2019).

2 Al-Hijrah and other words directly connected to the migration process

2.1 Al-Hijrah and its family

Migration has always been of great importance to the people of the Middle East. It is not by mere chance that the Islamic calendar is based on the date of the Hijra, the migration of the Prophet

Mohammed from Mecca to Madinah in the year 622. The Hijri year is a lunar year that starts with the month called Muharram and ends with the month called Dhu al-Hijja.

According to *Lisān al-ʿArab* dictionary, the word هجرة comes from the word هَجَرَ [h-ǧ-r] *haǧar,* and *al-haǧr* is the opposite of 'staying in contact with someone'. [*Al-hiǧra*] الهجرة means 'leaving one's land to reside in another', while المُهاجِرُونَ [*al-muhāǧirūn*] refers to those who migrated with the prophet Mohammed. *Al-muhāǧirūn* were called "immigrants" because they left the homes in which they lived and were raised, heading to a new land that was not theirs and where they had no relatives nor business; basically, anyone who leaves his home to reside in another country is an immigrant *muhāǧir*. *Lisan Al-Arab* quotes Al-Azhari (an Arab lexicographer and grammarian of Arabic): the origin of the word المهاجرة [*al-muhāǧara*] is related to the Bedouin migration from the desert to the city.

In *Tāǧ al-luġa wa ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabiyya* dictionary, the meaning of the word هَجَرَ [h-ǧ-r] *haǧara* is the same as in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, while the word تهجير [*Tahǧir*] refers to forcibly displacing people and obligating them to leave their land, home, and country.

It is worth noting that there's a difference between the meanings of the words هَجَّرَ [*haǧǧra*] and تهجير [*Tahǧir*] in classic dictionaries and their contemporary meanings. [*Haǧǧra*] هَجَّرَ in the classic dictionaries such as *Lisān al-ʿArab* and *Tāǧ al-luġa wa ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabiyya* means 'walking under the burning sun'. In contemporary usage, however, the term – as mentioned above – refers to the forcible displacement of people and the obligation imposed on them to leave their homes, land, and country.

We can draw another example of how the meaning can change over time, such as the word اغْتَرَبَ [*iġtaraba*]. In classic dictionaries the word means 'to marry a foreign woman', that is, a woman not related to you. In contemporary usage, however, it means "to live in a foreign country", one that is not your native country.

The base word for migration is هجرةً [*hiǧra*], but before concentrating on its derivations, it is worth mentioning the word المَهجَر [*al-mahǧar*], which refers to the place to which a person leaves their home. It is usually used for the Syrian and Lebanese immigrants who left their countries at the beginning of the last century to settle in North and South American countries and in Canada, where they established Arab communities and subsequently developed their own culture and literary production. This is called أدَب المَهجَر [*adab al-mahǧar*] – the literature of al-Mahjar – a literary movement that expresses feelings of solitude and nostalgia for the homeland and contributed to the creation of an Arab literary school of thought, one of whose most famous pioneers was Gibran Khalil Gibran. Migration is therefore not only the movement of people from one country to another, but also a movement of language and culture.

The root for the Arabic verb هَجَرَ [*hajara*] means both 'to migrate' and 'to abandon'. In order to express the verb 'to migrate' or 'to immigrate' in Arabic, we need the derived form هَاجَرَ [*hāǧara*], which expresses an extended act of leaving, thus migration. While in Italian we can use three verbs to express the idea of leaving one's country (*migrare, emigrare, immigrare*), in Arabic we use only the nominal form to express the three cases, followed by an adjective: هجرة وافدة [*hiǧra wāfida*] 'immigration', هجرة مغادرة [*hiǧra muġādira*] 'emigration'.

2.2 Terms for 'migration': connotations in a large corpus of Arabic

Before presenting the corpus-based observations, it is useful to clarify that the analytical approach adopted in the following section concerns only the Arabic language. The aim is not to offer a comparative or translation-oriented analysis, but rather to identify the most recurrent connotations and semantic tendencies of the migration-related terms within Arabic itself. This focus is nevertheless framed within the broader lexicographic work developed by (Chiari 2021, Chiari, Bader, Salem and Squillante 2021), where Arabic terminology is aligned with the Italian terminology used in migration management practices in Italy. For this reason, the study uses three

languages with different functions: Arabic for the lexical items under analysis; Italian for the first translation in line with the migration-management prototype; and English, which is provided solely as a gloss for non-Italian readers. When the discussion concerns only Arabic terms and their lexical properties, Arabic is accompanied by English glosses; when the perspective becomes comparable, it refers specifically to the Arabic–Italian axis, with English remaining a descriptive aid.

Connotations of the Arabic terms of migration vary significantly as can be observed in corpora[3]. The corpus is a general huge web corpus of Arabic composed of more than 7 and a half billion words. The data represented are only the raw frequencies, but the extraction primarily considers the association score in the Word Sketch (Arts, Belinkov, Habash, Kilgarriff and Suchomel 2014; Belinkov, Habash, Kilgarriff, Ordan, Roth and Suchomel 2013). Thus, even in cases where we observe low frequency, the association score can be very high, indicating a strong preference and connection between the two related forms. The association score used is logDice wich determines how typical (or how strong) the collocation is: "A high score means that the collocate is often found together with the node and at the same time there are not very many other nodes that the collocate combines with or it does not combine with them too frequently. A low score means that the collocate likes to combine with very many other words" (Sketch Engine 2021). For reasons of synthesis, we have chosen to observe only the relationship between the noun and its modifiers.

If we view the use of the word هِجرَة [*hiğra*] in ArTenTen (87,748 occurrences) we can find as modifiers nouns, participles, and adjectives. Of course, the most common use of the word is connected to Mohammad هِجرَة الرَّسُول [*hiğrat al-Rasūl*] 'migration of the prophet' (2,231 occurrences, score 2.8)[4], which, although with a high frequency, has a medium-high score of association. Further uses are connected to the general meaning of population movement. The stronger collocate is هِجرَة مُعاكِسَة [*hiğra muʿākisa*] (511, 5.6), 'reverse migration' (in some cases 'return migration') with also a variant هِجرَة عَكسِيَّة [*hiğra ʿaksiyya*] (419, 5.1). This kind of migration can involve migrants of the previous generation returning to the country of origin to create businesses in their field of acquired expertise or for migration from urban to rural areas. Also a common modifier is هِجرَة الرّيف, [*hiğrat al-rīf*] 'rural migration' (643, 4.0) or هِجرَة الأريَاف [*hiğrat al-aryāf*] (110, 3.0), literally the 'migration of the countryside/countrysides' هِجرَة رِيفِيَّة [*hiğra rīfiyya*] (36, 0.8), connected to هِجرَة الفَلَّاحِين, [*hiğrat al-fallāḥīn*] 'peasants' migration' (320, 3.3). More generally there is a reference of the 'migration of population' هِجرَة سُكَّانِيَّة, [*hiğra sukkāniyya*] (79, 3.0). Also, as previously stated, the term is used to portray endemic 'migration of Arab tribes' as in هِجرَة القَبَائِل العَرَبِيَّة, [*hiğrat al-qabāʾil al-ʿarabiyya*] (444, 2.5) also to refer to nomadism.

At very high collocational score we find the terms previously mentioned: هِجرَة قَسرِيَّة, [*hiğra qasriyya*] 'forced migration' (289, 6.8), هِجرَة جَماعِيَّة, [*hiğra ğamaʿiyya*], 'mass migration' (1,157, 5.3), and هِجرَة طَوعِيَّة[*hiğra ṭawʿiyya*] 'voluntary migration' (83, 5.1). Migration is also connected to its reasons and the features of its agents as in هِجرَة العَمَالَة المَاهِرَة [*hiğrat al-ʿamāla al-māhira*] 'skilled migration' (74, 5.0) or هجرة العمالة المُدَرَّبة [*hiğrat al-ʿamāla al-mudarraba*] 'migration of skilled labour' (35, 2.6) and هِجرَة اليَد العَامِلَة [*hiğrat al-yad al-ʿāmila*] 'labour migration, migration of labour' (525, 2.5) in Arabic literally 'migration of the working hand'.

Migration is also qualified by quantity as in هِجرَة كَثِيفَة [*hiğra katīfa*] 'intense, heavy migration, mass migration' (181, 4.3) or هِجرَة مُكَثَّفة [*hiğra mukattafa*] (134, 2.6) or هِجرَة كَثِيفَة [*hiğra katīfa*] (29, 2.2); and by timing as in هِجرَة مَوسِمِيَّة [*hiğra mawsimiyya*] 'seasonal migration', هِجرَة مُؤَقَّتَة [*hiğra muʾaqqata*] 'temporary migration' (182, 3.0), هِجرَة دَائِمَة [*hiğra dāʾima*] 'permanent migration' (254,

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2.7), هِجرَة مُستَمِرَّة [*hiğra tadrīğiyya*] 'gradual migration, progressive migration' (13, 1.8), هِجرَة تَدريجيَّة
[*hiğra mustamirra*] 'constant migration' (135, 1.0); and also qualified by space as in هِجرَة دَاخِلِيَّة
[*hiğra dāḫiliyya*] 'internal migration' (387, 2.9).

Migration is further defined by the modality and legality of the phenomenon as in هِجرَة شَرعِيَّة
[*hiğra šarʿiyya*] 'legal migration, regular migration' and هِجرَة غَير شَرعِيَّة [*hiğra ġayr šarʿiyya*]
migrazione illegale, immigrazione illegale, immigrazione clandestina 'illegal migration, illegal
immigration' (together 720, 2.7). As it can be observed both in Italian and English, depending on
the use and connotations, there is a variation in usage mainly between *immigrazione* 'immigration'
and *migrazione* 'migration', whereas in Arabic, the term is primarily associated with another
perspective – that of those leaving the country (thus corresponding to *emigrazione* 'emigration').
This ambiguity, already mentioned in the previous paragraph, also concerns the terms of agency,
which will be discussed in the next section.

Table 1. Terms and occurrences in ArTenTen 2012

Terms	*Occurrences in ArTenTen*
هِجرَة hiğra	87,748
هِجرَة الرَّسُول hiğrat al-rasūl	2,231
هِجرَة مُعاكِسَة hiğra muʿākisa	511
هِجرَة عَكْسِيَّة hiğra ʿaksiyya	419
هِجرَة الرِّيف hiğrat al-rīf	643
هِجرَة الأرياف hiğrat al-aryāf	110
هِجرَة رِيفِيَّة hiğra rīfiyya	36
هِجرَة الفَلَّاحِين hiğrat al-fallāḥīn	320
هِجرَة سُكَّانِيَّة hiğra sukkāniyya	79
هِجرَة القَبَائِل العَرَبِيَّة hiğrat al-qabāʾil al-ʿarabiyya	444
هِجرَة قَسْرِيَّة hiğra qasriyya	289
هِجرَة جَماعِيَّة hiğra ğamāʿiyya	1,157
هِجرَة طَوْعِيَّة hiğra ṭawʿiyya	83
هِجرَة العَمَالَة المَاهِرَة hiğrat al-ʿamāla al-māhira	74
هِجرَة العَمَالَة المُدَرَّبَة hiğrat al-ʿamāla al-mudarraba	35
هِجرَة اليَد العَامِلَة hiğrat al-yad al-ʿāmila	525
هِجرَة كَثِيفَة hiğra katīfa	181
هِجرَة مُكَثَّفَة hiğra mukattafa	134
هِجرَة مُؤَقَّتَة hiğra muʾaqqata	182
هِجرَة دَائِمَة hiğra dāʾima	254
هِجرَة تَدْريجِيَّة hiğra tadrīğiyya	13
هِجرَة مُسْتَمِرَّة hiğra mustamirra	135
هِجرَة دَاخِلِيَّة hiğra dāḫiliyya	387
هِجرَة شَرْعِيَّة hiğra šarʿiyya / هِجرَة غَير شَرْعِيَّة hiğra ġayr šarʿiyya	720

2.3 Agentive terms: مُهاجِر, مُهَجَّر, مُغادِر مُهاجِر, وَافِد مُهاجِر, مُغتَرِب, نازِح, مَنفِيّ, لاجِئ

In what follows, we discuss a selection of Arabic terms relating to migration and the corresponding
terminology as attested in Italian corpora collected for the *Language on the Flight* project. The aim
is to highlight the challenges posed by current migration management practices in Europe,
particularly in Italy, when attempting to identify Arabic equivalents, whose semantic connotations
often differ significantly. This section therefore begins by outlining the relevant Arabic terminology

and its lexical properties, before considering comparable Italian notions used in migration management. English is employed solely as a glossing language to facilitate comprehension.

The previous distinction between هِجرَة وَافِدَة [*hiğra wāfida*] 'immigration' and هِجرَة مُغادِرَة [*hiğra muğādira*] 'emigration' is also reflected in the agent nouns in Italian, such as *migrante* 'migrant', *immigrato* 'immigrant', and *emigrante* 'emigrant'. It is worth noting that in Italian the second term is predominantly used in the past participle form, to underline that the process has been completed, while in English it is used in the present participle as the other two forms. For the agent noun in Arabic, it is necessary to add a modifier to specify the direction, as in مُهاجِر مُغادِر [*muhāğir muğādir*] to express the equivalent of *emigrante* 'emigrant' (someone who leaves their own country), and مُهاجِر وافِد [*muhāğir wāfid*] to express *immigrato* 'immigrant' (someone who arrives in another country), thus reversing the perspective of the previous term. According to Abdel Malek Sayad (Sayad 2002), the migrant is an emigrant before becoming an immigrant; considering only one aspect of the migratory experience means looking at only half of the experience.

Another word used for the concept "migrant" is مُغتَرب [*muğtarib*]. It has a different root from the form mentioned before and comes from the verb غَرَبَ [*ğaraba*], which means 'to go far' but also 'to become absent' or 'sunset'. Since the sun sets in the west, it also refers to 'the West'. Another vocalization of the same verb, غَرُبَ [*ğaruba*], means 'to be a foreigner' or 'to be strange'. A third morphological form of the same verb, اِغتَرَبَ [*iğtaraba*], means 'to go abroad' or 'to be far from one's own country', and from this verb we obtain the noun مُغتَرب [*muğtarib*], a citizen from a different country who lives abroad.

The act of migrating is seen as voluntary if expressed in Arabic by the agent noun مُهاجِر [*muhāğir*], the active participle of the verb هاجَرَ [*hāğara*]. While in Italian we can distinguish between *migrazione volontaria* 'spontaneous migration' هِجرَة تِلقائِيَّة [*hiğra tilqā'iyya*]) and *migrazione economica* 'economic migration' هِجرَة اِقتِصادِيَّة [*hiğra iqtiṣādiyya*]); migration can also be *migrazione forzata* 'forced migration' (قَسرِيَّة هِجرَة [*hiğra qasriyya*]). In Arabic, this can be expressed by different verbal forms derived from هَجَرَ [*hağara*] / هَجَّرَ [*hağğara*] 'to make somebody migrate'. Forced migration can also be referred to as تَهجير [*tahğīr*] (*tahjīr*). When referring to a systematic policy to displace inhabitants of a place, we can use the term تَهجير [*tahğīr*] or 'displacement policy', تَ سِياسَة تَهجير [*siyāsat tahğīr*]. Besides مُهاجِر [*muhāğir*], which refers to a voluntary migrant, there is also the passive participle مُهَجَّر [*muhağğar*], based on the verb هَجَّرَ [*hağğara*], meaning 'someone who has been forced to migrate'.

The term مُهَجَّر [*muhağğar*] can be distinguished from the Italian *sfollato* 'displaced', نازِح [*nāziḥ*], which in Arabic is the active participle of the verb نَزَحَ [*nazaḥa*] 'to leave a place, emigrate'. نازِح [*nāziḥ*] refers to a person forced to leave their place because of war, natural calamities, or a state of emergency, but without implying a systematic displacement. The deverbal noun نُزوح [*nuzūḥ*] corresponds to the Italian *sfollamento* (rarely used in this sense) 'displacement'.

Another term in the series of agent nouns is مَنفِيّ [*manfiyy*], 'exiled', from the verb نَفَى [*nafā*] 'to exclude, expel, exile, deport'. مَنفِيّ [*manfiyy*] is a passive participle and refers to a person who is exiled or expelled from a country.

To the previous terms describing the movement from one country to another, we must add another set: لاجِئ [*lāği'*] "refugee" (not completely corresponding to the formal Italian *richiedente asilo* 'asylum seeker', who has submitted an asylum request but has not yet been granted refugee status). The term *asylum seeker* in Arabic is another active participle of the verb لَجَأَ [*lağa'a*], 'to seek refuge, shelter, or support'. The refugee لاجِئ [*lāği'*] is someone who seeks refuge in a country other then their homeland, escaping persecution, war, or calamities; although this choice is almost always compelled, it is still considered a choice.

The deverbal noun لُجُوء [*luğū'*] means 'asylum' and appears in expressions such as 'right of asylum', حَقّ اللُّجُوء [*ḥaqq al-luğū'*]. The term مَلجَأ [*malğa'*] means 'a place granting protection', a

shelter, but it is not used for countries. For countries, the expression بَلَد اللُّجُوء [*balad al-luğū'*] 'country of asylum' is used.

2.4 Agentive terms: connotations in a large corpus of Arabic

In order to identify the connotations associated with the previously mentioned Arabic terms, the following analysis relies exclusively on an Arabic corpus, focusing on the lexical and semantic elements linked to this domain. This approach makes it possible to determine which features are most relevant for establishing corresponding translation equivalents within European Union terminology, using Italian as the primary reference language and English solely as a gloss.

The Arabic term مُهَاجِر [*muhāğir*] (27,125 occurrences) is used with modifiers such as شَرعِيّ [*šar'iyy*] *immigrato regolare* 'legal immigrant, legal migrant' (54 occurrences) or مُهَاجِر غَير شَرعِيّ [*muhāğir ġayr šar'iyy*] *immigrato clandestino* 'illegal immigrant, illegal migrant' (803 occurrences). With the modifier قَانُونِيّ [*qānūniyy*] 'legal', we observe مُهَاجِر قَانُونِيّ [*muhāğir qānūniyy*] (6 occurrences) and مُهَاجِر غَير قَانُونِيّ [*muhāğir ġayr qānūniyy*] (55 occurrences) 'illegal immigrant'. In 22 occurrences, migrants are described as "blocked" (in a region, city, or country) مُهَاجِرين عَالِقِين [*muhāğirīn 'āliqīn*]. As can be observed: (a) when not determined, مُهَاجِر [*muhāğir*] is used in the sense of *immigrato* 'immigrant', even though the form is neutral; (b) most occurrences appear with negative modifiers rather than positive ones.

The case of مُغتَرب [*muġtarib*] (26,540 occurrences), on the contrary, is not associated with evaluative modifiers but only factual and neutral ones, such as specifications of country of origin (Syrian, Jordanian, Somali, etc.).

The term مُهَجَّر [*muhağğar*] (4,900 occurrences) is often associated with the modifier داخِلِيًّا [*dāḫiliyyan*], thus corresponding to the Italian *sfollato interno* 'internally displaced' (29 occurrences). Other modifiers include مَسجُون [*masğūn*] 'detained, imprisoned' (7 occurrences) and مُهَجَّر قَسرِيّ [*muhağğar qasriyy*] 'forced migrant' (6 occurrences). The general use of مُهَجَّر [*muhağğar*] is therefore more factual and descriptive and less evaluative.

The term نَازح [*nāziḥ*] 'displaced person' (6,484 occurrences) is associated with the idea of being stuck, trapped, or blocked, as in نَازحين عَالِقين [*nāziḥīn 'āliqīn*] (10 occurrences, score 3.3), or dead, as in نَازحين مُوَزَّعِين [*nāziḥīn muwazza'īn*] (37 occurrences, score 2.9), or internally displaced, as in نَازح داخِلِيًّا [*nāziḥ dāḫiliyyan*] (53 occurrences, score 1.2). Thus, نَازح [*nāziḥ*] resembles مُهَاجِر [*muhāğir*] only in the meaning of being blocked, and otherwise resembles مُهَجَّر [*muhağğar*] in that it is used in a more factual and non-evaluative way.

The word مَنفِيّ [*manfiyy*] 'exiled' (6,272 occurrences) is often مَنفِيّ اِختِيارِيّ [*manfiyy iḫtiyāriyy*] (7 occurrences, score 1.5) 'self-imposed exile', corresponding to Italian *esilio volontario*. The term is also frequent in the Islamic tradition, as in مَنفِيّ شَرعًا [*manfiyy šar'an*] 'religiously banned/excluded', referring to things, actions, concepts, or people (125 occurrences, score 1.5). The word is used in a neutral way, not associated with force but with self-determination, while in the Islamic sense it refers to being banned or excluded from the umma.

The last term in the series is لَاجِئ [*lāği'*] (24,975 occurrences), meaning 'refugee'. It is used with adjectives specifying place of origin (Somali, Afghan, Iraqi, Sudanese) and with determinations such as 'registered refugees' لَاجِئين مُسَجَّلِين [*lāği'īn musağğalīn*] (157 occurrences, score 5.8), 'blocked' لَاجِئين عَالِقِين [*lāği'īn 'āliqīn*] (28 occurrences, score 4.5), or 'dead' / 'distributed' لَاجِئين مُوَزَّعِين [*lāği'īn muwazza'īn*] (60 occurrences, score 3.6). It is also often accompanied by the participle مُشَرَّدِين [*mušarradīn*], which can also be used as a noun meaning 'displaced people', as in لَاجِئين وَمُشَرَّدِين [*lāği'īn wa mušarradīn*] 'refugees and displaced persons'. Among common modifiers are لَاجِئ سِيَاسِيّ [*lāği' siyāsiyy*] 'political refugee' (682 occurrences, score 2.1), لَاجِئ بِيئِيّ [*lāği' bī'iyy*] 'environmental refugee' (11 occurrences, score 1.6), and لَاجِئ مُعتَرَف بِهِ [*lāği' mu'taraf bihi*] 'recognized refugee' (35 occurrences, score 1.6). A refugee granted humanitarian status is لَاجِئ إِنسَانِيّ

[*lāği' insāniyy*] (29 occurrences, score 0.1). The literal equivalent of 'asylum seeker' *richiedente asilo* in Arabic is مُلتَمِس لُجُوء [*multamis luğū'*], while لَاجِئ [*lāği'*] is used as the general term 'refugee'.

Table 2. Agentive terms and occurrences in ArTenTen 2012

Terms of Agent and Modifiers	*Occurrences in ArTenTen*
مُهَاجِر muhāği	27,125
مُهَاجِر شَرعِيّ modifier of muhājir) [šarʿiyy	54
مُهَاجِر غَير شَرعِيّ muhāğir ġayr šarʿiyy	803
مُهَاجِر قَانُونِيّ[muhāğir qānūniyy	6
مُهَاجِر غَير قَانُونِيّ muhāğir ġayr qānūniyy	55
مُهَاجِرين عَالِقين muhāğirīn ʿāliqīn	22
مُغتَرِب muġtarib	26,54
مُهَجَّر muhağğar	4,9
مُهَجَّر دَاخِلِيًّا muhağğar dāḫiliyyan	29
مُهَجَّر مَسجُون muhağğar masğūn	7
مُهَجَّر قَسرِيّ muhağğar qasriyy	6
نَازِح nāziḥ	6,484
نَازِحِين عالِقين nāziḥīn ʿāliqīn	10
نَازِحِين مُوَزَّعِين nāziḥīn muwazzaʿīn	37
نَازِح دَاخِلِيًّا nāziḥ dāḫiliyyan	53
مَنفِيّ manfiy[	6,272
مَنفِيّ اختِيارِيّ manfiyy iḫtiyāriyy	7
مَنفِيّ شَرعًا manfiyy šarʿa[	125
لَاجِئ lāği'	24,975
لَاجِئين مُسَجَّلِين lāği'īn musağğalīn	157
لَاجِئين عَالِقين lāği'īn ʿāliqin	28
لَاجِئين مُوَزَّعِين lāği'īn muwazzaʿīn	60
لَاجِئ سِيَاسِيّ lāği' siyāsiyy	682
لَاجِئ بِيئِيّ lāği' bī'iyy	11
لَاجِئ مُعتَرَف بِهِ lāği' muʿtaraf bihi	35
لَاجِئ إنسَانِيّ lāği' insāniyy	29

3 Marriage and adoption in the migration context

3.1 Marriage and adoption in a translation perspective

When dealing with migration from Arabic-speaking countries to the European Union, the translation of terms related to family law, particularly those concerning marriage and adoption, must also take into account the legal, administrative, and cultural adaptations that migrants are required to navigate upon arrival. These domains differ substantially across legal systems, and such divergences generate concrete challenges both for translation and for the application of the rule of law. Concepts such as marriage, its legal validity, its religious meaning, and the admissibility or non-admissibility of adoption vary widely between countries of origin and EU member states. As a result, linguistic mediation must address not only lexical equivalence but also the underlying institutional and cultural frameworks, which shape the way these terms are understood and implemented.

It is of great importance, when speaking about migration, to discuss marriage in light of the migratory context and to consider how challenging it is to translate the various terms related to

marriage within this context. Furthermore, this issue poses another challenge – namely, the cultural one – which cannot be ignored; it requires solid knowledge of major social issues such as marriage and its related religious dimensions. The same applies to the case of adoption. Both topics are highly present and crucial in Arab social and migratory contexts.

As mentioned previously, in order to provide the best translation into Arabic, we must take into account the cultural and religious aspects of social issues such as marriage and adoption. Regarding marriage, Arab culture views it as a sacred relationship between a man and a woman. Such a relationship should be built on mutual understanding and a certain degree of equality from social, religious, and even financial points of view, between the two individuals. Both families are also expected to reflect this kind of equality and similarity from cultural, social, and financial perspectives. Thus, terms such as "marriage of convenience" represent a real challenge for the translator, as the foundation of marriage in Arab culture is fundamentally opposed to what this term means. In addition, it is necessary to analyse the new shades of Arab culture that have developed in migratory societies.

There is also a set of terms which, when translated from Italian into Arabic, pose problems related to cultural and social issues. Translating social terminology and concepts is particularly challenging, as it often involves differences in the cultural and religious contexts between Italian or English and Arabic.

One of these terms is *matrimonio fittizio* 'marriage of convenience, paper marriage, fake marriage, sham marriage, fictitious marriage'. In Arabic, we can choose between two different forms: زَوَاج صُورِيّ [*zawāǧ ṣūriyy*], literally 'false marriage'; صُورِيّ [*ṣūriyy*] comes from صُورَة [*ṣūra*] 'image/picture'. This means that the couple is married only on paper. The second translation is زَوَاج الـمَصْلَحَة [*zawāǧ al-maṣlaḥa*], literally 'marriage of interest'. Culturally, this phenomenon was unfamiliar in Arab societies; however, it is spreading among Arab communities in Europe and the USA as a means of obtaining residence permits. The second translation is more common, especially in spoken Arabic in many Arab countries, because one may marry someone for the benefit of wealth or money, or for interests such as obtaining European or American citizenship through marriage.

Regarding marriage, we observe another case: *matrimonio forzato* 'forced marriage', which in Arabic has two possible translations: زَوَاج بِالإِكْرَاه [*zawāǧ bil-ikrāh*] and زَوَاج قَسْرِيّ [*zawāǧ qasriyy*]. The first translation comes from the verb كَرِهَ [*kariha*], meaning 'to detest' or 'to hate'. The common English equivalent is 'forced marriage', while in Italian we also find expressions such as *matrimonio contro la propria volontà* 'marriage against one's will' and *matrimonio riparatore* 'shotgun marriage'.

The issue of adoption التبني [*al-tabannī*] is important from legal, social, and cultural points of view in Arab communities. The term *adozione fittizia* 'adoption of convenience' can be translated as التبني الصوري [*al-tabannī al-ṣūriyy*] or التبني لأغراض الحصول على الإقامة [*al-tabannī li-aġrāḍ al-ḥuṣūl 'alā al-iqāma*]. This translation results in an explanation rather than a short equivalent, since it is necessary to provide context: it means 'adoption for the sake of obtaining a residence permit'. The word التبني [*al-tabannī*] is also translated as احتضان [*iḥtiḍān*], which literally means 'to embrace', and is used to refer to taking in a child for the purpose of obtaining a residence permit.

However, the most common and culturally/religiously accepted translation is كفالة [*kafāla*] 'legal fostering of a child' or 'sponsorship'. The word originates from كَفَلَ [*kafala*], which means 'to provide basic needs such as food and care for a child'. The cultural and Islamic context makes adoption التبني [*al-tabannī*] less common among Muslim Arabs, because the implications of the terms 'adoption' التبني [*al-tabannī*] and 'legal fostering' كفالة [*kafāla*] are significantly and legally different.

Adoption التبني [*al-tabannī*] involves giving the child the adoptive father's name and family name, and the child may fully inherit from the adoptive father. Under كفالة [*kafāla*], the caregiver fully takes care of the child as if he or she were biological; however, the child cannot inherit from the caregiver and cannot take caregiver's full name (first and family name). The child may be given either the first name or the family name, but not both together. Christian Arab families, however,

may fully adopt children and grant them their full names, allowing them to inherit. It is worth noting that even under كفالة [*kafāla*], an adopted child can still inherit if a will is written.

The closest translation of "adoption" in the European legal context is التبني [*al-tabannī*], in which a child can be given the father's full name and can inherit. In some Arab countries, an adopted child may be given the father's name and family name to protect the child's basic rights when the biological parents are unknown, especially in societies that place great value on family lineage and biological descent.

3.2 Socially related issues in corpora

In the corpus used, the difference between زَوَاج صُوريّ [*zawāğ ṣūriyy*] and زَوَاج الْمَصْلَحَة [*zawāğ al-maṣlaḥa*] is connected to the circumstances and contexts in which they occur. Moreover, the first expression focuses on the document itself, while the second focuses on the motivation behind the registration of the document. زَوَاج صُوريّ [*zawāğ ṣūriyy*] occurs in 106 cases, most of which are related to the acquisition of a residence permit. زَوَاج الْمَصْلَحَة [*zawāğ al-maṣlaḥa*] has 342 occurrences in the corpus, and its meaning is broader than the migration context. The multiword expression is used in a general sense, as opposed to *love marriage* (هل هو زواج عن حب أم زواج مصلحة؟ [*hal huwa zawāğ 'an ḥubb am zawāğ maṣlaḥa?*] 'Is it a matter of love or interest?'). The "interest" can be of different kinds and can also be used metaphorically, as in زواج المصلحة بين القوى الدولية والقوى السياسية [*zawāğ al-maṣlaḥa bayna al-quwā al-duwaliyya wa al-quwā al-siyāsiyya* 'marriage of convenience between international powers and political forces', or in زواج المصلحة الأميركي – الإيراني [*zawāğ al-maṣlaḥa al-amrīkiyy – al-īrāniyy*] 'the marriage of convenience between the United States and Iran'. Thus, the general meaning is connected to any kind of interest, mainly financial.

The case of marriage to obtain residence or citizenship is attested in the corpus in a few examples, such as إنه زواج مصلحة لأن الزواج من متطلبات منح الجنسية للأبناء [*innahu zawāğ maṣlaḥa li'anna al-zawāğ min mutaṭallabāt manḥ al-ğinsiyya li-l-abnā'*] 'marriage of convenience because marriage is a requirement for granting citizenship to children'. In this case, the Italian term *matrimonio fittizio* ('fake marriage') is closer to the first form in Arabic than to the second, since, although it focuses on the procedure of marriage being based on false premises, it is more consistently used to represent cases in which the reason for the document stipulation is to obtain the right to stay in another country.

For the expressions of 'forced marriage', the corpus is less exhaustive: زواج بالإكراه [*zawāğ bil-ikrāh*] does not produce any results.

Regarding *adozione*, 'adoption', التبني [*al-tabannī*], the corpus yields 19,266 results. There is a close connection with the Islamic concept of كفالة [*kafāla*] as a procedure to protect children, but not as a form of legal adoption. Thus, corpora confirm the lack of correspondence between *adozione* and التبني [*al-tabannī*]. Probably stemming from this difference, corpora do not attest the expression التبني الصوري [*al-tabannī al-ṣūriyy*] 'false adoption'. Since most legal consequences of adoption are not envisaged either in التبني [*al-tabannī*] or in كفالة [*kafāla*], there is no linguistic need to express the notion of an adoption implemented for reasons of obtaining residence, and the translation equivalent appears only in translation contexts and does not occur in authentic Arabic corpora.

4 Conclusions

The examples discussed in this paper provide an overview of the challenges involved in translating legal and migration terms as portrayed in official documents produced within the context of European Union documentation regarding migration issues. Migration terminology is deeply rooted in each country's practices and is often not comparable, particularly regarding the cultural and social implications that each term carries. Even though—in some cases—accepted translations do exist,

the use of these multiword terms does not take into account connotations that can differ significantly when a term is translated into another language. Thus, Arabic translations of Italian terms (or their English equivalents) may add meanings to the translation that are often incompatible with the original sense conveyed in the source language and may fail to transmit the intended institutional framework, potentially generating misunderstandings with dangerous consequences for the lives of migrants entering Europe. A deeper investigation is needed to make explicit the cultural differences that strongly affect migration terminology and to make this knowledge accessible to cultural mediators, legislators, and all those involved in protecting individual rights within the context of migration.

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