

## Unseen Policies in News Translation: A Study Investigating News Translators' Practices and Strategies

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the institutional practices of translating news articles by focusing on ideological representations and editorial guidelines. It also investigates the steps adopted by news translators when transferring news articles with a slight focus on Arabic. The study uses surveys in a form of interviews and questionnaire, which were delivered to a range of journalists and news editors involved in translating news. Their input is qualitatively analysed to find out how translation operates and how ideologies impinge upon translation products in media institutions. The paper enhances our understanding of the role of translators who work within ideologically-driven institutions. In particular, it reveals that the editorial policies of news institutions are not always stated and can at times be hidden. Moreover, a news item can be intentionally altered and news sources can be blurred, so that readers are kept unaware that the target text is a translation from various sources.

### INTRODUCTION

News consumers rarely think of the news they read as a result of translation from another language, but the reality is that many news articles are rewritten using material from other source texts written in other languages. News is frequently shaped by media institutions to target particular audiences. It is 'tailored' to gratify the needs of the media organisation's consumers (Williams, 2004 as cited in Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009, p. 139). Translation is usually meant to provide readers of another language or culture with a representation of what originally occurred in the source language or culture. The fact that ideas may be distorted or even manipulated is a subject that has been under scrutiny by translation scholars for a long time. Yet, this study explores the role of journalistic institution in translation and whether editorial policies affect the translation products. For instance, the role of translation is usually a pivotal component of the daily job of journalists, and translation is not conceived as a separate journalistic task but rather a skill of news report writing – substantial previous work in translation studies has dealt with this topic, in translation studies including van Doorslaer (2010b); van Doorslaer (2012); Valdeón (2015a); Davier and van Doorslaer (2018); Davier (2019).

Indeed, research in news translation is gaining ground in Translation Studies. McLaughlin (2015) mentions that the interest in news translation among translation studies

scholars began in the mid- 2000s. This is when Cortés Zaborras and Hernández Guerrero edited the volume *La traducción periodística* (2005) and the Warwick project took place on news translation (Conway and Bassnett, 2006). Later in 2009, two books exploring the nature of news translation appeared. Bielsa and Bassnett offered a detail account on the process of news translation in international organisations and Hernández Guerrero shed light on the complexities of news translation in Spanish newspapers (Valdeón, 2012, p. 851). The second edition of *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* included an entry focusing on "news gathering and dissemination" and the *Handbook of Translation Studies* contained a section titled "journalism and translation" (ibid). More works have been published subsequently, including the special issue of *Across Languages and Cultures* in 2010 and the *Meta* edition devoted to 'Journalism and Translation' in 2012 that was guest-edited by Valdeón (McLaughlin, 2015). News translation is different from other types of translations in that the concept of a source text transferred into a target text rarely exists (van Doorslaer, 2012). In the process of writing news reports, a translated text is "dismembered" and then re-joined in other different news products (Orengo, 2005, p. 170). It is observable that two media institutions may diverge when reporting the same event even if their news stories are a result of translation from the same news wire. Thus, this paper asks the questions: (1) what are the

practices (or steps) applied in the translation of journalistic texts? (2) to what extent is the role of news translator significant in the manipulation of news texts (representation of reality) for a particular news agency? The answers to these questions are reached by looking both at the macro-practices of news translators from their institutions' points of view, and at the role that translators play, as social actors, in the manipulation of news items.

Translators are, indeed, "social actors in their societies and are active members of social or political institutions. They observe norms and reproduce materials in compliance with the internalised constraints of their community" (Ethelb, 2016, p. 110). Vermeer (2000, p. 299) states that "one translates as a result of either one's own initiative or someone else's: in both cases, that is, one acts in accordance with a 'commission'". He defines 'commission' as the instructions given to the translator by an initiator or a commissioner. The role of the commissioner can be intertwined with the role of the news editor or the 'gatekeeping' process of what is newsworthy (cf. Whitney and Becker, 1982).

### IDEOLOGY DRIVES NEWS PRODUCTION

News texts "are not a value-free reflection of facts" (Fowler, 1991, p. 4) because "anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position" (1991, p. 10). As a result, news texts not conforming to the official ideology of the political party in power may be made inaccessible to the public of a given society. According to Palmer (2009, p. 187) and Valdeón (2015a, p. 635), this inaccessibility is an effect of government intervention in "non-Western democracies" or news networks that are at the mercy of certain political organisations. The ideological reflection in the production of news texts could be completely blurred by the senior staff at a news institution by means of "planning and guiding" or "directing and assisting" (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, in Merkle, 2010, p.18). These are, in fact, censorial procedures that are aiming at mediating the outputs of translated texts. Valdeón (2007, p. 103), based on Robert de Beaugrande's definition of mediation, states that negative mediation, as opposed to positive mediation, means that text producers might be influenced by "their own ideological background" or the institutions they work for.

Taking the concept of mediation to news production, Schaffner (2020) argues that it is more of transfer rather than the traditional concepts of source text (ST) vs. target text (TT). She continues that journalists "perform mediation activities" in order to "cross linguistic and cultural boundaries". In reporting a protest, for example, the first person involved is the field reporter. News organisations geographically locate field reports all over the world, specifically, in conflict regions (Participant 4). Field reports need to find answers to five questions: how? why? where? when? And who? The editor then checks these answers presented in a report and decides whether to publish it or not. Publishing the news story will depend on the editor-in-chief's approval by judging its importance (Participant 4) beyond any linguistic or cultural hindrances.

Of course, the question that always attracts the attention of researchers is what makes a story important or

newsworthy. This was raised in the interviews and the answer was that a news story should be informative and novel. The selection of news by news producers is one of the most important processes in news production – combined with how this selection is presented because it tells people what to read (Tewksburg and Rittenburg, 2012, p. 85). According to Fairclough (1992, 2003, p. 37), what is excluded from a news story representing a particular reality weighs exactly as much as what is included. Fowler (1991) distinguishes between selection and representation: in short, media providers are more likely to select the same event to report, but the way they represent it may differ dramatically. This is usually decided by the editorial guidelines of the news organisation. Three out of four journalists interviewed in this research agree that the editorial guidelines of news organisations are the determining factors in selection and representation of news items. For instance, Participant 4 explains that "primarily, the reasons are political, if the news doesn't conform to the news organisation's policy. Of course, any journalistic institution has a certain set policy that all its staff should follow, meaning this is a red line". The most pertinent element to the argument here is that a news translator cannot make decisions about what to translate. They are instructed to translate texts and also to choose the terminology their news organisation adopts, as seen from the interviews in this study. The selection of news is explored in research on news media under the concept of news values (Bell, 1991).

### TRANSLATING NEWS

Translation in news contexts is present from the first step of the news-gathering process and it involves a number of alterations. A news text that is transposed from one language into another goes through processes of editing, rewriting, re-shaping and repackaging to be set into a new context. van Doorslaer (2012, p. 1047) argues that source text – target text relationship rarely exists in news translation. Kang (2007, p. 221) invites the concept of "entextualization" where the original text functions as subordination in producing news reports. Davier (2019, p. 70) and Doorslaer (2010a) discuss the concept of "multiplication" of source texts that are used at times to produce a news story. This source-target text overlap is also elaborated on by Schöffner (2020). Schöffner (2012) brings in the concept of "multi-authored nature" in journalistic work (citation in Davier, 2019, p. 70). Further, Davier and Doorslaer (2018, p. 242) talk about the collapse of the source text and unique author in news organisations. This is because a news story involves several people in its production. According to Davier and Doorslaer, news agencies could be the only place that challenges the definitions of translation due to "the multi-source and the multi-author situation" (2018, 242). An argument that is also presented by Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) and Schöffner (2012, p. 875). Valdeón (2015b) contributes that the sources of news are "unstable" as news articles "are transformed in many ways for a new audience: different journalistic conventions and ideological interests are bound to affect the final product" (p. 451). This results in no clear distinction between the

source and target texts (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009, pp. 13-14). The process of news translation entails certain measures of transformation on the source text for the purpose of producing news-style content. This means that the concept of faithfulness in journalism is not attributed to the target text, but rather to the sequential narration of events in the target text (*ibid*).

Events in journalistic texts, according to Bielsa and Bassnett (*ibid*), could be reported in three main generic types. The first one is the informative genre, which relates to the factual description of events. In this genre, the author's style is minimized and textual alterations on the target text maximally allowed. Most of the news agencies adopt this type of genre, making their news texts informative. The second type is the interpretive genre, which relates to issues such as reportage. In this type, information is selected, interpreted and then narrated by a journalist. The third type is the argumentative genre, which relates to authors who are not journalists, but columnists or writers of online opinion articles. This type is different from the informative genre in the sense that the author's style is to a certain degree maintained.

The informative texts of news reporting are the ones which arguably incur maximal textual alterations in their lexical and syntactic structures. Changes occurring on news texts when transformed for other audiences are usually described as "transediting" (Valdeón, 2014, p. 51). Stetting (1989) coined the term 'transediting' to reflect on the activity of translating and editing. Valdeón (2014, p. 52) states that Stetting's term manifests "the complex relationship between news production and translation." Indeed, this is because the process of news reporting involves information gathering, selecting, translating, reformulating, repositioning and editing (van Doorslaer, 2010, p. 181). It lets us that translation in news, in particular, is more than a linguistic activity as it exhibits other cultural and "conceptual difficulties (Valdeón, 2014, p. 52). While the "transediting" activity describes the process of producing a news texts from various sources (Davier, 2019, p. 70). van Doorslaer (2012, p. 1049) introduces the term "journalator", which is more on the role played by journalists when using translation to reformulate news stories. van Doorslaer further argues that the term "journalator" touches "the journalist's work" in the newsroom and indicates the "interventionist attitude" of the active media professionals in the newsrooms. Orengo (2005, p. 185) states that journalists may relinquish ideas that are present in source texts "in order to meet readers' expectation and ideological views" and this is where the term "journalator" parallels with "characteristics of a translator, a communicator, a manipulator, a mediator and a transmitter" (van Doorslaer, 2012, p. 1050). Translators' actions in media outlets impinge upon the process of translating and producing news. Such influence and textual intervention are highlighted in Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler's interesting definition of translation:

Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In

these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politician, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture. (2002, p. xxi)

Translation, therefore, is much about deliberate selection of certain vocabulary or what a journalist wants to include or exclude in their translation. In doing so, they allow all kinds of textual interventions and manipulation of the target text. Translation is an essential activity in the production of news and it is inseparable from other journalistic practices. Schäffner (2012, p. 874) contends that news translation is "very complex" and the translated texts "are adapted to suit the target audience, the in-house style, and/or ideological positions of the newspaper." Translation in news stories, therefore, can be distorted by the ideological interests of institutions (Ethelb, 2019, p. 53). A good example of this is the distortion of a speech given by the former president of Egypt Mohamed Morsi at the 16<sup>th</sup> summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran. The speech has been altered by the Iranian interpreter to make it ideologically fit with the discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Dehghan (2012) reports that as President Morsi was attacking the actions of the Syrian regime, the interpreter replaced the word Syria with Bahrain. Furthermore, whenever Morsi says the term the 'Arab Spring', the interpreter translates it into 'al-Sahwa al-Islamiya' (Islamic Awakening). This could, therefore, indicate that a new reality has been constructed in the minds of the public which was created by the Iranian interpreter. Indeed, translation is crucial in the activities of news networks in terms of production and distribution of news. Loupaki (2010) argues that news producers are arguably making textual alterations which lead to different representations.

Bani (2006, p. 35) advocates that "translated news contributes to the shaping of readers' opinions, actively influencing the way they perceive the world around them". In this sense, it could be argued that news translation is a key textual tool in representing events and people differently to other audiences. This is because news is a social and cultural platform which gives rise to issues concerning the public in general.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section offers a brief account of the analytical framework as well as the qualitative approaches to data analysis. It presents the research context and research procedures by spotlighting the research instruments – a questionnaire and interviews – and how they have been conducted.

### Research Participants

This paper uses a questionnaire and interviews to investigate the nature of news translation, practices of translating journalistic texts, and the role of translators in representing reality. The participants, who are deeply involved in news translation, were "experiential experts on the phenomenon being studied" (Rudestam and Newton, 2007, p. 107). The questionnaire and interview participants had to meet the following criteria:



- Are, or have been, involved in writing news articles by the use of translation in a media organisation.
- Are, or have been, editors-in-chief engaged in editing articles of journalists.
- For interviews, the working languages are English and Arabic and they are working for Arab media organisations.
- The primary genre of participants' translation work is in political issues and affairs, rather than economics, sports, or other genres. The results of this work are intended to be a part of a larger contribution investigating political news translation.

With these criteria in mind, a convenience sampling technique has been adopted because the response rate among news translators and journalists was relatively low. The participants' confidentiality and anonymity have been strictly maintained throughout the research. It was made clear to them that participation in the questionnaire and the interview was voluntary and they were allowed to withdraw at any point, which did in fact happen multiple times. In addition to the 17 who ultimately participated in the questionnaire, five individuals had first expressed their willingness to take part, but when they received the questionnaire, they expressed their intention not to continue. The audio-recorded voices of the interviews and the questionnaire responses were electronically secured in an encrypted folder. Participants were given a Participant Information Sheet along with the questionnaire, and prior to the interview, which included a detailed explanation of the study, in terms of objectives, aims, scope and risks.

### **The Instruments of Research (Questionnaire & Interviews)**

The interviews and questionnaire offer access to the thoughts and views of media professionals towards translation, and identification of how translation as a process is conceived and conducted (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013). Moreover, Williams and Chesterman (2002, p. 24) contend that in a study that investigates an institution, as well as the procedures and policies within that institution, it is better to use a combination of a questionnaire and interviews. Such variety will broaden the understanding of the "working process of translators" (ibid). The questionnaire offers a wider understanding of the translation strategies adopted by news translators from different regional and international news agencies.

#### **Interviews**

108 interview invitations were sent via LinkedIn to individual news translators, journalists involved in translation and news writing, news editors and editors-in-chief asking them to take part in an interview. The target population was staff in the following four media organisations: Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya, the BBC and Sky News Arabia. Even with this means of communication, only four out of the 108 invitations were in fact interviewed, though 8 other individuals did express some interest. The four interviews were conducted on Skype, with audio recorded in a secure manner.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the process of news translation and how journalists behave, the interviews tended to follow a conversational course focusing on the key relevant questions. The interviewees were helpful and outgoing during the sessions and understood the nature of the questions, which were ideology-oriented. However, in some cases, they refrained from giving answers, or when asked an ideologically-driven question, they tended to digress. To keep the interview running smoothly, the interviewees were asked for their input for particular questions and we moved on to a less ideological question, sometimes, related to the strategies used by news translators.

Note that initially, fieldwork visits were planned for Aljazeera and Al-Arabiya. However, on-site visits faced obstacles such as responsiveness to emails, interviewer nationality and passport restrictions, and lack of interest from most of the media outlets contacted. Other organisations, such as the BBC, Sky News Arabia and France 24 were also contacted for on-site visits due to their popularity in the region, but were all unresponsive.

#### **Questionnaire**

In all, 55 individual news translators were approached directly through LinkedIn and asked to participate in the questionnaire. From this pool, 22 expressed their desire to take part. At this stage, the questionnaire, along with the consent form and the Participant Information Sheet were sent to them. As a result, 17 of them responded to the questionnaire and signed the consent form. The questionnaire was an internet-mediated one, delivered via email or social media.

As was mentioned earlier, this convenience sampling technique was used throughout the collection of the data in the questionnaire and interviews because the accessibility of one specific group of journalists or news translators was challenging. For example, a participation request was sent via email to 27 international, regional and local news organisations, including Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya, Sky News Arabiya, BBC Arabic, Reuters, Al-Hurra and many other local and regional outlets in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Libya and Algeria. However, since no response from these media outlets was received, this study ultimately contacted individuals separately instead of contacting organisations and heads of news divisions and departments.

#### **Subject population**

The questionnaire participants in this study were from a number of international countries with a slight focus on the Arab world. They were or are deeply involved in news translation and journalistic work. They work for Middle East Online, Al-Madina Multimedia Center, Libyan News Agency, Asia Digital Media Group, Libyan Herald, Italintermedia, Asahi Shimbun, Radio Lumen, Sky News Arabia, BBC, AFP, Al-Akhbar Daily News, and Jordan News. Table 1 provides more details on the respondents in the questionnaire:

In terms of the interview, participants were from four media organisations: one from Aljazeera, one from the BBC and two from Sky News Arabia. They are working for these

**Table 1.** Information and background of research participants

Respondents	Years of experience	Qualifications	Training
Respondent-1	1	MS Business English	Reuters
Respondent-2	12	MA in Finance	AP
Respondent-3	1	BA English Language	-
Respondent-4	35	MA Translation	-
Respondent-5	7	BA English Language	Asia Digital Media Group
Respondent-6	10	BA English Literature	-
Respondent-7	7	MA Conference Interpreting	-
Respondent-8	6	BA English Literature	-
Respondent-9	5	MA Translation	Translation Bureau
Respondent-10	9	MA Translation & Interpreting	-
Respondent-11	10	Economics	-
Respondent-12	20	MA English Language	-
Respondent-13	18	BA	AFP
Respondent-14	8	MA	-
Respondent-15	10	BA English Language	-
Respondent-16	4	BA English Language & Literature	-
Respondent-17	10	MA Political Science	Al-Akhbar Daily News

media outlets, at the time of the study, and have considerable experience in translating news. They met the criteria set for the target population. One of them is a sub-chief editor who has news translators working under his supervision. In addition to translation, they were involved in other forms of journalistic work, which made their contributions to this research valuable.

### Data Analysis

The questionnaires and the interviews were mainly designed to trace the path of the translation process. They focused more specifically on the ideologies of the translators in carrying out a translation or rewriting task to produce a news story. The questionnaires and the interviews were analysed qualitatively, so that the contributions of the participants were brought to the analysis where appropriate. For instance, some questions were designed to survey the participants' opinions on topics such as deletion, selection of news stories, influences of media institutions and the like.

The analysis focused on the practices and behaviours of news translators and the perception of the survey participants, which were extracted from the qualitative instruments applied in this study. Mautner (2008, p. 48) states that it is crucial for a researcher investigating data from media sources to have "a thorough understanding of the conditions" surrounding the phenomenon under investigation to underpin his/her analysis. A prerequisite is that I have been following the Arab Spring uprisings since the beginning, and has been thinking to put it within an academic research project framework. Indeed, the understanding of politics in the Arab world has helped the analysis process. Thus, the analysis section presents the steps news translators carry out, the degree of ideological or conventional alterations, and the editorial policy they have to adhere to.

### IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES IN TRANSLATING NEWS

This section is devoted to analysis of the survey. Its main focus is to examine the ideological representations, behaviours and practices of news translators. Views of survey participants are brought in to enrich the discussion and make the argument as cogent as possible. Kress (1988, p. 7) identifies the ideological and institutional practices of promoting or undermining discourses by stating that "discourses are systematically-organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution". This is critical as it substantiates the fact that media institutions' output is usually centred around their own ideologies or values rather than on the facts of events. It supports the argument that media organisations use discourses to usurp power by controlling and monitoring, as well as manipulating their translation output.

#### Translation Steps

Among the aims of this study is to identify the process or steps of translating news. In this respect, a direct question in the questionnaire was asked on how news translators interact with a news text for translation. Participants of the questionnaire, who were also asked if they could describe the process of translating news from start to finish, offered a range of responses about their techniques of translating a news text. Table 2 shows these steps:

#### Ideological Alteration Strategies

This section analyses the ideological alterations occurring to news texts as per the beliefs of journalists involved in news translation practices. Specifically, it focuses on instances of addition and deletion in news translation processes and anal-

**Table 2.** Techniques of translating a news text from start to finish

Technique	Procedure
Reading the ST carefully	Most of the respondents said that they start by reading the ST. Their answers indicate that they read the whole piece; read it twice for full understanding; study it; analyse the text while focusing on the core information; carefully read original news item.
Identifying difficulties	One respondent stated that he would ‘identify the hard words and terminologies’ before going to the following step. Two respondents would find relevant background to better understand the news item. One stated he would conduct an Internet search if necessary.
Getting the key idea	In this regard, two respondents stated they would select the most important sentences and put them in order. One respondent said the choice depends on the available space. However, another respondent said the choice should suit the news organisation’s policy.
Translating the text	Different translation techniques were surveyed, ranging from translating paragraph by paragraph, translating 70-80% of it, translating the whole text, rewriting a summary, translating it to fit the target audience with neither misunderstandings nor exaggerations, translating the text with possible adaptations of length and adjustments of style, rewriting it using (as much as possible) the same format, information ranking. One respondent commented that ‘the translator should avoid using difficult or culture-related expressions as much as s/he can, but if the text necessitates, s/he should explain such expressions’.
Reviewing the translated text	Most of those surveyed review, proofread, revise, and check the accuracy of the translated text. However, one respondent stated that he would repeat his editing step a second time. Another similar technique to this was adhering ‘to the ST context’, as stated by one respondent.
Approval	A final revision and approval are done by a senior editor or a higher-ranking official in the desk.
Publishing	Incorporating the translated text into a larger block of texts to achieve a broad picture on an issue.

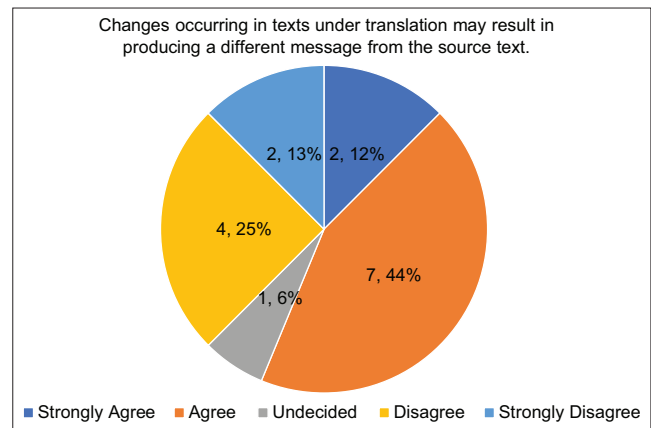
yses them through the concept of ideology. It also focuses on the substitution of ideological items in news articles, and the ideological selectivity of news texts.

For example, textual alterations of target texts may lead to other textual representations in the target culture. The participants’ opinions in relation to changes/alterations occurring in news text after translation showed that news translators find it acceptable to alter meaning even if it deviates from the source text (Figure 1).

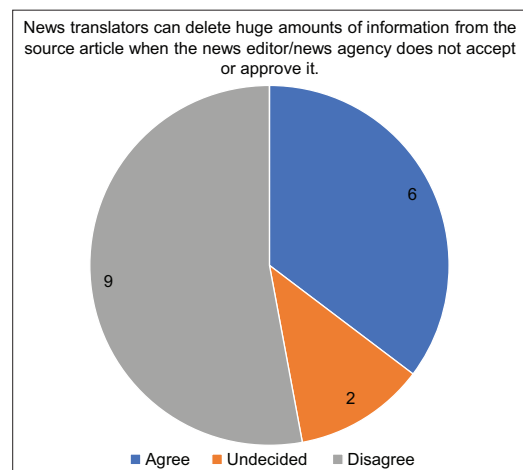
One of the strategies that news translators occasionally resort to is the deletion of segments, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. In fact, it seems to act as a springboard for news translators and editors to take away sensitive statements. Although deletion is a frequently used strategy, as shown in the data at hand, interviewees seemed to undermine its significance in their daily practices. Figure 2 shows the result of the questionnaire with regard to deletion:

However, when large portions of deletion takes place; news translators, journalists, and editors seem to attribute the use of this strategy to non-ideological reasons. For instance, Participant 1 in the interview states that “I delete the unimportant information [and] any repeated information”. This may be the case in news stories that do not involve conflicts, yet when news stories are pertinent to contested rivalries that led to bloodshed and fierce confrontation, the decision of deleting unimportant information could be somehow subjective in terms of audience’s preferences.

A survey participant, giving a brief account of translating news, stated that “I [...] translate 70-80% of each one [news article] just removing details or cross references to old texts”. This might reflect another viewpoint of Participant



**Figure 1.** News translators’ views on making changes to source texts



**Figure 2.** News translators’ can-do attitude towards deletion<sup>1</sup>

3 in the interviews, who stated that “It is not about what I delete; it is about what I take from these articles [...]. So, if I have an article about five hundred words, I might take only one hundred words from it”.<sup>2</sup>

Translation Studies stresses the importance of context. Kang (2007, p. 21) states that translators as text producers make “translation-related decisions” based on their training and experience within the context of the institution they work for. In other words, they draw conclusions about what to omit in a particular news story from the discursive practices they have been exposed to, and then interpret events within this realm. Consequently, the selection of items and the representation of events will inevitably be influenced by the news institution. Therefore, translation behaviour is arguably regulated by discursive practices and the agenda or the ideology of the news institution in question.

News institutions can manipulatively mediate news by means of substituting ideological preferences. In interviews, translators/editors agreed on the fact that news organisations, including those they work for, possess ideologies and agenda. Participant 4, for example, said that “indeed news organisations and newspapers follow certain policies and ideologies, which serve their interests or the interests of the governments behind them; national or partisan interests”. Participant 1 expressed a similar idea: “it is a political agenda. Yes, any channel, any news channel has an agenda”. However, they consider that this agenda does not harm the objectivity, the impartiality and the true representation of their news stories. This, therefore, would imply that the ideological agenda that news organisations embed in their news stories is usually not recognised by the public.

### Ideological Selectivity

In selecting a news story, news translators usually get assigned news wires to translate. However, in some organisations where the job of the news translators is to produce news stories, they choose their own stories, which will be reviewed by a news editor at a later stage, as claimed by Participant 3 who says that “I am a journalist who can translate. So, I choose my items. I choose my stories. It is my judgment”. The selection process starts immediately, as Participant 3 continues to explain that “I read it carefully, selecting the paragraphs that I am going to translate”. In this stage, the news translator is involved in the process of ‘re-writing’ the article, trying to maintain the same vocabulary, the same format and similar flow of information. Then, the text is revised by a senior staff, the news editor or producer, who might perform radical alteration and substitution of elements. In some cases, news professionals consider the task of translation as a ‘translation plus editing’ process, under which a text may suffer massive textual changes. Figure 3 reflects the different attitudes of news translators and journalists involved in news translation:

News organisations can easily miss out unwanted ideologies in their news texts. This is done through news selection. In exploring the views of interviewees on whether there were any specifics or criteria used when selecting the news stories for translation or rewriting. Participant 1 clearly states that

it “depends on the editorial policy of the channel I work in”, and reiterates that “the criteria to select news stories is based on our editorial policy”. In a similar vein, Participant 2 explains that “the criteria also connected to politics [...] most of the Arab media, they neglect what they call or consider anti-their-attitude news”. The news institution plays a major role in selecting what is to be translated; making sure that it complies with the discourse it adopts. It is also the case that when a text is chosen for translation, it goes through a reformulation process involving translators, editors, and editors in chief acting as gatekeepers.

In response to a direct question about the media ideology and if the news networks work on spreading their ideologies, the questionnaire provided revealing information regarding the ideology of media institution, as shown in Figure 4:

Seven respondents agreed on the statement and six disagreed with it. Thus, it is likely that news institutions could work on spreading their own ideologies and crossing out unwanted ideologies in the news texts – such phenomenon is likely to be happening intentionally in some, if not all, circumstances.

The translated text seems to exhibit an ideological content that overrides the one in the source article and belies the intended messages. It is highly likely that the order of paragraphs in the same text will undergo reordering. As a matter of fact, sentences can be reshuffled and repositioned in a new order during the translation process in a manner

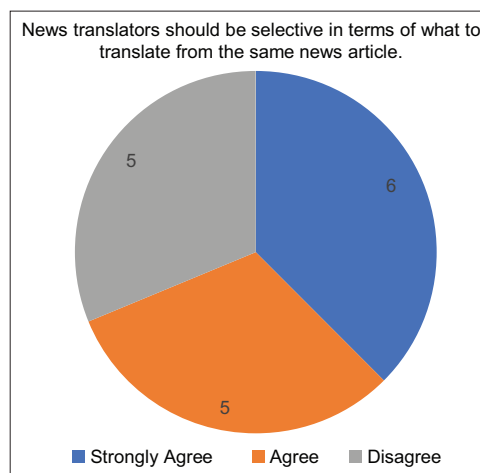


Figure 3. News translators' attitudes towards selection process

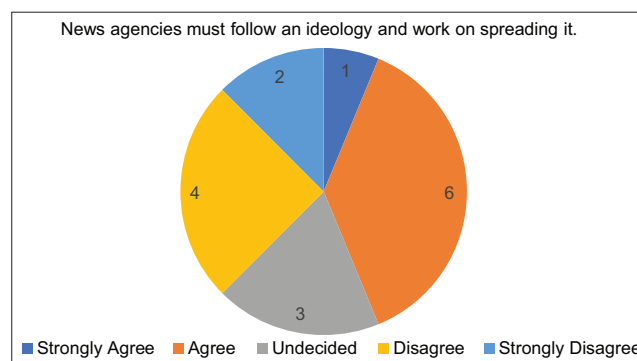


Figure 4. News translators' views on media ideology and whether news agencies aim to spread it in their products



that enables news translators to negotiate their ideological point of view. Participants were surveyed regarding their views on the reordering and re-organising of the structure of news texts. News translators seem supportive of altering the order of sentences in paragraphs and paragraphs in texts, as shown in Figure 5.

The process of producing news stories through translation entails bringing to the fore the values that are important to the news institution (Bell, 1991). The ST organisation of paragraphs is arguably done in accordance with the values of the ST news agency. It can be posited that, in translation, the TT news agency has different values and ideologies; thus, its news production would be mediated from the ST to make its values shine through its news stories.

Changing the order of paragraphs and repositioning the sentences within a paragraph is a strategy that translators in news outlets resort to in order to refocus a particular point of view – varying from political and ideological to conventional and stylistic reasons. This means that it is not the act of reparagraphing itself that is ideological, but the act of prioritising one idea over another by deciding to make it first to read by the audience. In so doing, the translator judges to reposition paragraphs to refocus their points of view. Therefore, linking reparagraphing to ideology in this context is a matter of highlighting the fact that the news institutions will always be fronting what concerns them most in a news text. This, in fact, reinforces the view that “all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose” (Hermans, 1985, p. 11). Further, not stating that a particular news article is the result of translation would raise doubts regarding the objectivity and transparency of a given news organisation.

### Ghost Policy of News Agencies

The editorial policy or guidelines of a news institution have to be rigorously followed by journalists, editors and translators. According to Participant 1, news organisations hold a monthly editorial meeting to discuss and update the policy and the list of vocabulary that a news institution should avoid using in its output. For instance, Participant 1 states

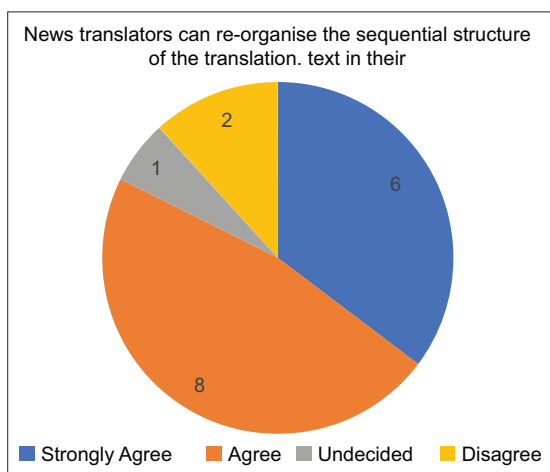


Figure 5. News translators' views on re-organising text structure

that they do not use the term ‘revolution’, they say ‘uprising’ instead. In general, if a news story conforms to the policies and the news institution it will be published, and if it does not it goes through a reformulation process to meet the output guidelines.

However, editorial policies can be divided into two types. First, there is the stated policy that can be accessed and discussed in meetings, and with senior staff. This policy is usually based on the principles and beliefs of the news institution towards humanitarian, logical or religious areas. Under this type, staff and media professionals agree with these principles as they consider them important for the objectivity and neutrality of their output. According to Participant 1, they follow the editorial guidelines, but that does not harm the objectivity in presenting and disseminating news to the public.

Second, there is the unstated or unseen policy, it is a sort of implicit policy which is not found on documents circulating in a news organisation, and not discussed in meetings. According to Participant 2, one learns it from the surroundings; it is there in the atmosphere. It is untold but felt, and news translators find themselves applying this policy even if they have not been told to do so. This policy is more political and ideological. In describing this policy, Participant 2 says that applying such policies in Arab media would result in “a systematic killing of reality in most of the news” stories that a media institution chooses to neglect or manipulate.<sup>3</sup>

Due to its invisibility, Participant 2 from Aljazeera describes this type of policy as a ghost, because you cannot touch or see it. This policy serves the interests of the news institutions and governments behind them – national, international or partisan interests. Translation under a news institution’s policy falls into the trap of being a ‘victim of politicisation’, because of the heated ‘degree of polarisation’ between media providers (Participant 2). All survey participants in this study agree that the news translator has to be acquainted with the ‘art of journalism’ and able to produce a journalistic work out of the translation. However, and most importantly to the argument of this study, Participant 4 expressed:

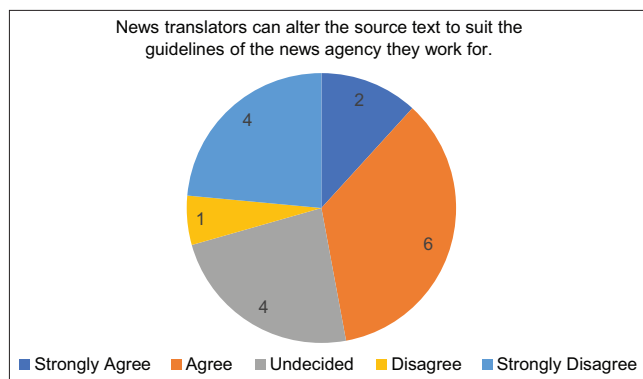
المترجم لا يختار كما يريد هو، لأن هناك سياسة معينة للمحطة وعليه رقابة من حارس البوابة...، بمعنى هو مترجم ولكن يوجد رئيس تحرير ولا يقوم بترجمة أي خبر أو أي كلمة إلا بموافقة رئيس التحرير وهو الذي يوجهه

Translation: “The translator doesn’t have a free choice, because there is a specific policy for the news organisation and he/she is censored by the gatekeeper... meaning he/she is a translator, but there is an editor-in-chief. The translator cannot translate any news or a word unless he/she has approval from the editor-in-chief, who directs him/her.”<sup>4</sup>

In a questionnaire statement regarding the change of the news text to meet the policies of the network, eight participants agreed on acquiescing to the editorial guidelines of a news organisation and five disagreed (Figure 6).

The editorial policy of any news organisation determines its output.<sup>6</sup> The primary reason for not approving news items to be disseminated is either political or ideological, according to Participant 4, who explains that there are ‘red lines’. He also offers an example about Aljazeera by saying:





**Figure 6.** News translators' views on altering source text to suit news institutions' guidelines<sup>5</sup>

الكثير من الصحف مثل الجزيرة وهي قناة قطرية في النهاية وتتنفس بنفس الحكومة القطرية غير تعاملها مع دولة أخرى وبالتالي كل شيء مسموح سيء عن الدولة الثانية فينشر. إذا هي سياسة، سياسة حكومة بالدرجة الأولى، فتوجد سياسة لكل قناة وهذا يعتبر خط أحمر لا يمكن أن يجتازه أحد.

Translation: "Many newspapers such as Aljazeera, which is a Qatari channel after all and is breathing the same air as the Qatari government and dealing with it in a different manner compared to some other countries. Therefore, everything distressing to the other country is permissible to be published. So, it is a policy, primarily a government policy. Every channel has its own policy and this is a red line not to be exceeded."<sup>7</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The resistance of media companies to engage in conversation has made it difficult to reach out to news translators and editors for interviews. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that investigating news translation is like breaking into a fortified castle, as professionals refuse to provide any insights into how translation operates in their strongholds. However, the survey results have offered an in-depth account of the behaviours and practices of news translators. The techniques and procedures presented in Table 2 in this contribution indicate that the process of news reformulation involves selection, rewriting, adaptation, reordering, and approval of news stories by editors. This in fact has clearly gained great interest in translation studies and in line with van Doorslaer's (2012) findings. However, this study by using a questionnaire offers more details of the reformulation process in which *journalators* – using van Doorslaer's term – carefully describe their news translation activities along with the stated or unstated policies in the news organisation. One important finding is the influence of editorial policies. In fact, this matches observations of earlier studies such as Bielsa and Bassnett (2009), Vuorinen (1997), and Tsai (2005). However, the most striking result to emerge from the interviews in this respect is that the editorial policy can be divided into two types. The first one is the said/seen or documented policy and the other type is the unsaid/unseen or undocumented policy.

It is concluded that the production of the TT is influenced at a very basic level by the ideological stance or the political interests of the media outlet. Further, the news audience of

the text will generally be unaware of the process that has created the news item they are reading. This implies that, to a certain degree, news organisations allow manipulation of the translation they are carrying out. This manipulation is accompanied with a denial of the translation act in news production from the start.

## END NOTES

1. This research is a part of PhD contribution that is being published in four papers. Data collection process along with survey documents had been ethically approved by University of Glasgow ethics committee and supervision team.
2. Temporal and spatial constraints are also a possible reason for taking off information believed to be unnecessary by news translators. This has been mentioned by interview and questionnaire participants.
3. In asking the participant about the criteria of selecting news for translation, he answers 'I think the criteria also connected to politics [...] most of the Arab media neglect what they call or consider anti-their-attitude news. So, let's look at Yemen nowadays, you'll find most of the Arab media – especially those supporting Saudi Arabia and the so-called Saudi Arabia Coalition – totally not mentioning anything about the civilian victims killed by the air-strikes and other types of attacks. So, you'll find news like this:  
قتل خمس وعشرين من مسلحين مليشيا الحوثي وثلاثون من قوات علي عبدالله صالح (Twenty-five Huthi militants and thirty of Ali dellik erew decrof s'helaS halludbA  
It's like this. These agencies and reporters don't mention anything about the civilian casualties. They change the definitions of who's the militia? And who is the Army? If you are with Huthi, you'll say something different. If you are supporting Hadi government, you'll say something different. That's all! Actually, it is very clearly [...] that in the Arab world there is a systematic killing of reality in most of the news'.
4. Gatekeepers are the news producers. They are over the editors in chief. They are the ones who pay close attention to the materials to be produced and examine their elements. They make sure that their products conform with the policies of the news organisations.
5. For more detail about the role of internal guidelines in shaping the output of news narrative, see Barkho (2014), who uses the BBC and Aljazeera English as case studies.
6. In her book *Arab News and Conflict*, specifically Chapter 5, Bazzi (2009, p. 131) discusses the political discourses that a news organisation adopts. These discourses are determined by the ideologies of the media and accentuated by the *editorial control* in news organisations. Bazzi takes Reuters as a case study and its policy towards Arab culture. For instance, instead of using the terms "Hezbollah terrorists" it says "Hezbollah which America and Israel accuse of terrorism".

7. See Barnard (2010) for Japanese censorship in news translating.

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