
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translation of Media Discourse: Approaches and Strategies

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| ABSTRACT

This article explores the nuanced relationship between translation and media, placing a special emphasis on the significance of language, particularly translation, in molding media discourse. This article adopts a theoretical and analytical approach, focusing on the exploration of diverse approaches and strategies applied in the translation of media discourse. The aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical frameworks and practical methodologies that underpin the translation of media discourse. In addition to the theoretical and analytical framework, this study is based on a diverse corpus of written media discourses from the websites of Al Jazeera and BBC Arabic. These media texts include headlines, articles, and news content, among other forms of communication. By examining real-world media discourses, the research investigates the various translation approaches and strategies across different media contexts. The findings show that the process of translating media discourse on the two websites entails modifying language and references to resonate with the cultural background and expectations of their specific audiences. The study, thus, contributes to the existing body of knowledge on translation studies, shedding light on the approaches and strategies inherent in the translation of media discourse.

| KEYWORDS

Translation, Media, Media Discourse, Language, Translation Strategies

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1. Introduction

As societies become increasingly interconnected, the dissemination of news, entertainment, and cultural content across linguistic boundaries necessitates a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics involved in the translation process (Mirza, 2009). Mass media, including television, function as instruments for disseminating and perpetuating ideology within society. When confronted with the same issue, media outlets often adopt divergent positions reflective of their distinct interests.

Translation, being a bridge between languages and cultures, plays a crucial role in conveying not just the literal meaning of words and sentences but also the underlying ideologies embedded in media texts (Schäffner, 2003). As news articles, television programs, films, and online content cross-linguistic boundaries, translators became a pivotal part in guaranteeing the faithful transmission of the intended message of media discourse (Bell and Candlin, 1991). In this regard, the article investigates the ways in which translation is used in mediating discourse and the different approaches adopted in the translation process.

Following the analysis of a diverse range of texts sourced from the websites of Al Jazeera Arabic and BBC Arabic, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how these influential media platforms use translation to disseminate media discourse. This aims to identify patterns of translation that exist across different media outlets. Discourse analysis emerges as a valuable tool in deciphering how information is conveyed (Gee, 2005), shedding light on the nuanced ways in which media outlets impact public opinion through the strategic use of translation. Applying discourse analysis to translated content in Arabic media allows researchers to dissect the linguistic strategies employed. By scrutinizing vocabulary, syntax, and rhetoric, analysts can uncover how

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translation choices contribute to the ideological discourse within the media landscape. This holistic approach aids in understanding the intricate interplay between language, ideology, and media representation.

The choice of reputable news sources plays a pivotal role in ensuring the reliability and objectivity of the study. This article focuses on scrutinizing media discourse related to global events from Al Jazeera and BBC, starting from January 2022. The selection of these two news outlets is justified by their established international reach, diverse perspectives, and distinct editorial stances, emphasizing the significance of their coverage during the specified timeframe. They also both share common properties. Al Jazeera, established in Qatar, has gained a reputation for its editorial autonomy and credibility, often presenting perspectives that may differ from those of Western media outlets. On the other hand, BBC, funded through the United Kingdom's television license fees, is known for its commitment to impartiality and accuracy in reporting. This allows for a nuanced analysis of media discourse translation, facilitating a deeper understanding of the strategies and approaches used in the translation and presentation of global events.

The key objectives of the article are:

- a. To investigate the approaches used in translating media discourse.
- b. To present the strategies employed by translators to maintain fidelity to the source text while accommodating cultural and ideological nuances.
- c. To evaluate the impact of translation on media discourse.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology to examine the various strategies and approaches employed in the translation of political discourse in the different chosen media outlets. Our investigation focused on an extensive observation and analysis of media news articles, derived from the news websites of Al Jazeera and BBC starting January 2022. A diverse data set of more than 50 media discourses was observed, from which 20 news articles were analysed and studied in relation to their source texts. We based the research on an analysis of these different media news articles and previous studies on the subject. The inclusion criteria prioritized studies of articles discussing significant political issues, spanning a variety of topics, to ensure a comprehensive representation of media discourse. By scrutinizing the source texts alongside their translated counterparts, we aimed to identify the different linguistic nuances and strategies used in the translation of media discourse within these media websites. The objective was to conduct a thorough study allowing for a broader exploration of the trends and patterns in the translation of media discourse. The ultimate objective is to provide translators and translation researchers with a global outlook on the different strategies employed in the translation of media discourse.

3. Language and Media discourse

Discourse is a structure of meaning produced through the use of language (Baker and Ellece, 2013). In this sense, discourse is not merely about individual words or sentences but involves the broader social and cultural context in which language is used (Renkema, 2004). Media discourse constructs meaning through the careful selection and arrangement of words, creating narratives that influence public perception. From lexical choices to syntactical structures, each linguistic element contributes to the discourse within media platforms. Discourse, in this context, refers to more than just the transmission of information; it encompasses a complex system of linguistic choices, cultural references, and rhetorical devices employed by media outlets. By understanding discourse as a structure of meaning, we delve into the subtleties of language that contribute to the creation and dissemination of ideologies within the public sphere.

Media texts have the transformative power to make events come alive for readers. Through vivid descriptions, compelling narratives, and multimedia elements, media texts create a sense of immediacy, enabling individuals to experience events vicariously (van Dijk, 1988). The use of language and imagery in media texts contributes to the emotional and cognitive engagement of the audience. The dynamics of media discourse distinguish it significantly from other textual forms, both in terms of substance and structure. These texts are organized to convey information effectively. The structural framework, as stated by van Dijk (1988), encompasses components such as the "headline and lead" forming the summary, key events, contextual background, verbal reactions, and comments. In addition, the language, framing, and presentation of information in media texts shape the way individuals construct opinions, attitudes, and beliefs, influencing also the construction of individual and collective realities.

Language serves as the lifeblood of media, facilitating the transmission of information, ideas, and narratives to diverse audiences (Fowler, 1991). Language, in this sense, is not merely a means of conveying information; it is a transformative agent that shapes how individuals perceive and engage with the world presented to them. The words chosen, the tone employed, and the narrative structures crafted within media text collectively contribute to constructing a version of reality that readers internalize. It is through

language that the events portrayed in media text become more than mere information; they become lived experiences, influencing the emotions and attitudes of the audience.

Unlike explicit messages, ideology is subtle and pervasive; shaping the way information is framed and presented. It operates in the background, exerting its influence on the construction of narratives and the selection of language. Analyzing media discourse, in this sense, "allows us to see what kinds of ideas circulate through media texts, how they are constructed, how they change over time, and when they are being challenged"(Croteau and Hoynes, 2003, p. 163). This analytical approach helps reveal the underlying ideologies and power dynamics that shape media content. In this sense, language within media discourse is not neutral but is influenced by ideology. This implies that the way information is framed and presented is subjective and tailored to serve the interests of those in power.

4. Translation of Media Discourse: Approaches and Strategies

Translators, much like journalists, are faced with the challenge of navigating the complexities of language, including its cultural nuances and ideological underpinnings. The skillful use of language in media discourse, demonstrated by journalists, extends to translators who must convey not only the words but also the connotations, nuances, and subtle shifts in meaning that may be inherent in the source text. This process becomes particularly vital when dealing with televised discourse, where the choice of words can significantly influence public perception. According to Bassnett and Lefevere (2004, p. vii):

All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulation processes of literature are exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live.

In translation, the act of rewriting becomes evident as the translator navigates linguistic and cultural gaps to convey the original text's meaning in a different language and cultural context. The translated work reflects not only the linguistic choices made by the translator but also the cultural nuances and ideological perspectives embedded in the translation process. No two languages can achieve 100% equivalence, no matter what the geographical, cultural, linguistic or historical patterns they may have in common. Editors, as outlined by Allan Bell (1991), employ various transformative practices such as deleting information, substituting words, and adjusting sentence structures to create precise and compelling stories.

Venuti (2004) introduces two translation strategies: foreignization and domestication. Foreignization preserves the distinctive "foreign" attributes of the source text, whereas domestication aims to convey the intended meaning of the source text in an idiomatic and natural style appropriate to the target language. When applied to media discourse translation, these strategies become significant tools in adapting content for diverse audiences. The nature of news reporting, with its emphasis on immediacy and clarity, necessitates adjustments to align with the preferences and cultural nuances of the target audience. The primary goal here is to ensure the comprehension of news stories by the readers of the target culture. In this context, the prevailing strategy often leans towards absolute domestication. Absolute domestication in news translation involves prioritizing fluency, readability, and cultural appropriateness over strict fidelity to the source text's foreign attributes. This strategy aims to make news stories more accessible and relatable to the target audience, employing idioms, linguistic structures, and cultural references that resonate with the readers. Roger T. Bell introduced an important distinction in Translation Studies in his *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. The distinction is made between translation as process, a product, and as a concept and was explained as the following:

- (1) A translation: the product of the process of translating (i.e. the translated text);
- (2) Translating: the process (to translate the activity rather than the tangible object);
- (3) Translation: the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process. (Bell, 1991, p.13-15)

This terminological distinction establishes a groundwork for the exploration of Translation Studies. The primary phase in scrutinizing translated media texts involves differentiating between translation as a process and a product. In accordance with this, Catford sees translation as 'the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in other languages (TL)' (Catford, 1965, p.20). He considers translation to be a process and an operation which we perform on languages.

From Will's perspective, "translation is a conscious, planned activity, performed in a controlled manner and aims at establishing communication between different cultural environments"(as cited in Sidiropoulou, 2004, p.1).

The functionalist approaches that were initiated by Vermeer (1978) see translation as an activity and action with a certain purpose. The functionalist approach, according to Schäffner (1996) 'is a kind of cover term for the research of scholars who argue that the purpose of the TT is the most important criterion in any translation' (p. 2). From this approach, translation is seen 'as a process of intercultural communication, whose end product is a text which is capable of functioning appropriately in specific situations and context of use' (Schäffner in Baker, 1998, p.3).

Translators often grapple with the challenge of preserving global themes while tailoring content to resonate with local audiences, reflecting the interconnected nature of media communication. For instance, in many cases, media outlets are influenced by political agendas, leading to potential translation bias. Translators, knowingly or unknowingly, may choose words that align with the editorial stance of the outlet. This can be observed in the framing of headlines, the selection of quotes, and the overall tone of translated content. In this regard, translators working for outlets with specific political leanings may opt for language that aligns with their editorial perspectives. For instance, the translation of politically charged terms or statements can either amplify or mitigate their impact, serving as ideological markers.

Many views consider that translators should have the ability to understand what is going in the mind of the author of the original text (Haggard and McLean, 1975), since that will help them in the transfer of the idea and the message of the ST into another language. They even go further by claiming that this is what determines the 'value of a translation' (Haggard & McLean, 1975, p. 4). Translation, in this sense, is not only a linguistic transfer between two languages but an intercultural communication. Since translation is not a mere process of transmitting elements from SL to TL that is done in a vacuum, the translators of media texts do not perform their work in a vacuum; they do it in different contexts, social and political. Hatim and Mason (1997) see that 'the translator acts in a social context and is part of that context. It is in this sense that translating is, in itself, an ideological activity' (p.146). Robinson considers translators as "those people who let their knowledge govern their behavior. And that knowledge is ideological. It is controlled by ideological norms. If you want to become a translator you must submit to the translator's submissive role, submit to being possessed by what ideological norms inform you" (cited in Calzada-Pérez, 2003, p. 7).

It is a known fact that there is no absolute equivalence between two languages, regardless of their structures or similarities. Equivalence can be a burden on the translator, and achieving it can seem an impossible task. This depends on the type of equivalence the translator aims to achieve. In political and mediated translation, equivalence is far more complicated, since different factors are included in the translational choices. Throughout the history of translation, the concept of Equivalence was present in direct and indirect ways. Different scholars presented different views on equivalence: Linguistic-oriented equivalence by Jakobson and Vinay & Darbelnet, Cultural-oriented equivalence by Nida, House, and Baker, and Catford's Taxonomy of Cultural Equivalence and Linguistic equivalence.

Linking both the linguistic and communicative approach, Mona Baker (1998) offers a broad study of equivalence, providing an explanation of how equivalence works in the translation process on different levels. For Baker, equivalence first takes place on the word level, then on the grammatical level, referring here to the difference in the grammatical categories between different languages, textual level (in terms of cohesion between the ST and the TT), and pragmatic equivalence. In many cases of the translation of media discourse, equivalence or the lack of it is not done in an arbitrary manner, but it is the result of a profound process of mediation and translation.

In relation to equivalence, Kinga Klaudy (2003) sees that researchers in translation can be divided into two types or groups. The first group sees that equivalence is a main aspect and a basic condition in any translation. The second group, on the other hand, claims that there are different degrees of equivalence. This latter group can be divided into two types of scholars: the 'normative group' and the 'descriptive group'. The first type follows a prescriptive way as it tells the translators and shows them the way to achieve equivalence, while the second describes and studies how translators achieve equivalence in translation. In essence, the dichotomy among researchers in translation reflects the diverse methodologies and perspectives required to address the challenges posed by media discourse. The recognition of different degrees of equivalence and the pragmatic approaches advocated by scholars contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how translation practices can effectively bridge the gaps between source and target media contexts.

5. Findings and Discussion:

The findings reveal a divergence in the application of translation theories to media discourse, with certain theories showcasing inherent tensions in balancing fidelity to the ST and adaptation to the target culture. Translation theories are conceptual frameworks that guide practitioners in making decisions about how to transfer meaning from one language and cultural context to another. In the context of media discourse, where communication is not only linguistic but often includes cultural, visual, and contextual elements, the application of translation theories becomes particularly intricate. Discourse analysis, a key methodology

in understanding media communication, is extended to the analysis of translated media texts. By scrutinizing how information is transferred through translation, researchers can uncover how linguistic choices may influence the reception and interpretation of media discourse in different linguistic and cultural contexts. The role of translation in shaping the ideological landscape becomes evident. As media outlets adopt different positions on a given issue based on their interests, translators grapple with conveying these nuanced perspectives in another language. The translation choices made—whether in terms of vocabulary, tone, or cultural adaptation—become powerful tools in either preserving or altering the ideological nuances embedded in the original texts. From the observation and analysis of the different media texts in the chosen websites, we noticed that media employs various translation strategies to convey information, shape narratives, and influence public perception. These strategies are often employed by media organizations to achieve specific goals or align with particular ideologies. The following table represents the common strategies found in the analysed media discourses:

Strategies	Explanation	Purpose
Framing	Selecting to translate certain aspects of an issue and highlighting them while downplaying others. In the data, translators of both Al Jazeera and the BBC Arabic make decisions about which aspects of a source text to emphasise or downplay. This also includes choosing which sources to include or exclude and where to place them in the media narrative.	It aims to shape the way an issue is perceived and influences audience interpretation. This can also shape credibility, biases, and perspectives presented in the discourse.
Language and Ton	Choosing words and adopting a particular tone to convey messages. Sometimes, the choice of words and tone in the source language may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Other times, it is done with a particular agenda in mind. Translators, in this case, adapt language and tone to evoke similar emotional responses or different responses and convey the intended narrative style.	This works to influence the emotional response of the audience and frames the narrative.
Quoting and Attribution	<p>Selecting quotes and attributing statements to specific individuals or groups. Incorporating expert views to lend authority to a particular perspective.</p> <p>Translators face decisions about how to attribute statements and quotes to maintain the credibility and perception of actors involved in the target culture.</p>	This adds credibility and legitimacy to the presented information. It also influences the credibility and perception of the actors involved.
Repetition and Consistency	Reiterating key messages and maintaining consistency in translation. This is vividly noticed when the same ST is translated by the outlets differently, in accordance with the agenda of the two media networks.	This works to reinforce particular viewpoints and ensures a lasting impression on the audience.

Emphasis on Conflict or Consensus	Highlighting either the conflictual or consensual aspects of an issue by first selecting which text to translate and include in the Arabic article and choosing specific vocabulary that go hand in hand with the website's ideology and agenda..	This shapes the perception of the nature of current events and issues by the target audience.
Storytelling Techniques	Structuring information in a narrative format to engage and captivate the audience. Translators in this case use narrative structures that engage the target audience effectively.	This aims to make complex issues more accessible and relatable. Adapting storytelling techniques ensures that complex issues remain accessible and relatable in the cultural context of the translation.
Selective Omission	Choosing to omit certain details or perspectives from a discourse.	This shapes the narrative by excluding information that may contradict the desired message and intended impact.
Euphemism	Employing mild or indirect expressions in the translation of media discourse to downplay the severity of an issue or make it more palatable.	This softens the impact of negative information or presents it in a more socially acceptable way. It also works to avoid putting direct responsibility or accountability on the translated discourse.
Stereotyping and Generalization	Making broad statements about a group of people or a situation based on simplified or exaggerated characteristics. This also includes the use of weasel words, i.e. using vague or ambiguous language that allows for flexibility in interpretation.	It reinforces certain beliefs or prejudices, shaping audience perceptions through oversimplification. Provides a degree of protection by not making explicit claims, making it harder to challenge or disprove.

Table.1 Strategies employed in the translation of media discourse on Al Jazeera and BBC Arabic

Strategies vary based on the linguistic characteristics of the media texts, indicating a need for translators to adapt their approach to suit the specific demands of different genres within the media domain. Certain translation theories, such as Skopos theory and relevance theory, demonstrate high applicability to the translation of media discourse due to their flexibility and adaptability to dynamic communicative contexts. The translation of a political text, for instance, may require a different set of strategies compared to the translation of an entertainment piece. The former demands an acute sensitivity to ideological intricacies and political terminologies, while the latter may necessitate an emphasis on cultural references and colloquialisms. The adaptability of translators in tailoring their strategies to the distinctive features of each media text ensures that the translated discourse not only retains linguistic fidelity but also resonates authentically within the specific communicative context.

The findings offer valuable insights for researchers and educators in shaping translation studies curricula to better prepare early career translators for the complexities of translating within the media domain. The study also reveals the influence of power dynamics in shaping translation strategies within media discourse. Translators may navigate political and ideological considerations, impacting their choices in rendering messages that align with or resist dominant discourses. Furthermore, the

analysis concluded an interplay between framing and perspective, showcasing how translators balance the preservation of the original framing with cultural and political considerations. Sensitivity to political contexts was observed as an integral strategy, highlighting the translator's role in conveying complex geopolitical narratives accurately.

The adaptation is not merely about linguistic translation but extends to accommodating the cultural nuances, trends, and references prevalent in the target culture. The challenge lies in finding the right balance, as excessive adaptation might risk diluting the original message or distorting the intended meaning. Successful cultural adaptation involves a delicate balance between preserving the cultural nuances of the source text and ensuring the target text resonates effectively with the target audience. The tension between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the target culture illuminates the intricate dance that translators must perform to ensure meaningful and culturally relevant communication in the dynamic landscape of media. As observed, tailoring news content to the preferences and expectations of the target audience is a key strategy. While Al Jazeera may adopt a more region-specific approach, BBC Arabic tends to employ a western perspective. Translation of media discourse in the two websites works by adjusting language and references to align with the cultural background and expectations of their respective audiences.

5. Conclusion

The article highlights the intricate relationship between translation and media, emphasizing the role of language, particularly translation, in shaping media discourse and ideological narratives. Translators in this context serve as cultural mediators, wielding considerable influence over how information is presented, and thus contributing significantly to the broader societal understanding of political events and issues. This aims to accentuate the need for a nuanced approach to translation that recognizes the complexities of cultural and ideological contexts in the case of the mediation of political discourse within the Arabic-speaking world.

The editorial stances of Al Jazeera and BBC Arabic, though rooted in journalistic principles, often reflect their regional and cultural contexts. Al Jazeera's coverage offers insights shaped by its Middle Eastern origins, presenting narratives that are distinct from Western-centric perspectives. In contrast, BBC's reporting, grounded in a Western worldview, provides an alternative lens through which global events are perceived. By observing data from both these sources, this study unravelled the intricacies of media discourse translation, shedding light on how editorial choices influence the construction and interpretation of news narratives. This involved identifying recurrent translation strategies and examining their implications on maintaining fidelity to the ST while adapting to the linguistic and cultural nuances of the target audience. By selecting data from both these sources, this study also captures a broader spectrum of the translation of media discourse, incorporating diverse strategies used in both outlets.

While this study strives to provide valuable insights into the translation of media discourse, certain limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, the analysis predominantly focuses on written media discourses, without referring to the complexities involved in translating spoken and broadcasted content. Future research could explore the nuances specific to oral discourse translation for a more comprehensive understanding of the field. In addition, the findings are not fully representative of the entire spectrum of media discourse translation. A more extensive and varied corpus could offer a more nuanced perspective on the strategies employed in different media genres and contexts. The findings, while insightful, capture a snapshot of translation strategies at a particular point in time. Continuous research would be necessary to keep pace with the ever-changing dynamics of the media landscape.

Despite these limitations, this study serves as a foundational exploration of translation strategies in media discourse, providing a starting point for future investigations to delve deeper into specific contexts, languages, and evolving media formats. Researchers and practitioners engaged in the intricate task of translating media discourse, stand to benefit significantly from the wealth of strategies and approaches showcased in the examined literature and analysis. As the media landscape continues to evolve, a deeper comprehension of these strategies becomes essential for fostering accurate and culturally resonant communication in the globalized world.

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