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THE HURDLES TO OVERCOME TRANSLATION BIAS IN NEWS MEDIA: CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND LINGUISTIC

Summary. This article will analyse issues surrounding the translation bias of media news. It will introduce what are the common areas of bias that are likely to occur in translation of news articles by both human and machine translators. It will explore the nature of bias and provide an overview of the most common types of translation in linguistics in which bias can occur. Furthermore, the article will provide a definition of translation bias in order to anchor the wider concepts included in the undertaken research. The role of cultural differences that impact translation, and possible consciousness / unconscious bias will be explored with the aim of judging its impact. Special attention is paid to linguistic techniques that shape the way people interpret, understand, and emotionally respond to mass media information. The article will also examine what ethical considerations must be deployed to limit bias, in addition to suggesting strategies that aim to mitigate or limit bias. The conclusion will indicate that even when all possible practices are undertaken, media bias remains a prevalent and prospectively concerning issue in translation.

The process of converting a text from one language into another goes beyond mere linguistic substitution. It embodies the translator's depth of understanding of both languages, as well as their cultural awareness and personal perspectives. A translator's choice often reveals their attitudes, emotional responses, which may include intentional or unintentional biases, ideological or prejudicial frameworks. Thus, translation is not only a technical or linguistic skill but also a reflective practice shaped by translator's worldview. The relevance of this study is underscored by ongoing developments in contemporary translation studies. This research contributes meaningfully to reducing the influence of bias in the translation process by proposing a series of strategies and recommendations. The originality of this research is rooted in its comprehensive approach of bias emphasizing the interplay of cultural, social, and linguistic dimensions within bias.

Key words: translation, translation bias, cultural context, linguistic techniques, mass media discourse.

Problem statement. Translation bias in media reporting is a significant field of inquiry connecting linguistics, media studies, and political communication. In this framework, bias denotes the systematic warping or reshaping of information that, in turn, affects the perception and understanding of the audience [1]. The many types of translation that occur within languages – each with its news implications – can easily and unwittingly bring biases into the mix and allow for cultural predispositions or ideological leanings to seep through. Especially because of the way translators are trained, they are likely to draw upon a number of cognitive and linguistic processes that introduce types of distortion [1]. However,

even if one accepts the premise of intact, distortion-free translation, one must still allow for at least some degree of warping in the types of stories that are expressed across different languages, societies, and cultures. This is because of the stark differences in communication, narrative, and storytelling that are found among the world's many regions.

Theoretical background. Translation bias in news media discourse has recently been increasingly recognized as a critical issue in the field of translation studies, media studies, and political communication. Scholars such as Roberto A. Valdeón has contributed to understanding of journalistic translation by analysing how political discourse is reshaped across languages using appraisal theory [2]. His findings suggest that translation is not merely linguistic transfer but a form of ideological reconstruction. Another study by Simo and Admed have explored the nature and causes of bias in translation, identifying various types, such as framing bias and epistemological bias [1]. Despite these valuable contributions, the issue of translation bias in news media remains underexplored in several key areas. There is a lack of comprehensive empirical studies concerning identifying and mitigating translation bias in global news dissemination.

Therefore, **the aim of this pilot study** is to analyse issues surrounding media news bias and how to overcome it in translation.

Results and discussion. Bias represents a consistent move away from fairness or balance, often twisting information or how it's shown [3]. It appears in many forms and is especially clear in 'fake news', where the line between reality and imagination is blurred. This is complicated further due to deliberate attempts by individuals or groups to mislead. Besides it isn't just that the fake news is bad in itself; it's that it leads to all kinds of very real outcomes. Think of a newspaper spread and imagine that the left half is taken up with fake news. What fills the right half? A bunch of real-world effects that range from the trashing of someone's reputation to a manipulation of your beliefs and opinions, to a very real effect on the way you see the world. And that's an incomplete list.

The essence of bias extends not only to its blatant forms – like the clear twisting of language – but also to the much subtler ways it may 'just happen' because of the way language itself is built. It is not a bold statement to argue that very few people would argue that translating is a totally neutral activity. I would suggest that it is even possible to reach any type of universal conclusion as any experiments on the subject are bound to be complicated by a multitude of subjective areas. Additionally, it seems that a significant degree of bias may be intrinsic to the very act of translating one language to another. Some words just fail to have any direct equivalents, and any choice that is made, to some extent, is ultimately

an ideological one. Additionally, beyond that, translating in the context of a deeply divided and polarised society is bound to produce the propagation of narratives, either because of the circumstances under which an individual translator operates or because of the society's polarisation itself [4].

In the end, dealing with bias means that observers and researchers must look carefully at the society in which translations happen and, perhaps even more pertinently, at the translators themselves. When possible, there must be a need to use rigorous methods to detect bias – both objective and subjective. By doing so, the process can come close to something like fairness in news translation. Ultimately, translating for fake news is a problem of its own, and those who do it are answering to a very different set of masters than those who translate for real news. Yet, the stakes are high because news needs to be factual and not merely skewed perspective or outright propaganda. In the most basic sense, bad translations that serve as propaganda can make people believe a set of lies, which fallaciously reduces their understanding of the world [5].

Types of translation in linguistics

In linguistics, translation is divided into several key types, each with unique methodological and theoretical bases [6]. Literal translation is a word-for-word rendition of the source text that preserves its original grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions. Dynamic equivalence is a type of translation that aims to convey the same meaning and emotional force as the original, albeit in different words, and focuses on the impact that the translated text has on its reader, listener, or viewer. Functional translation, as its name suggests, privileges the role or function that the text is meant to play within the confines of the specific context in which it operates [2; 7]. There is, in addition, a meaningful difference between interlingual translation – translation between different languages – and intralingual translation [8], which involves rewording or paraphrasing within the same language (to make something clearer, for instance, or more accessible to a different audience).

Translation also appears in specialised forms, with particular regard for cultural nuance and audience reception. Audiovisual translation (which involves not just subtitling but also dubbing) represents one such form [9]. More traditionally, literary translation, with its imperative to “faithfully” – however that is ultimately translated – render the style of the original, is a further complication. Since the invention of machine translation, yet another form of specialized translation has arisen. This is a form of translation that is grounded in the automation of procedures that were once executed by human cognition. Despite all the advances that have been made over the past seven decades in this arena, there are still a number of highly sophisticated “problems” or “challenges” that serve as the focus of current research and that help us to understand where and why machine translation “breaks down” [10].

Definition of translation bias in news

Systematic changes in translating news create bias, leading to misrepresentations of the original messages [1]. The problem arises because of the lack of understanding of what has occurred by the audience. Translators, who are the first gatekeepers of international communication, might not realise they are working under a certain bias or that their work is being done in a less-than-objective manner [11]. They might think they are accurately translating the message of the original news story when, in fact, they have unconsciously taken some latitude with the information, either by choosing certain turns of phrase that alter the tone or by emphasiz-

ing some parts of the story while downplaying others [12]. In this way, a translator might unwittingly be doing the work of a propagandist. A particularly insidious form of international communication might be the kind of “news” story that is already a product of a biased lens, to begin with. All of this is happening within a much broader context of increasing interconnectedness in a multitude of media formats – including social media, which has a much higher proportion of translation bias. International audiences are relying more and more on news translated from other languages to understand the events happening around the world. For this reason, international audiences are in some ways at the mercy of the biases of the translators and the journalists whose work the translators are rendering into another language [2].

However, understanding the bias in translation is not just a matter of examining language – there are cultural and ethical issues too. It has to do with the broader question of who gets to speak, and whose voices are marginalised, in the societies we live in and the international stories we tell [1]. Furthermore, those questions connect to the power dynamics in what has become an interdependent and interconnected globalised world. When there is talk about bias in translation and the “accuracy” of translations, what is really being discussed is the magnitude of the impact those translations have on people’s communication and the formation of public opinion [11]. Pondering those issues leads us to an interdisciplinary examination that covers not just the field of translation studies but also cultural studies, communication, and media studies.

In the study of translation, scholars must always be on the lookout for bias. That is because translation is an inherently subjective act, no matter if machine or human conduits are utilised. Even in the best of circumstances, there is no “one-to-one” correspondence between words and their definitions that would make a translation an objective exercise. Each word or phrase carries with it a set of connotations and a history of usage that makes what you’re doing the act of making a choice.

Linguistic techniques influencing perception

Techniques in language significantly influence how the public understands events, especially when it comes to translating the news. The weighty words in a language like English can replace more euphemistic terms in other languages, or vice versa [13]. However, the change in tone is often deliberate and intended to communicate a very different tone [2]. Not only does the selection of words matter, but also the choice of which words to use in the first place. Narratives are imbued with whatever emotional resonance their creators want them to have. Adjectives, selected with care and precision, help position the audience inside the story, with a view to understanding it in a certain way. When a translator chooses to call a particular political movement “revolutionary” instead of “insurgent,” the audience is invited to see it more as a fundamental and perhaps needed change. Yet, at the same time the audience also needs to reflect on the outlook of the translator, if human, or the software platform, if machine. However, as most translation devices / persons do not obviously promote an agenda, this can be a complicated and ultimately impossible endeavour. Therefore, trust and ethical responsibility is essential [14].

The structure of sentences plays a significant role in translation bias. Translators can unconsciously use certain syntactic forms that lend a sense of inevitability or justification to a statement. When a sentence is put into the passive voice, it is often because the translator – perhaps at the behest of the original – wants to convey a sense

of inevitability or lack of a genuine alternative [1]. In the same way, translators can use metaphors that serve as cognitive tools to shape a reader's understanding of an issue. For example, when a media news piece talks about an economic downturn and uses war metaphors to describe it, the audience is being told, in essence, that this is a life-or-death situation [15].

These methods do more than just express underlying ideologies; they actively keep those ideologies going by virtue of their repeated presence in the narratives of translated news that we consume [16]. It is a matter of some urgency that we understand these linguistic processes, not just because they are interesting and intricate, but because they affect our perception of world events. To not understand is to submit to the viewpoint being presented and to lose agency as the recipient. If we are to be active consumers of news, we need to recognize the bias inherent in the kinds of language choices and structures that translators and journalists use.

Cultural context and its impact

Cultural context significantly influences how news is interpreted and translated [17]. It deals with the social, political, and historical frameworks that accompany language, often containing a multitude of signals and suggestions that might mean something different in another language. As Valdeón [2] notes, the task of the translator is to unpack these signals and suggestions and then repack them into a different language. It is a complex task that involves not just substituting words and phrases but also making sure that the message being conveyed has the same impact in the target language as it does in the source language. When this is done poorly, it leads to "translation bias," which is when the target language is loaded with the cultural baggage of the source language [11].

Cultural context also serves as an unwritten guide to what constitutes significant or relevant information within a media story. This is where the translator's bias, or a tendency to view and interpret the world from a particular perspective, can have a big impact on the final product. Take, for instance, a news story that originated in one society being translated into another. When the story is politically sensitive, the translator might lend more weight to aspects of the story that resonate with their own beliefs. They might even prioritise these aspects over others, effectively making the story say something quite different from what was meant by the original author. Therefore, what ends up being published in the second language is not quite the same story, or context, that was published in the first [1].

Grasping the complex relationship between cultural context and translation practices is crucial for identifying the potential biases that can occur when translating news. Recognising the influence of these contexts allows translators to work toward the ideals of neutrality and accuracy. In this manner, they can do their part to ensure that journalism / general news reporting remains the practice of conveying facts and relevant details across linguistic and cultural divides. It ensures that actors do not become the practice of conveying the translator's own biases and ideological predispositions.

Case studies of biased translations

Biased translations in news media can profoundly shape public perception. A compelling case study is the translation of Paul Krugman's op-eds into Spanish [18]. Valdeón employs Nord's functional model to show how translators' choices of lexical items and syntactic structures altered the nuances of Krugman's arguments, transforming them for Spanish-speaking audiences. This is a clear manifestation of what is sometimes called the "two-way

street" of translation and interpretation [19]. While it may be said that the translator's job is to get as close as possible to the source message, there are many ways in which a translator's choices subtly or not-so-subtly shift the meaning of the original text in the direction of the translator's or the translator's client's preferences. Gender bias in machine translation could be seen as another dimension of this problem [20]. When algorithms tasked with translating from one language to another tend to favour masculine pronouns or terms over feminine ones, they are perpetuating the same kind of stereotype that pressures people in certain societies to think of most things in terms of the masculine. Ahmed relates instances where translators changed the source material to a more or less favourable view of events as the translator's client wished [1]. This seems to raise a red flag in what we might call the "Fidelity to the Source" department. Must the public rely on translators to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? These are ethical and not merely practical questions.

Ethical considerations in news translation

Ethical issues in news translation are critically important because translators have immense power over how information is presented to the public. The way a translator renders a text can significantly alter its meaning and, by extension, the public's understanding of events. The key ethical issue here is fidelity to the source material. Not only must translators ensure that they are representing the original material as accurately as possible, but they must also consider how their work might affect those who are touched by it. News translation is not just a linguistic operation; it is also an interpretive act, a complex transposition of one culture into another (or, in some cases, one subset of a culture into another) that can introduce errors or bias that change the fundamental meaning of what is being communicated [21].

Power dynamics and responsibility are also significant in this realm of news translation. Who gets to control this narrative? Translators often work within the confines of institutions that may have ideological biases or commercial goals [22]. Translators also work under pressure and with tight deadlines. The power of translation has been described as a "third of the way" between the two languages (or, if you prefer, as half of the distance between the source and target languages). What kinds of checks and balances can we set up to ensure that errors of judgment, which may result in biased translations, do not happen? Who should be held accountable when they do? In many ways, these questions are almost impossible to answer to a universal rubric.

Ethical translation practices demand clear acknowledgment of the methodologies and choices involved [23]. They require translators to think not only about the surface meanings of the texts they are translating but also about the possible biases contained within the source text and the target language. Additionally, they necessitate an awareness of the power dynamics involved in the act of translating, particularly when working across languages. Translators hold a great deal of power in their hands, and carrying out this work with even a modicum of ethical awareness should mean that all these aspects are at least thought about and acknowledged in the act of translation.

Strategies to mitigate translation bias

Mitigating bias in news translation requires a multifaceted approach. It involves addressing linguistic and contextual elements and can be achieved with a variety of methods. One way to accomplish this is to employ a rigorous framework for translation, some-

thing like the model described by Christiane Nord. Her ‘functional’ model of translation is a theory that views translation as a purposeful human activity, rooted in Skopos theory [24] emphasizing that a translation’s success depends on fulfilling its specific communicative goal for a target audience [25]. Therefore, this model is useful for “preserving the intended meaning and purpose” of the source text [2]. The model promotes an understanding of the “communicative situation” that surrounds the source text. It also urges translators to interpret “the sender’s intention,” which, as was mentioned at the beginning of this section, seems to be an intention to express a certain viewpoint or ideology.

Before translating content, translators should conduct in-depth cultural research [26]. They need to understand just what the text means in its original cultural setting and why it has been written because nuances matter here. Translators need to attend to the cultural references and idiomatic expressions that make up the text as a whole. If the text is “original,” their translation will be biased in ways that the original producer of the text certainly never intended [1]. Additionally, if a work is produced by native speakers or experts in a particular field, those producers will often use a voice of authority to relay the information. It is best to consult with these producers during the translation process because they provide insights into how the work should be represented in another language.

Furthermore, editorial processes must introduce systematic and transparent bias checks. One approach is to have multiple translators work on a text and then compare notes [27]. Are the translated texts the same in meaning? If they differ, why? This not only builds a culture of accountability but also means that messy, contentious passages get to be examined by a larger group of people with diverse perspectives.

Finally, technology serves as a useful tool. Machine learning algorithms are being developed to detect patterns of biased language. These algorithms can be integrated into the editorial workflow as a supplement to human translators [20]. The algorithms can flag potentially biased phrases or constructions for review. By using a combination of these strategies – rigorous frameworks, cultural research, collaborative practices, robust editorial checks, and technological assistance – news organisations can greatly reduce the bias that creeps into translated texts and offer a more balanced portrayal of world events.

Conclusions. Using a linguistic lens to probe the bias in news translation spotlights the complex interaction among language, culture, and perception, and brings out how even seemingly innocent language choices can go a long way toward shaping public understanding and opinion. The last decade has given a strong glimpse of such manipulation through the variable use of ‘fake news’ to parameterise a specific agenda. To start with the multifaceted nature of bias as a starting point – encompassing both its overt and covert forms – and then examine different types of translation practices found in linguistics, what can be seen are some of the mechanisms through which bias makes its way into news and exerts its influence on international audiences. If looking for a definition of what “biased” means in the context of news translation, it can be argued that it has a dual role: It reflects an inherent part of the cultural context in which it is produced, and it serves as an agent that can perpetuate stereotypes or, in some cases, woefully misrepresent realities. Analysing how some of the linguistic techniques used in translation can influence perception is integral especially when analysing the level of understanding the tools of the trade (translation devices) better. Word choice, syntactic structures, and framing devices all

work to sway audience interpretation, often in a subconscious way. In the end, case studies and ethical considerations provide some of the most concrete evidence that exists for these theoretical constructs and supplies context for real-world implications that can arise from biased translations.

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Никитченко К. Перешкоди на шляху до подолання упереджень у перекладі новин: культурні, соціальні та лінгвістичні

Анотація. У статті аналізуються питання, пов'язані з упередженням у перекладі новин засобів масової інформації. У розвідці представлено типові прояви упередження, які можуть виникнути під час перекладу новинних статей як перекладачами-людьми, так і автоматизованими системами перекладу. Стаття досліджує природу упередження та розглядає найпоширеніші типи перекладу в лінгвістиці, в яких може виникнути упередження. Крім того, у статті надається визначення упередження в перекладі, що дозволяє закласти основу для більш широких концепцій, охоплених проведеним дослідженням. Здійснено аналіз впливу культурних відмінностей на переклад, а також виявлено

можливі свідомі чи несвідомі упередження. Особлива увага приділяється мовним прийомам, які обумовлюють те, як люди інтерпретують, розуміють та емоційно реагують на інформацію, що надходить із засобів масової інформації. У розвідці також висвітлюється, які етичні міркування необхідно враховувати для подолання упередження, а також запропоновано стратегії, спрямовані на послаблення або усунення упередження в перекладі. У висновку зазначається, що навіть за умов застосування всіх можливих заходів, упередження у новинах ЗМІ залишаються поширеною і потенційно серйозною проблемою в перекладі.

Процес перекладу тексту з однієї мови на іншу виходить за межі простої лінгвістичної заміни. Він втілює глибоке розуміння перекладачем обох мов, а також його культурну обізнаність та особисті переконання. Вибір перекладача часто виявляє його ставлення, емоційні реакції, які можуть включати навмисні або ненавмисні упередження, ідеологічність або забобони. Таким чином, переклад є не тільки технічним або лінгвістичним навиком, але й рефлексивною практикою, сформованою світоглядом перекладача. Актуальність дослідження визначається сучасними тенденціями в галузі перекладознавства. Це дослідження робить вагомий внесок у зменшення впливу упередження у процесі перекладу, пропонуючи низку стратегій і рекомендацій. Оригінальність цього дослідження полягає в його комплексному підході до упередження, що підкреслює взаємодію культурних, соціальних і лінгвістичних аспектів.

Ключові слова: переклад, упередження в перекладі, культурний контекст, мовні прийоми, мас-медійний дискурс.

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