The Ideological Implications in the The Translation of News Headlines

By

Maha Sadiq Yassin Prof. Dr Kadhim –Ali

Abstract:

The present paper attempts to investigate the ideological aspects of news headlining in an English–Arabic translation context. The aim is to answer the following two questions; Do news headlines carry an ideological message? And does the translation of these headlines express the same ideology or is it manipulated by the translator/ news agency? The assessment was carried out at the word level, sentence level and discourse level, and critical discourse analysis was used in order to discover the ideological underpinnings of both the original and translated versions by shedding lights on the lexical choice and the grammatical representation of the headlines. The conclusion of the study indicate that the language of headlines and news is not neutral. It is constantly reflecting an institutional interest, and these interests are either rendered faithfully or not in the translation into Arabic/English. Most of the time translators are governed by particular political, social or religious ideologies that they express in

their translations of the news headlines.

1. Introduction

The incorporation of ideologies into various fields of study has been explored and researched with one such field being that of translation. Translation research has revealed that there is a relationship between culture, i.e., sets of values, concepts, and beliefs, on one side, and the way translators control and make linguistic choices in their translated texts, on the other side. Thereby, the translation of the text is often influenced by both the ideologies of the original writer/agency and the translator who can influence the interpretation of both the written and spoken word.

This study investigates the ideological implications that translators embedded when translating news headlines. Translators, like any other professionals, have their own perspectives and understandings to the global events; therefore, they took sides when translating news articles especially those related to political or social/religious events. Ideologies as (van Dijk, 2000: 6) defined it "have something to do with systems of ideas, and in particular with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group or movement. These ideologies are present in both the original news text and its translations. Sometimes the translator transfers the same ideological message and sometimes he/she manipulate this message to make a different impression or effect. In order to investigate these ideologies in news articles and whether their

translations convey the same outlook, critical discourse analysis has been applied in as a tool for analysis.

2. Ideology: General Definitions :The general understanding of ideology can be defined as “a systematic scheme or coordinated body of ideas or concepts, especially about human life and culture, a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group or culture. The integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program” (Merriam Webster, 2015 Dictionary).

The concept of ideology is tackled thoroughly in Van Dijk (2003). According to him, ideology was first presented by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy late in the 18 century. De Tracy overtly addressed the young people in a famous work in which he said that the minds of well-known academics are already loaded with "fixed ideas" that are challenging to alter. Van Dijk also referred to the notion of ideology as being primarily used in politics, social science and in the media. This means that the prolonged exposure to certain cultural values will be reflected in the translators’ work and shifting these rooted thoughts to assimilate the contemporary ones will be a challenge.

Accordingly, Van Dijk (2003: 6) concluded from Destutt de Tracy's writings that ideology has a relation with "system of ideas" namely political, social, and religious ideas that are shared by a social group or party. Then, he listed several examples of prevailing

ideologies like "Communism as well as anti–communism, socialism and liberalism, feminism and sexism, racism and antiracism, pacifism, and militarism" in which our formulated perspectives of life and how we perceive its values can be either positive or negative.

The analysis of newspapers includes a reflection not only of reporting styles but also of headline styles since both of them expose much about the ideology of the newspaper and how it uses certain linguistic techniques to enforce its ideology on the audience. All news articles start with a headline that functions as an introduction to what the reader should expect from the article, for example, tabloid headlines use some linguistic of gimmicks to captivate the audience; like alliteration puns, wordplay, metaphor, rhyme. Also, headlines need to be simple, readable and applicable to the ideology of the paper. Below is an example from Al Monitor, 6 April 2016, demonstrating the ideological implications when translating headlines;

ST:

يلتحقون باعتصامات التيّار الصدريّ الدينيّ على بوّابات المنطقة الخضراء في بغداد [sic]الالمدنيّون

TT:

How religious movements gained the upper hand in Iraqi protests

While the Arabic headline focuses on the secular movement that

joined the Sadrist in the protest asking to fight corruption and to make major governmental changes, the translation of the headline focuses on the power of religious movements used to control protests, and insinuating that it could lead the change that Iraqis are aspiring for. For the Western readers, such a headline shows them that the religious movement has a strong grip on people.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis: In order to resolve specific contentious issues, especially about social issues, the media often use specific patterns of language in their discourse that aims to deal with a variety of ideologies. This would mean that if a journalist exerts complete control over his/her own writing, it gives them the opportunity to implement different ideologies and could have the opportunity to influence the perception of the readers if they wish to do so. The means of doing so can be seen in the rhetorical organisation of a newspaper article: headlines, lead and body (though this is not true, there is always the editor, and chief editor: a journalist never has full control over it.

Different sets of linguistic strategies are used in CDA (henceforth) to analyse atext, for example, presuppositions, intertextualization, political implicatures and manipulations. Added to this, the emphasis is given to lexicalization, and the use choice of words as an explicit factor of the textual CDA as lexicon (vocabulary or terminology) is an important dimension of ideologically controlled discourse meaning (van Dijk, 1995). Thus, a simple word can

have either a negative or positive connotation and imply different meaning, depending on the ideological basis, and thereby communicate a different message about in-group or out-group members.

According to Van Dijk (www:1998): Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately to resist social inequality.

Based on this CDA has a role of probing unusual social ideologies that show discrimination, inequality and abuse of social power to the disadvantage of the underprivileged in society.

Potter and Wetherell (1992) (cited in Wooffitt (2005:51)) emphasised the ideological characteristics of the ordinary discourse. They argued that DA could be used as an analytical tool to study the way ideologies exemplified and imitated ordinary discourse practices. They also suggest that DA could present more acceptable explanations of the association between "ideology, racism, and social practice than provided by traditional Marxist conceptions of ideology."

4. Characteristics of Headlines: News headlines have some unique features that characterise them from other forms. These techniques

are intended to make such an impact on readers, so they will be interested in reading the body of the news article. The headline can reveal much about the ideology and aims of an individual paper. There are some distinguishing features that can be outlined in newspaper headlines, and they are closely related to their purposes. With a minimum of words, they aim at getting the courtesy of readers. Their shape, structure and choice of words play a central role in attracting the readers and thus manipulating their choice of articles because their aim is to win potential customers. The idea that a writer wants to express is governed by the words and expressions he/she uses for the headline and by the audience, he/she is targeting. Omer and Ali (2013: 216-226) and Abdulla and Salih (2012: 195-209) have list a number of features of the news headlines, the most prominent ones are going to be reviewed in this sections with examples taken from newspapers/agencies published online

4.1 Ellipsis: As stated previously, headlines have a distinct type of written register that incorporates several features on the top of which is ellipsis. This feature is intended to raise the curiosity of the reader in identifying what is missing and finalising his interest to the very end of the article.

Usually, the words omitted from headlines include function words (grammatical words that do not carry inherent meaning, and their purpose is to add to the syntax rather than the sense of a sentence), determiners (some, this, that, the, a, more, much,

either, neither), pronouns (he, they, it) auxiliary verbs (be, is, am, are) punctuation marks and titles (Mrs, Sir, Lord). Conjunctions and prepositions are also likely to be omitted, too.

An example from the BBC News, 10 June 2016:

Bangladesh arrests 900 in crackdown on Islamist militants

If this headline is converted into a proper sentence, then the sentence would read:

Bangladesh police say they have arrested 900 people as part of a crackdown on militants following a series of deadly attacks.

Another example from BBC News, 24 April 2016:

North Korea 'will halt' nuclear tests if US stops S Korea exercises

Which refers to:

North Korea has said it will suspend its nuclear tests if the US stops South Korea exercises.

4.2 Word Play: A substantial part of newspaper language is word play or pun. Words that refer to different meanings in English can be used in a comical and entertaining way. An example would be *Police found drunk in street*. This headline plays with the word 'drunk'. This headline can bear two different meanings: one is that the Police were found drunk in the street, the other is that the Police found a drunk man in the street. For example:

Mom watches as cruise sail away with kids on board

This headline appeared on the ABC7NY, 28 April 2016. When

reading it, one would have the impression that the ship takes the children away on purpose, but when the reader reads the rest of the article we will know that it was the mother's fault because she did not get on board before the deadline that the cruise ship has made clear for every passenger on board.

4.3 Noun Strings: The use of a row of nouns is also common in headlines. Noun phrases can stand as nouns on their own, but frequently include other words such as determiners numbers (a thousand dollars), adjectives used as modifiers 'these fast cars', 'the famous people'. Noun phrases can also be pronouns. Example from Al Monitor 16 May 2016:

Egypt's next national security threat: all the single ladies?

Not only does this example consists of nouns but also carries a great deal of ambiguity making the readers interested to know more about this threat and how it can be linked to single ladies.

4.5 Alliteration: Alliteration happens when preliminary consonant sounds in two or more adjacent words or syllables are repeated (Merriam Webster, 2015 Dictionary). This type of gimmicks is often used in poetry as well as newspapers. Newspapers use it to draw readers attention and make it more outstanding. For example: (Al Monitor, 27 May 2016)

Saudi Arabia's post-oil plan enters slippery slope

Both the 'S' and the 'P' are repeated.

4.6 **Vagueness**:

Maybe the most prominent feature in headlines is being ambiguous, thus, making the reader wondering if there is more

information to reveal.

For example:

In the Arabic version of the CNN (بالعربي) on the 11 April 2016 we read:

بالصور..بغداد و طهران في يوم "القدس العالمي"... مواقف و رموز متشابهة

Any reader would wonder what those "مواقف" are. Further, still, when we read the article it referes to "الرموز التي رفعت أو أحرقت أو أهينت من قبل المحتفلين."

4.7 Verb Changes and Lexical Density: Verbs are often changed in headlines. For example, the simple tense is used instead of the continuous or perfect tense, and the infinitive is used for the future. Loaded words (Yourdictionary,2013) are often used in headlines, they are words that carry specific strong implications, that is to say, they carry an emotional load beyond their literal meaning. Examples from Al Monitor (2 and 18 May 2016);

Congress rolls out red carpet in Washington for jilted GCC

Saudi IS members killing their own relatives

What is stated above represent the important features of news headlines that are adopted for mostly marketing aspects or creating some ideological influence on the readership. The features stated above do not only make a headline pretty recognisable but also urge the reader to stimulate his/her analytical and investigative skills to deduce the meaning and comprehend the news text.

Having listed the most recognizable characteristics of the

headlines, it becomes clear that the language of the news discourse is not 'innocent', because it violates a great deal of the linguistic standard rules in order to achieve a special effect, that is to say, it is often manipulated, reconstructed and loaded with several ideological concepts and stances. This control is achieved by power-holders, editors or translators.

5. Data Analysis: Example 1: Al Monitor on 29 April 2016

ST:

الرمادي... مدينة مفخّخة بالموت وتحذيرات من عودة النازحين إليها

TT:

Landmines hinder return of displaced to Iraq's Ramadi

Discussion: In this headline, taken from Al-Monitor, the original headline appears to be a very strong warning sign giving the impression that Al Ramadi is a death trap for anyone who wants to enter it. This is one of the important characteristics used by news writers, Lexical density, to draw the readers' attention. On the other hand, we notice that the translation is more moderate in tone and gives a direct hint to the main topic of the article. We can say the translator followed the substitution strategy to express the differences in the expressions.

Example 2: Al Monitor, 12 May 2016

ST:

العلويون بين التقية والعرفان الفلسفي

TT:

Who are Syria's Alawites?

Discussion: It is clear that the translator modifies the entire headline; this can be attributed to cultural differences. In the ST headline, the writer assumes that the reader has a background knowledge about the Alawites. However, in the article, he gave further explanation about the sect's origin and beliefs. The translator, on the other hand, used an interrogative structure as an introduction to the main topic of the article. Also, he added the word "Syria" to link the subject and limit it to the Syrians in an attempt to draw the reader interest by stating that there is another party in the Syrian struggle which might be marginalised by others.

Example 3: Al Monitor, 16 May 2016

ST: تدمر إرث سوريا الحضاري ضحية "داعش" والأسد

TT:

UNESCO steps in to protect what's left of Syria's Palmyra

Discussion: The writer of the Arabic title is clearly referring to those who are responsible for destroying the Historical city of Palmyra; IS (Islamic State) and Al Assad, the head of the Syrian regime. The translated version of the title avoided any reference to the doers and highlighted the humanitarian efforts of the UNESCO to save the city. We can say that the intention of such translation is to draw the readers' attention on the 'Western' humanitarian activities in the area as a neutral party in the conflict by substituting and

omitting key words. Nevertheless, the Western military forces are participating in the fight against IS and the Syrian regime. They also want to show the other side of their participation. The UNESCO is an international organisation, yet; we rarely notice its Islamic or Arabic influence.

Example 4: OZY news 19 January 2016, Al Sabah newspaper translation, 5 May 2016

ST:

THE INDIAN DAUGHTER WHO DEFIED ALL THE ODDS

TT:

تزايد وأد البنات في الهند

Discussion: In the translation of this title, the translator substituted the original wording. The article described the story of an Indian girl's survival after her father attempted to infanticide her. The translator gave a different perspective by stating that the practice of ending the lives of young girls was growing. This translation contradicts the facts mentioned in the original article "Female infanticide, though now rare, was actively practiced in India for centuries", which is also rendered by the translator " فوأد البنات رغم ندرته الآن كان يمارس بكثافة في الهند لقرون; thus, the translator contradicts the statement he made in his translation of the title.

Example 5: Al Monitor, 1 June 2016

ST:

الفلّوجة... التحرير مهمّ لكن ما بعد التحرير أهمّ!

TT:

How will Baghdad plan for liberated Fallujah?

Discussion:In this headline from al–Monitor we notice how the translator changed the type of the sentence into an interrogative one wondering about the ability of the Iraqi government to solve the political problems that are expected to emerge after the liberation of Fallujah. The Ideological impression intended in this translation makes the reader believe that the Iraqi government is incapable of controlling the conflicting parties over Fallujah.

Example 6: Al Monitor, 13 December 2015

ST:Will election of women open door to reform in Saudi Arabia?

TT:

انتخاب المرأة في السّعوديّة خطوة على الدّرب الصّحيح

Discussion: By choosing the word "reform", the English original headline clearly suggests that there is a problem with the ruling regime in Saudi Arabia, but is this reflected in the translation? We find that the translator changed the type of the sentence into a statement and omitted the word "reform". The ideological implication here is not to reveal any of the shortcoming of the ruling regime in Saudi Arabia, and that allowing women to participate in the Election is an advantage counted to the government.

6. Conclusion:When translating headlines into Arabic or English, translators mostly tend to follow the substitution or reduction strategies, where they can shift the readers' attention to

other political or social aspects.

Neutrality and faithfulness in translation are vital when it comes to the translation of Media/news texts. Translators should always endeavour to be neutral when rendering news texts because imposing their own ideology will give a different message to the readership that will distort the meaning intended in the original text. Most of the time translators are governed by particular political, social or religious ideologies that they express in their translations of the news.

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