

Crisis Communication and Breaking News Translation.

Accuracy, Speed and Ethical Responsibility in the Translation of English-Arabic News

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التواصل في الأزمات وترجمة الأخبار العاجلة: الدقة والسرعة والمسؤولية الأخلاقية في ترجمة الأخبار

من الإنجليزية إلى العربية.

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المستخلص

في ظلّ الإعلام العالمي المعاصر، تُثقل الأزمات في الوقت الفعلي، متجاوزةً اللغات والحدود الثقافية. وتُعدّ الترجمة بالغة الأهمية في تسهيل الوصول إلى الأخبار العاجلة في حالات النزاعات المسلحة، والكوارث الطبيعية، والاضطرابات السياسية، وحتى حالات الطوارئ التي تُهدّد صحة السكان. ومع ذلك، فإنّ ضغط الوقت المرتبط بتغطية الأزمات يُخضع المترجمين لقيود زمنية شديدة، وغالبًا ما يُضطرون إلى تغليب السرعة على الجودة والاعتبارات الأخلاقية. يُحلّل هذا البحث ترجمة الأخبار من الإنجليزية إلى العربية خلال التواصل في الأزمات، حيث تبرز الحاجة إلى تحقيق التوازن بين ضرورة نشر المعلومات بسرعة، ودقة اللغة، والمسؤولية الأخلاقية. واستنادًا إلى نظرية الغاية، ودراسات ترجمة وسائل الإعلام، وتحليل الخطاب النقدي، تُحلّل الدراسة تقارير مختارة عن الأخبار العاجلة في وسائل الإعلام الإنجليزية والعربية. وتُظهر النتائج وجود اتجاهات مشتركة تتمثل في تبسيط المفردات، وغياب التفاصيل السياقية، وإعادة الصياغة الأيديولوجية، والاعتماد على الترجمة الآلية. تُقدّم هذه الورقة البحثية أطروحةً مفادها أن الترجمة في أوقات الأزمات ليست مجرد عملية تقنية، بل هي ممارسة ذات تبعات اجتماعية وأخلاقية بالغة الأهمية، ولها تأثير كبير على نظرة الجمهور. الكلمات المفتاحية: التواصل في الأزمات، الأخبار العاجلة، الترجمة الإعلامية، الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، أخلاقيات الترجمة

ABSTRACT

In the modern global media crisis is delivered in real-time communicating across languages and cultural borders. The translation is critical in facilitating the access to breaking news in case of armed conflicts, natural disasters, political unrests, and even emergencies on the health of the population. Nonetheless, the time pressure that is related to crisis reporting subjects translators to severe time constraints, and they are often compelled to choose speed over quality and moral consideration. The current research is an analysis of English-Arabic news translation during crisis communication, where it is necessary to balance between the need to disseminate information quickly, language accuracy, and ethical accountability. Based on the Skopos Theory, media translation studies, and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study examines the selected reports on the breaking-news in English and Arabic media. The results show that there are common trends of lexical simplification, the absence of contextual details, ideological reworking, and reliance on machine translations. The paper presents a thesis that crisis translation is not a technical process, but a socially and ethically consequential practice that has a great influence on the perception of the population.

Keywords: crisis communication, breaking news, media translation, English–Arabic translation, translation ethics

1. Introduction

The contemporary media environment has been marked by the high rate of information dissemination. Development of digital technology and international communication networks has made news agencies to provide real time coverage of crisis events to audiences in other regions of the world, virtually right after it happens. Consequently, translation has been considered the inseparable part of crisis communication, enabling the information to penetrate language and cultural barriers faster than ever.

Wars, terrorist attacks, earthquakes, pandemics and political upheavals are the types of crises which require the attention of the people at the moment. In this case, audiences depend a lot on translated news to convey the events that are taking place and make a good judgment. Translation, hence, is important in developing popular knowledge, emotive feelings, and political sentiments in times of emergencies.

The art of translation in breaking news is not similar to other types of translation. As opposed to literary or technical translation, it is created under the circumstances of uncertainty, urgency and limited verification. Translators usually have partial information at their disposal and are expected to release texts fast, at times before the situation has been comprehended. These limitations cast big doubts on accuracy, reliability, and ethical responsibility.

Political sensitivities and ideology polarization also add to the complexity of crisis news translation encountered in English - Arabic context. Conflict news, as in the case of Middle East news, is commonly reported on and not always reported on in the same way, and translation decisions may support or defy dominant discourses. This paper explores the influence of these pressures on the practice of translation in crisis communication.

2. Literature Review

2.1 News Translation and Media Institutions

News translation has actually been more and more understood as a mediated rewritten form as opposed to a more direct linguistic transfer. According to Bielsa and Bassnett (2009), the institutional routine, editorial choices and ideological placement influence the translated news texts. Translators work in news organizations that are designed to promote speed, attention to the audience, and political orientation.

The transediting concept indicates the hybridity of the translation of journals. According to Schaffer (2012), it is common that when translators are translating texts, they usually edit, summarize and rearrange information instead of translating it word to word. The practice is particularly noticeable in breaking news, as time constraints do not allow uncertainty to be given a chance to be translated in a detailed manner.

Valdeon (2015) underlines that, translators play an active role in the production of news. Their use of language shapes framing, stress, and assessment and thus, they are not the invisible truckers between media and the audience.

2.2 Crisis Communication Theory

Crisis communication is the process of spreading information about the happenings that cause jeopardy to the safety of the people, their social standing or their legitimacy as an institution. According to Combs (2015), successful crisis communication should be accurate, timely and credible. Lack of such standards may increase the fear of the population and lead to lack of confidence.

The article by Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer (2018) focuses on ethical component of crisis communication, stating that communicators are under the moral duty to reduce the harm and encourage informed decision-making. This ethical responsibility is applied even in the translation of messages and translators are the ones whose work is to meet across the cultures.

2.3 Speed, Time Pressure, and Translation Quality

Breaking news translation is characterised by time pressure. According to Pym (2010), translators with increased urgency are typically inclined to use standardized translations, reduce syntax and omit contextual information. These strategies bring about efficiency, but tend to lead to a loss of meaning and a lack of nuance. According to Munday (2016), speed-based translation raises the chances of misrepresentation, especially when it comes to the translation of a politically sensitive text. Such risks are ethically important in crisis situations, where the information received will potentially affect the actions of the people.

2.4 Ideology, Power, and Narrative Construction

Translation is entrenched in ideologies and power systems. Baker (2006, 2018) illustrates that translation helps in building of narratives in conflict situations. Repeat pattern of framing determines the manner in which the audiences perceive responsibility, legitimacy, and victimhood

The analysis of the critical power relations in media discourse through linguistic decisions can be done using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 2008). CDA can be used in crisis translation to identify the construction of agency, blame and evaluation by lexical and grammatical means.

3. Theoretical Framework

This paper uses the Skopos Theory as its main theoretical approach. Vermeer (1989) argues that the purpose of the target text defines the translation strategies. The other purpose is prevailing in crisis communication; quick spread of information, which may not be detailed and contextualized.

To tackle the ideological implication, the research incorporates the Critical Discourse Analysis, which dwells upon the ways in which the choices on translation reflect and reproduce the power relations. The media translation theory also places translation in the institutional framework highlighting how editorial policy and political orientation affect translation.

4. Methodology

The research uses qualitative comparative research approach. International media reports on armed conflict, natural disasters, political unrest, and health crises were sampled in a corpus of English breaking-news reports about such events. Arabic translations that were published in a short period of time were examined.

The analysis focuses on:

Lexical choice and semantic shift.

- * Omission and addition
- * Headline framing
- * Representation of agency
- * Ethical implications

In this way, one can thoroughly study the process of translating crisis discourse.

5. Applied Analysis: English–Arabic Crisis News Translation

5.1 Armed Conflict

English Source:

There were airstrikes of residential locations and the conflict was escalating.

Arabic Translation:

”غارات جوية تستهدف مناطق سكنية مع تصاعد التوتر”

Analysis: The Arabic translation undercuts the severity of the scenario by substituting the escalating conflict with the Arabic phrase of "تصاعد التوتر". This change of lexicon lessens apparent severity and is an indication of ideological delicacy in conflict coverage.

5.2 Natural Disaster

English Source:

Authorities encourage people to evacuate immediately and the flooding increases.

Arabic Translation:

”السلطات تدعو إلى إخلاء فوري مع تفاقم الفيضانات”

Analysis:

It is translated urgently and clearly, which satisfies the communicative role of crisis messages. It shows that even time pressure can help functional adequacy to be realized.

5.3 Political Crisis

English Source:

There are protests between security forces and the protesters after disputable ruling.

Arabic Translation:

”اشتباكات بين متظاهرين وقوات الأمن بعد قرار مثير للجدل”

Analysis:

The translation does not give explanatory background regarding the decision and this is due to the time and editorial priorities. Breaking news translation is prone to such omissions.

5.4 Health Emergency

English Source:

Health authorities threaten of increased cases of infections as hospitals turn over.

Arabic Translation:

”مسؤولون صحيون يحذرون من ارتفاع الإصابات مع امتلاء المستشفيات”

Analysis:

Although this is true, the translation contains no numerical data and makes the message easy to use.

6. Discussion

The results prove that crisis translation is more functional than equivalent. Strategies that lead to simplification and omission tend to be common because of their speed, especially in politically sensitive areas. Such practices redefine meaning and tend to cause ideological framing.

This analysis establishes the active role of translators in the creation of crisis stories supporting the ethical aspect of their activity.

7. Ethical Implications of Crisis Translation

Crisis translation is associated with an increased level of ethical responsibility because it may influence the behavior of people and their perception. The translators need to strike the right balance between the speed requirement by the institutions and the professional requirements of accuracy and transparency. Translators are in difficult situations due to the absence of clear ethical rules.

8. Machine Translation and Crisis News

The increasing use of machine translations are an indication of the urgency in news making. Nevertheless, machines are not effective when it comes to ambiguity, cultural sensitivity, and ideological sensitivity. In the crisis situations, human control is still critical.

9. Conclusion

This paper has revealed that translation is one of the key elements of crisis communication and dissemination of breaking news. The translation of English-Arabic crisis is influenced by urgency, institutional and ideological factors. Although speed is a necessity, it must not take the place of ethical responsibility and accuracy.

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