

Local Cultural Sensitivity in Translating International News



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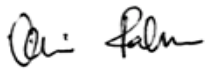
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Spring, 2024

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this internship report is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This internship report has been submitted with my approval.



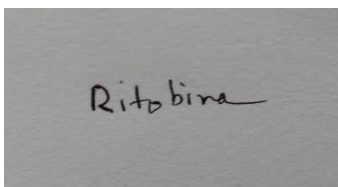
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DECLARATION

This internship report is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgment of collaborative research and discussions.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be "Ritobina" written in a cursive style.

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Dedication

To my Ma and Baba, who have always supported me, loved me, and stayed with me in my darkest hours. Thank you for being the best parents in the world.

Acknowledgments

Expressing gratitude towards the people who have had an impact on my life is a difficult task. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those who have been a part of my life in some capacity or the other.

I am deeply grateful to God for granting me the intelligence and strength to complete my report.

My mother deserves a separate acknowledgment for her kindness and patience. She has been the voice of reason during my foggy days, showing me the path to take. I also want to thank my father for giving me the confidence to dream and shaping me in more than one way. My brother has been a constant source of inspiration to me and a support system in my life, always helping me whenever I needed it.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Oliur Rahman Sun, for his patience and guidance during my internship. I am genuinely thankful for the valuable counseling he provided me with and for always being there to calm me down whenever I felt overwhelmed. His guidance was instrumental in my learning and growth during this period.

I also am appreciative to Ekattor Television for giving me this internship opportunity, and to the portal department for allowing me to be a part of their team and training me.

No acknowledgment would be complete without expressing gratitude to these individuals from whom I had the privilege of learning. I extend my sincere thanks to Sarah Anjum Bari Ma'am, Nishat Atiya Ma'am, Sudeep Chakravarti Sir, and Dr. Sohana Manzoor Ma'am for creating some of the most enriching learning experiences in the classroom. I vividly recall the innovative approach Bari Ma'am took in her classes, which ignited my passion for contemporary translated

literature. Her insightful ideas served as a driving force behind this paper. Additionally, I am grateful to the Head of the Department, Arifa Ghani Rahman Ma'am, for her constant encouragement and help in exploring diverse opportunities.

The Department of English Language and Humanities, thank you for providing me with this once-in-a-lifetime experience. These past four years have been some of the most memorable moments of my life.

During my internship, Mehelika Anan was always there to offer her assistance, and I am truly grateful for her constant support. Lastly, I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my friends for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout these four years. They stood by me through thick and thin.

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Abstract

In today's globalized world, international news plays a crucial role in shaping people's opinions and understanding of the world. This is especially true in Bangladesh, where news from around the world is translated into local languages, keeping the populace informed about important events and developments taking place beyond their borders. Translating international news into Bangla poses unique challenges for journalists who must navigate cultural sensitivity while maintaining journalistic integrity. This study explores the complexities of translating global news into Bangla within the Bangladeshi media landscape while maintaining local cultural sensitivity. For analysis, a mixed-methods approach has been taken, including survey and document analysis. The purpose of the study was to investigate how translators navigate cultural sensitivity while balancing cultural fidelity and journalistic responsibility, including linguistic and contextual adaptation in digital media. The study utilizes Mona Baker's Translation Theory and Geert Hofstede's Intercultural Communication Theories to elucidate how translators navigate cultural differences and linguistic complexities, ensuring the delivery of accurate and culturally sensitive news. The mixed methodology employed in this paper also provides an in-depth understanding of the factors shaping news translation in Bangladesh. Ultimately, this research examines how Bangla translators navigate cross-cultural communication and Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity when translating international news.

Keywords: Cultural sensitivity, international news translation, cultural fidelity, linguistic and contextual adaptations.

Chapter One

Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected world, translated news crosses the linguistic and cultural barriers, becoming an integral part of global communication. The translation of international news plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion while encouraging intercultural understanding and enabling informed discussion. "Intercultural communication is the communication between sources and receivers from different cultures, and good intercultural communication requires an interculturally sensitive attitude, cultural knowledge, as well as skills in frame-of-reference-shifting." (Nunez et al. 19) Nowhere is this more evident than in Bangladesh. In the Bangladeshi media landscape news is translated from diverse international sources. However, the process of translating international news into Bangla presents a unique set of challenges. Translators particularly need to navigate through the local cultural sensitivities while maintaining journalistic integrity. Understanding how cultural dynamics intersect with news translation is crucial for Bangladesh's engagement with the global community.

As information traverses linguistic and cultural boundaries, the process of translation becomes paramount, facilitating the transfer of news content to audiences around the world. However, translation is not merely a mechanical transfer of words from one language to another; it is a complex interplay of linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors that necessitates a nuanced approach to ensure effective communication and cultural sensitivity. "In translation studies, 'cultural translation' has been understood as 'any translation which is sensitive to cultural as well as linguistic factors'" (Katan 32) Translation and culture are intertwined with each other. Translators need to understand the context and cultural sensitivity of the language they are working

with. However, when it comes to translating international news, it becomes even more crucial to maintain cultural sensitivity and accuracy. This makes the role of translators even more important. Within the realm of news translation, even a simple word can hurt the readers' feelings and garner negative reactions from them. For that reason, understanding local cultural sensitivity is an integral part of news translation or journalistic translation.

This study delves into the intricacies of translating international news into Bangla within the Bangladeshi media landscape. It looks into how the translators navigate local cultural sensitivity while translating international news. To gain a deeper insight into the process employed by the translators to ensure cultural sensitivity is maintained, this study aims to analyze the survey responses provided by news editors from Ekattor Television, who are involved in international news translation.

1.1. Organization and the Internship:

Ekattor Television is a Bangladeshi satellite and cable news television channel. It is the first Bangla news-oriented broadcasting channel in Bangladesh. Additionally, the media house has an online page where they publish the news that is broadcast on the channel. In 2007 Ekattor started its journey, and in 2012 it started to give 24 x 7 live news coverage. As a socially responsible channel and news portal, Ekattor Television tries to bring out people's stories. It opened up doors for an interactive experience where the viewers themselves can participate.

I had an interest in working in the media industry, and especially in the international news department. I applied for an internship at Ekattor Television and was thankfully accepted here. I joined and did on-site work as a full-time intern for three months as part of my undergraduate degree completion requirement. The main purpose of working there was to gain

experience and knowledge about traditional media houses and familiarize myself with their working strategies when it comes to writing news. As an intern, I was assigned the position of a trainee news editor. My job responsibilities mainly included translating international news from English to Bangla for the portal department. I needed to search for recent international news, analyze and fact-check its information, and translate it into Bangla for Bangladeshi readers. I also had to proofread translated news and maintain cultural sensitivity in the news that I was assigned to. This Bangla-translated news is essential for keeping the Bangladeshi people informed about global events and shaping their perception of the world.

To proceed with my findings and analysis, the following research questions were developed to navigate a straightforward study process:

1.2. Research Questions:

The research questions that were investigated in the study are:

1. What linguistic and contextual adaptations are employed by translators to ensure cultural sensitivity in Bangla translations of international news in Bangladesh?
2. How has the evolving media landscape, including digital platforms and social media, influenced the cultural sensitivity of translated international news in Bangladesh?
3. How do Bangladeshi translators navigate the balance between cultural fidelity and the journalistic responsibility to convey information accurately and effectively?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In an era of globalization and interconnectedness, international media plays a pivotal role in shaping our global perspectives. In this interconnected world, translation plays a crucial role in understanding international news as it helps to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. This field of journalistic translation is crucial in interpreting and disseminating news content to diverse audiences. However, as the process of news translation was overlooked in the past, very little research was done on cross-cultural understanding and local cultural sensitivity of translated news. Similarly, little to no work has been done to understand the effect translated news has on Bangladesh's culture and how Bangla translators work to ensure local cultural sensitivity. Through a comparative analysis of scholarly works, including peer-reviewed articles, journals, and books, this literature review will explore this vast area of international news translation. These findings will provide crucial information on what kind of theoretical frameworks, methodological considerations, and practical implications were previously involved in translating news content across different cultures and languages.

“Journalistic translation (JTR)” has grown significantly over the years, reflecting an increasing interest in translating news content across languages and cultures. Professor Roberto A. Valdeón discusses this complex nature and ever-evolving significance of journalistic translation in his chapter "Translation and Culture in Mainstream Media and Journalism", which also provides a base to explore the field of translated news in Bangladesh. “What journalists do when they translate— ‘they are endeavoring to explain to members of one culture how members of another culture interpret the world and the events that take place within it’ (Valdeón 568), indicating they

attempt to explain how members of one culture interpret the world and events to members of another culture. Despite this, the role of translation in news production has only recently become a topic of substantial research interest within translation studies. The author focuses on the historical association between translation and newspapers, and different theories and methods used in studying journalistic translation, including trans-editing, gatekeeping, critical linguistics, narrative theory, and cultural studies. "Ideology has remained at the basis of many of these studies, which have explored how translation can modify the original message in order to emphasize the editorial line of the news company." (Valdeón 567) It analyzes how ideology shapes translation and new narratives for target audiences through linguistic and cultural adaptations. Although Valdeón's chapter is a good introduction to journalistic translation, it does not delve into how cultural sensitivity actually affects news translation.

Similarly, Professor Esperança Bielsa pointed out how news translation is vital for 'global journalism', facilitating the exchange of information across languages. Despite playing an essential role, it often goes unnoticed due to its seamless integration into journalistic practices. The article "News Translation" explores the role of journalists in translating news and the significant modifications that news text undergoes to suit diverse audiences. The distinction between domesticating and foreignizing translation strategies highlights the challenge of making foreign news accessible. While news agencies play a key role in delivering the news, the contributions of foreign correspondents and news editors are essential in interpreting cultural differences. Even though Bielsa's article talks about translation theory, like Valdeón's chapter, it does not fully look into how this theory is practically affecting news translation practices. As such, the study itself points out the scope for further exploration of this topic, particularly in reception studies and theoretical discussions.

On the other hand, the article “Journalistic Translation Research Goes Global: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations Five Years On” provides a comprehensive overview of the development of journalistic translation as a distinct subfield within translation studies since 2015. Roberto A. Valdeón used different approaches from discourse analytical, linguistic, sociological, and communication studies in this article. Nowadays researchers with diverse backgrounds explore news translation, including strategies, discourse analysis, translator roles, and new media's impact. However, this article highlights the importance of utilizing mixed methodologies to investigate these complexities in news translation. Valdeón employed narrative theory and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of ‘habitus’ and ‘capital’ in studies on journalistic translation. (Valdeón) Furthermore, traditional methods are acknowledged for clarifying the significance of translation in the evolution of journalism. Lastly, the article also highlights how journalistic translation globally has become a significant area of research within translation studies. Thus, opening the door to further employ this research in the context of journalistic translation in Bangladesh.

In "Cultural Studies and Journalism", Michael Meadows expressed how the field of journalism is not restricted to ‘journalists’ or ‘journalism educators’ only. The act of journalism typically involves examining external issues, institutions, and events. As such, it would be contradictory to suggest that only journalists are entitled to evaluate journalism itself. Meadows argues that journalism and media are too vital to democratic life to be gatekept by insiders. It narrows down the theories and research of this vast discipline. The article points out how journalism acts as a cultural resource by "comprising a set of cultural practices, which enable consensus formation - or 'cultural resource management.'" (Meadows 45) Cultural forms like 'media' and cultural processes like 'journalism', shape how we imagine ourselves and our

communities. The article helps to understand journalism's role in shaping cultural practice and its role in cultural sensitivity. This understanding can also be applied in the context of Bangladesh and how cultural sensitivity affects the translation process of international news.

Takuya Sakurai examines the influence of cultural factors, particularly cultural proximity, and affinity, on the flow of international news in his article “Cultural Factors in the Flow of International News: A Review of the Literature”. It discusses how various cultural aspects such as language, colonial ties, ethnicity, and geographical proximity have been conceptualized and operationalized in international communication studies. “The factors demonstrate that the flow of international news helps Western countries locate at the center of the process to select international news, and that the culturally closer countries are to those Western countries, the more likely they are selected.” (Sakurai 1-2) Western countries often dominate the selection and dissemination of news, leading to an imbalance in international news flow, and cultural factors play a role in this process. This is evident when Bangladeshi media covers international news; they tend to focus on Western news more. Unfortunately, even though Sakurai explores how international news is influenced by political, economic, and technological factors which ultimately shape global perceptions and reinforce the dominance of certain cultural perspectives. He does not specifically highlight the effect of international news on a country's culture. The article examines the complex relationship between culture, power, and communication when disseminating international news. However, it fails to provide any insight into how international news affects countries such as Bangladesh.

Despite technological and economic advancements, multilingualism and translation still play a significant role in news production, and author Lucile Davier's article “The Moving Boundaries of News Translation” explores this news translation field within the context of today's

media landscape. The article discusses news translation and its role in sharing information across languages. It also explores terms like "transediting," "localization," and "transadaptation," and the challenges of defining news translation due to its integration into the news production process. The article also highlights different approaches in news translation, including product-oriented, process-oriented, and reception-oriented trends. However, the article fails to study the cultural dimensions of news translation. "Even in the instances where a source article seems to exist, unexpected problems arise: the exact translation direction is not always clear." (Davier 73-74) Davier, herself, addresses the methodological challenges in news translation, including uncertainties about the article's source and the impact of media convergence. This, however, promotes a scope for further interdisciplinary research on news translation in the digital age, especially in the context of Bangladesh.

Ilana Gershon and Paul Manning critically examine the intricate relationship between language, mediation, and presence in various communication contexts in their chapter "Language and media" from the book *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology*. By examining the complexities of mediated communication, the authors highlight the importance of materiality in shaping our understanding of language and media. "Materiality in some form often becomes the basis for analytically distinguishing a language from media for many theorists" (Gershon and Manning 540) The chapter also gives an insight into how materiality shapes language and media by drawing on the theories of Charles Pierce and Friedrich Kittler. "The definition of 'entextualization'—the process in which an article is bound and made available for circulation in other articles—becomes an example in itself" (Gershon and Manning 541). The entextualization processes, however, contribute to the understanding of how the subtleties of culture are mediated and transformed in the process of translating documents. All these insights would help to

understand how practices of translation bridge cultural gaps while bringing in cultural sensitivity toward the sharing of global news.

The concept of electronic mediation has become an important aspect of the efforts to revitalize minority languages. Patrick Eisenlohr's article "Language Revitalization and New Technologies: Cultures of Electronic Mediation and the Refiguring of Communities" elaborates on the socio-cultural dynamics that continue to swirl around the issue of language obsolescence and revitalization. Analysis of the role of electronic media contributes towards the shifting of the minority language and opens up issues to access power and the creation of new linguistic genres. At the same time, it puts into focus the issues of electronic mass media use of minority languages and its effect on the "revitalization" of these minority languages with the indistinct impact of their use on ethnic identity politics. While the article makes an important contribution to the case for investigating the complex web of electronic mediation and language revitalization, the author fails to demonstrate the actualization of its potential in everyday language. The article primarily examines minority language communities in Europe and North America, potentially disregarding insights from other regions where electronic mediation is important for language revitalization. However, the article also sheds light on the importance of considering local cultural sensitivities in translation practices. Translators can convey cultural nuances and linguistic authenticity in their news translations by understanding diverse linguistic practices and identities within minority language communities.

In "Media Linguistics and Its Role in The Language of Modern Mass Media", Khodjayorov Malik Berdimurodovich provides an overview of media linguistics as an emerging field of study. The authors explore the language used in mass communication, particularly in evolving media technologies and globalization. Additionally, the paper highlights the influence of mass media on

societal attitudes, knowledge acquisition, and cultural values. It emphasizes the dominance of "screen culture" in shaping the global information spaces. Even though Berdimurodovich identifies the dominance of Anglo-American mass media and the infiltration of English vocabulary into other languages, it fails to delve deeply into distinctive linguistic and cultural implications throughout the world. The article also did not specify the linguistic and cultural implications of this phenomenon in various global contexts. However, by using this article's media linguistic overview and theoretical lenses in a more practical setting, local cultural sensitivity can be more effectively promoted in international news translation.

Professor Esperança Bielsa in her article "Translation in Global News Agencies" highlights the critical role of news agencies in managing linguistic diversity and facilitating the dissemination of global news through translation. Bielsa traces the evolution of news agencies from translation-focused entities to global news providers like Reuters, Associated Press, and Agence France Presse. These agencies provide news translation in major European languages, with translation being an integral part of their operations. (Bielsa) "In the case of other languages, it is the subscribing news organizations which assume the task of translating the information provided by the news agencies." (Bielsa 136) As pointed out by the author, journalists of these news agencies are responsible for translating content while also managing other tasks, with the goal of maintaining adherence to journalistic standards. News translation involves adapting source texts to suit the target audience. This often entails changes in titles, leads, and content. The article emphasizes the translator's role as a "recreator" or "writer," prioritizing the communication of information over strict fidelity to the source text. It also highlights challenges in news translation and emphasizes the importance of translation in bridging language barriers and facilitating global communication. These findings provide detailed information about the challenges a journalist

faces in translating news which can help us understand the news translation that occurs in local news agencies and how translation in global news agencies works.

Hence, all these informative articles and books have accommodated in conducting the study by offering an in-depth premise to understand the intricate dynamics of international news translation in this increasingly globalized world. Therefore, it adds up to the knowledge and information of the study for critical and analytical analysis.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1. Study Approach:

Although throughout history studies have been conducted on language translation, the field of ‘Translation Studies’ is relatively new. “At one time, the term ‘translation studies’ implied more emphasis on literary translation and less on other forms of translation, including interpreting, as well as a lack of interest in practical issues such as pedagogy, but this is no longer the case.” (Baker 277) Globalization has connected us with the rest of the world, and with that, our understanding of different cultures has also increased. Among several sub-fields of translation, international news translation or journalistic translation has become a prominent field that influences people’s perception of the world.

Particularly the field of journalistic translation has not been adequately studied in Bangladesh. In order to determine the impact of translated news on local cultural sensitivity, this study examines the perspectives of practitioners involved in international news translations, provides examples of translated news, and explores relevant theories. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, this study utilized mixed-methods research. A survey was conducted among seven newsroom editors from the portal department of Ekattor Television, tasked with the translation of international news for their online platform. The responses obtained from these editors were then subjected to statistical analysis as part of this research endeavor. As part of this study, the news contents that I translated during my internship at Ekattor Television are analyzed to understand how local media actually does their translation. The study also used peer-reviewed academic journals and books from authentic sources for evidence and secondary sources. The paper critically

analyzes how Bangla translators ensure local cultural sensitivity while translating international news. Additionally, it is important to understand how digital platforms and social media are influencing the cultural sensitivity of translated international news in Bangladesh. This interdisciplinary paper uses Mona Baker's Translation Theory as well as Geert Hofstede's Intercultural Communication Theory for its theoretical lens. Translators' incorporation of cultural sensitivity in translating international news from English to Bangla can be understood through these theoretical lenses.

3.2. Why Baker and Hofstede?

Presently, translators must consider both the linguistic and cultural elements of news. Nowadays, international news translation is more than just converting news from one language to another. In the 1992 book *In Other Words A Coursebook on Translation*, Baker stated that,

As translators, we are primarily concerned with communicating the overall meaning of a stretch of language. To achieve this, we need to start by decoding the units and structures which carry that meaning. The smallest unit which we would expect to possess individual meaning is the word. Defined loosely, the word is 'the smallest unit of language that can be used by itself'. (10-11)

Translators do not translate news literally. They convey the essence of news in a way that resonates with the target audience and also stays faithful to the original information. In order to understand how this translated news is written and how it is affecting local cultural sensitivity the study incorporates two primary theoretical aspects from Mona Baker's Translation Theory and Geert Hofstede's Intercultural Communication Theories: Cultural Dimensions. For the Translation Theory Mona Baker's books, *In Other Words A Coursebook on Translation* (1992) and *Routledge*

Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (1998) chapter “Translation Studies” are being used as references and concepts. On the other, for a better understanding of Hofstede's theory on cultural dimensions, the references used pertain to *Theories of Intercultural Communication* (2020) and *Intercultural Sensitivity: From Denial to Intercultural Competence* (2017).

Translation theory is critical in reviewing the process, strategies, and difficulties that come with translating texts from one language into another while the cultural sensitivity remains. Baker includes the cultural element in her theory of translation, among other elements of translation. This kind of work is valuable for us to understand how translators mediate cultural and ideological gaps and negotiate cultural subtleties in translation practice. Similarly, Hofstede's cultural dimension theory provides insight into cultural differences among different societies. It also identified several cultural dimensions like individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, etc. These dimensions provide a framework for how cultural differences can impact communication and translation practices.

By combining Baker and Hofstede's theories a comprehensive understanding can be developed on how local cultural sensitivity is maintained in international news. This interdisciplinary approach explores the complex interplay between translation practices, cultural factors, and communication dynamics.

3.3. Data Collection:

During my internship at Ekattor Television, I was able to produce close to 300 translated international news for the portal department. The subject of the news varies from political, religious, war-related, day-event, and entertainment. As a maker and researcher of translated news, this content is going to be used in document analysis. Some selected translated news articles will

be used as examples for this paper. These news articles will be analyzed through the use of secondary sources from which a comparison can be made between the original English news and the translated Bangla news. This comparison can help identify specific linguistic and contextual adaptations that were made during the translation.

Structured surveys were taken of the seven newsroom editors who are responsible for the international news translation for Ekattor Television. The participants who are currently part of the portal department are males and females between the age range of 20 to 40. Their work experience in the media industry varies differently. The most senior newsroom editor of the portal department has more than a decade's worth of experience in the media industry, and the most junior newsroom editor has been working just over half a year. A set of questions was given to these participants to share their honest opinions and knowledge based on their experiences in the media industry and perspectives on the common challenges faced during translation, particularly concerning Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity. The sections are as follows–

1. Newsroom Editor Survey:

- Demographic Questions
- Approaches in News Translation
- Impact of Digital Media
- Importance of Linguistic and Contextual Factor
- Common Challenges in News Translation
- Accuracy in Translating News
- Ethical Consideration
- Additional Comments

3.4. Limitations of the Study:

Due to time and resource constraints, the survey was conducted at only one media house, Ekattor Television, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the limited number of participants might affect the accuracy and dependability of the outcomes. Conducting it across multiple media channels would increase diversity and would have helped to understand what kind of approach their translator takes in ensuring the local cultural sensitivity in news translation.

Another limitation of this research was that, due to time constraints, the study did not observe the long-term impact of digital media on translated news. In this day and age, digital media influences people's ideas of culture and cultural sensitivity. Even though this study examines the impact of digital platforms and social media on the cultural sensitivity of translated international news in Bangla. However, it does not explore how over time digital media has influenced culture and cultural sensitivity, and throughout the years what kind of adjustments translators needed to make to their writing style to maintain local cultural sensitivity in their translated news.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Discussions

Bangladesh's media industry has made significant progress since the country gained independence. Domestic news is now well-covered by various media houses. However, due to a lack of resources, Bangladeshi media outlets often fall short compared to larger international ones. Rather than sending their own correspondents, most Bangladeshi media houses, including Ekattor Television, rely on sources such as BBC, Reuters, Aljazeera, CNN, The Guardian, The Times, New York Post, etc. for international news coverage. The translation of international news produced by translators is affected by this issue. As international news is sourced from a secondary source, cultural translation becomes necessary. Since Bangladeshi news media cannot afford to cover international news from the source, translators need to translate news from various cultures and also maintain Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity in those translations.

The practitioners involved in international news translations play a vital role in bringing news from various global media outlets and translating it into Bengali for the people of Bangladesh. However, it is not as easy as it seems. Bangla translators in Bangladesh must navigate linguistic nuances, cultural references, and sensitive topics to accurately and effectively translate international news for local audiences. "The words of a language often reflect not so much the reality of the world, but the interests of the people who speak it." (Palmer 21) News translators face the challenge of linguistically translating the language and being sensitive to the local cultural nuances. Translators employ various strategies to ensure that the translated content not only accurately reflects the original source material but also resonates with the local audience.

4.1. Linguistic and Contextual Adaptations for Cultural Sensitivity in Bangla Translations of International News in Bangladesh:

Ekattor Television's newsroom editors translate international news into Bangla daily. While doing this they need to be extremely careful of the product they are producing. According to the 2006 paper “Translating the News: Reframing Constructed Realities”,

The writer frames his or her construction of reality into text, turning knowledge into information. Information is inactive knowledge comprising data, known facts or things used as the basis for inferences or reckoning. When the text is submitted to translation, the information is converted into knowledge as perceived by the translator. (Darwish 61)

Participants Response:

How important do you consider linguistic and contextual factors when adapting international news articles for Bangladeshi audiences?

7 responses

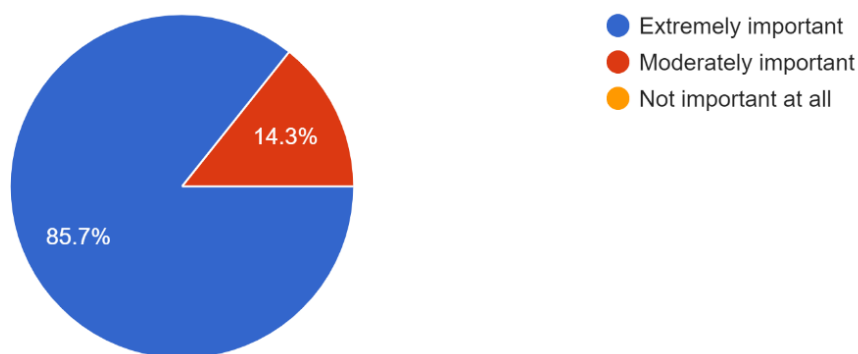


Chart 1: Participants response on the importance of linguistic and contextual factors in adapting international news

Participants	Response for: What are some common challenges you face when translating international news articles into Bangla, particularly in terms of Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity? Please explain your answer.
P1	We must handle news about LGBTQ and religious conflict with caution. I also need to consider whether to cover such news or not.
P2	In terms of Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity, the challenges we face when translating international news articles are not that much like before. Bangladeshi culture has become more aligned with global culture nowadays. But still, we consider a few things to represent a translated copy publicly: It doesn't contain any information that targets a particular group, especially minorities or less privileged, it doesn't work as a provocation for a communal conflict, it doesn't humiliate any culture, race, gender or people of any particular belief.
P3	As Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country, religion plays an important role in the culture of its people. Therefore, the impact of religion on culture is often evident. While I may have a personal interest in various Western cultures, I must also consider the religious and cultural sensitivities of the people in Bangladesh. For instance, I cannot promote all types of culture, such as LGBTQ culture, without taking into account the potential impact on the local population's beliefs and values.
P4	Translating international news articles requires a deep understanding of cultural nuances and contexts. Different languages have unique slang, jargon, and political terminology that may not directly translate, requiring explanations or footnotes to maintain accuracy
P5	The manner in which news is published is reflective of the culture of the country. However, when using pictures, certain elements such as alcohol and blood are avoided, but this is not an issue here.
P6	Cultural barriers, religious views, political alliances, and diplomatic stand-all these are the main challenges we face during translating international news articles into Bangla.

P7	We avoid using harsh language or revealing victims' names, especially women. However, this makes it difficult to comprehend news without names.
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Table 1: Participants' response on the linguistic and contextual challenges while translating news.

The survey responses had been collected in English with an online survey from February 2024 to March 2024. The study gave an insight into the translators' views on the significance of linguistic and contextual factors when translating international news articles. In the survey, the majority of the participants considered linguistic and contextual factors extremely important when adapting international news, and only one participant disagreed with it.

The survey reveals that translators encounter challenges when dealing with sensitive topics such as “LGBTQ rights” and “religious conflicts”. They need to navigate these topics delicately to ensure that the translated contents align with and respect Bangladeshi cultural sensitivities. Translators also adapt their tone and language in order to avoid offending the readers. All of these precautions are taken because Bangladesh is not an ‘individualistic society’. Rather, it is more of a ‘collectivist society’ where people are a part of a group from birth. “People are part of larger groups from birth and it is the responsibility of the extended family or another larger group to protect individuals. In return, loyalty to such a larger social unit is expected.” (Panocová 33) According to Hofstede, the dimension of individualism versus collectivism is universal, and as a result, it is also present in Bangladeshi society. Therefore, it can be observed that Bangladeshi society tends to set a boundary for the translators as they need to cater to what the mass wants. Through the survey, it is evident that the translators carefully select language that aligns with the cultural norms and values of the target audience. These include choosing appropriate vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and tone to convey the intended message effectively. “Elements of meaning

which are represented by several orthographic words in one language say English, may be represented by one orthographic word in another, and vice versa.” (Baker 11) Translators also navigate through linguistic nuances, slang, and political terminology to maintain accuracy in their translated news. This involves choosing appropriate Bangla words that are equivalent to the cultural connotations of certain words and expressions of international news.

In the survey, another aspect of linguistic adaptation has also emerged. Translators take precautions in avoiding harsh language and protecting the identities of victims, especially women. Due to Ekattor Television’s policy, news editors refrain from revealing the victim's names or using language that could further victimize or stigmatize them. However, it influences the translator’s work as they need to navigate through it to accurately present the translated news. Achieving the perfect balance between accuracy and effectiveness of translation is crucial for any translator. By ensuring that the translated content effectively resonates with Bangladeshi readers and aligns with their cultural values, beliefs, and norms, the core message of the original news article is accurately conveyed.

4.2. Influence of Digital Platforms and Social Media on Cultural Sensitivity in Translated International News:

Digital platforms and social media rapidly broke all boundaries and connected different cultures across the globe. Similarly, it has also connected the Bangladeshi people with the rest of the world and their unique culture. “Being able to transmit vast amounts of information rapidly from continent to continent, we have transformed a widely spread and diverse world into a single global megapolis.” (Darwish 53) The impact of digital platforms and social media on cultural

sensitivity in translated international news is significant and complex. These platforms have greatly transformed how news is consumed, distributed, and comprehended in Bangladesh. Thus, creating both chances and difficulties in preserving cultural sensitivity in translations. The widespread access to information has increased exposure to diverse perspectives and cultures, potentially leading to increased cultural awareness and sensitivity among audiences.

Participants Response:

Do you believe that digital media has impacted the cultural sensitivity of translated news articles in your work?

7 responses

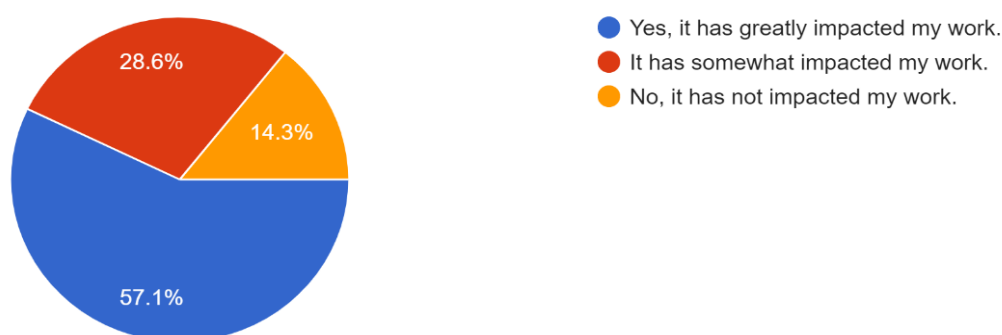


Chart 2: Influence of digital media on translated news.

The survey is a microcosm where seven newsroom editors of Ekattor Television shared their thoughts on how digital media has impacted their translation work. The survey included responses from both male and female editors with different levels of work experience. Some of the participants even have 15 years of work experience. The data collected through this survey provides valuable insights into the effects of digital media on newsroom editors. A majority of newsroom editors shared that digital media has greatly impacted their work, with only one exception. As a result, 57.1% of respondents stated that digital media had a significant impact on their translated news, while only 14.3% believe their work has not been impacted by digital

platforms or social media. Also, two participants believed their work has been somewhat influenced by digital media, making it 28.6%. From the survey, it is evident that digital platforms play a significant role in today's news translation.

Digital platforms and social media made it possible for readers to be active participants in what kind of international news is going to be produced. "To reach out to these people, most major news outlets publish a selection of their news items on social network sites, often in the form of links to their own websites with short additional messages." (Davies and Conway 85) Newsroom editors, especially those translating international news, carefully monitor various social media platforms to identify trending news. Whenever any translated international news article gains popularity, subsequent articles on the same topic tend to follow. Though this practice caters to the reader's preference, it also tends to ignore news which are less popular, but no less important. Takuya Sakurai, in his 2017 paper "Cultural Factors in the Flow of International News: A Review of the Literature", pointed out that developed Western countries are at the center of international news because they dominate the economy and, by extension, the culture of the world. During my internship at Ekattor Television, I observed that international news, from these developing countries, does well and gets more attention from the readers, even if the news topic is mundane. As a result, most international news in Bangladesh is from these specific developed countries that the Bangladeshi readers are obsessed with. It creates a hierarchy that highlights the unequal coverage of international news. Geert Hofstede explained it as a 'power distance'.

Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from

above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. (Hofstede 9)

It shapes the audience's cultural sensitivity and understanding of culture, creating filter bubbles and echo chambers, where individuals are exposed only to information that aligns with their existing beliefs and biases. It also presents challenges such as the spread of misinformation and the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes. Misinformation can distort cultural perceptions and hinder cultural sensitivity in translated international news. Thus, creating challenges for the translators as they need to maneuver through it.

4.3. Navigating Cultural Fidelity and Journalistic Responsibility Translated International News:

Navigating cultural fidelity and journalistic responsibility is not easy. To ensure it the translated news needs to accurately reflect the cultural values, beliefs, and norms of the target audience. Simultaneously, this translated news also needs to uphold journalistic standards of accuracy, impartiality, and effectiveness. “Translation conveys all the source text’s meaning, making only those adjustments necessary for cultural appropriateness without adding, omitting, condensing, or adapting anything else.” (Katan 21) This process requires translators to balance cultural authenticity and as well as, doing their duty by conveying information faithfully. Regarding Bangladeshi news translation, the translator must navigate the potential cultural differences between the source material and the target audience, while also ensuring that the translated news resonates with the cultural context of Bangladesh.

Participants Response:

Participants	Response for: How do you make sure translated information is aligned with the Bangladeshi culture's values, beliefs, norms, and practices without compromising its accuracy and effectiveness?
P1	N/A
P2	Nowadays Bangladeshi culture's values, beliefs, norms, and practices have become more aligned with global culture. So, it became easier to present translated information without compromising its accuracy and effectiveness. Yet there are some issues still. In those particular cases, we tend to use soft and noncontroversial terms in translated copies to ensure that they are properly aligned with the Bangladeshi culture's values, beliefs, norms, and practices.
P3	I seek guidance from senior colleagues and wait if they are unavailable or do not write that news at all.
P4	Recognizing the nuances of Bangladeshi communication styles is crucial. Bangladeshis tend to communicate indirectly, avoid confrontations, and use polite language. Translators should adapt to these communication norms to convey messages effectively
P5	First, the news has to be verified in multiple outlets. Then I tend to be careful not to change the news while translating.
P6	If we give the right information and follow laws, news ethics, and statistics; these are the main ingredients for effective news.
P7	Religious and war news, such as the Gaza conflict, have a significant impact on the Bangladeshi people. We strive to maintain neutrality in our language and consider various new media sources when presenting the news.

Table 2: Participants' response to translated information is alignment with the evolving cultural landscape of Bangladesh.

In response to the survey, the participant's response highlights their awareness of the evolving cultural landscape in Bangladesh and the alignment of local cultural values with global norms. Even though some participants lack knowledge of aligning translated material with Bangladesh's cultural values. However, most participants actively evolve their translations to match Bangladesh's changing cultural landscape. The survey suggests that while certain aspects of Bangladeshi culture may be more compatible with global standards, there are still sensitive areas where caution is warranted. Participant's translated work often uses soft language to navigate contentious issues while maintaining accuracy and effectiveness. This approach balances cultural fidelity and journalistic responsibility, ensuring that translated information resonates with Bangladeshi sensitivities while fulfilling journalistic goals. While examining the response it is evident that 'uncertainty avoidance' is particularly relevant here.

Uncertainty Avoidance is not the same as risk avoidance; it deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict behavioral codes, laws and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions, and a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. (Hofstede 10)

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures like Bangladesh, news translators may prioritize clarity, stability, and conformity in their translations. The news translator becomes more cautious when handling ambiguous or controversial topics, opting for a more neutral language to avoid potential misunderstanding and conflict. Translators adjust their communication strategies to align with cultural preferences for effective communication and stability while maintaining accuracy in

journalism. Uncertainty avoidance gives insights into how cultural factors influence translators' approaches to navigating cultural fidelity and journalistic responsibility in Bangladeshi news translation.

Chapter Five

Findings on English and Bangla Translated News

I had the opportunity to intern at Ekattor Television's portal department. During my internship, I worked as an international news translator and translated English news into Bangla. It provided me with valuable insight into the translation process within the Bangladeshi journalistic sector. Comparing an English news article to its Bangla translation can be difficult, as we often do not do a literal or direct translation of the news. Bangla and English are two distinct languages with unique cultures and concepts. They differ in their linguistic structures, vocabularies, phonetics, and meaning. For this reason, a literal translation of the English news article will not be coherent. "The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food." (Baker 21) While translating the news, we checked if there were any culture-specific parts in the original news and how they would translate into Bangla. Translators do take some liberties but maintain the essence and information of the source material.

While interning at Ekattor Television, I noticed that English and Bangla-translated news articles differ in many ways, one of which is the title and the language. My workplace supervisor advised me to make the translated Bangla title interesting so that readers would be curious enough to read the whole article for more information. Many media houses in Bangladesh tend to translate their international news from other international media sources, resulting in similar content across different publications. However, by changing the headlines and making them more interesting, these translators try to grab the readers' attention and persuade them to read their translated articles instead of others. Also, there is a higher 'power distance' (Hofstede) in the language and as such,

it is evident in the Bangla-translated news. Power distance in language refers to the hierarchy of communication styles. As Bangladeshi culture has a high power distance, the news language is often very formal and polite. Translator needed to maintain an appropriate level of formality in their translations.

Since translators obtain their information from secondary sources, there may be some inherent bias in the original news. Therefore, translated news aims to be as neutral as possible, so that the news is not contaminated with the translator's perspective or ideology. To ensure objective and less personal articles, translated news is often written in the third person. For example, in February 2024, the BBC reported on a father who lost 103 family members in the Gaza-Israel war, which garnered attention from many readers. The news article was originally written from the father's perspective, detailing the events that led to the death of his family. However, when translating the article, it was necessary to maintain an informative tone. As a result, the article was rewritten in a neutral tone. Any quotes used in the news were properly attributed to their original source material.

Words play an essential role in maintaining cultural sensitivity. However, it is not uncommon for certain words in the English language to be notoriously difficult to translate or have no direct equivalent in Bangla. Thus, thereby highlighting the challenges of maintaining cultural sensitivity in cross-cultural communication. In those cases, the translators take the liberty to choose a word that is as close as possible to the original meaning. On the other hand, some English words when accurately translated into Bangla can lead to negative reactions from the readers. Therefore, translators must make a conscious decision to use a different word. In the 1992 book *In Other Words* talks about this specific problem of word translation,

Words like homosexuality and homosexual provide good examples. Homosexuality is not an inherently pejorative word in English, although it is often used in this way. On the other hand, the equivalent expression in Arabic, *shithuth jinsi* (literally: 'sexual perversion'), is inherently more pejorative and would be quite difficult to use in a neutral context without suggesting strong disapproval. (Baker 24)

Baker shows how even translating the same word can cause problems as there are cultural barriers. In a particular news piece related to religion, the word 'scholar' was used, which translates to 'পণ্ডিত (Paṇḍita)', someone who is an expert in that topic, in Bengali. Although the translation was not incorrect, considering the context of the news and Bangladesh's cultural sensitivity, it could have sparked a negative reaction from the audience. Therefore, to avoid any controversy, the term 'ধর্মীয় বিশেষজ্ঞ (Dharma biśēsajña)' or 'religious expert' was used instead. It is important to understand that a direct translation is often not suitable due to cultural context. In the Bangladeshi cultural context, the term 'পরকীয়া (Parakīyā)' is commonly employed to denote 'adultery or extramarital affair'. When reporting on international news involving instances of adultery, the term 'পরকীয়া (Parakīyā)' is typically utilized. However, in cases where the subject matter is sensitive, the term 'ব্যভিচার (Byabhicāra)', which also translates directly to 'adultery', is preferred. For instance, when the Taliban edict to resume stoning women to death for 'adultery' was reported in March 2024, the word 'ব্যভিচার (Byabhicāra)' was used to maintain cultural sensitivity and graveness of the topic. In such instances, the selection of different words aims to mitigate any potential negative connotations and ensure respectful discourse. This type of cultural sensitivity not only affects society but also influences the writing style of translators, making it easier to

understand the language differences they navigate. Also, the following findings provide an initial insight into the language-related component of translating news.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Globalization has bound Bangladesh to connect more with the rest of the world, and international news translation has played a crucial role in strengthening this connection. Translation in journalism is very important, as it shapes one's opinion. However, cultural sensitivity also affects this translation process. It is important to understand the context and cultural sensitivities of local news in order to facilitate good translation. The aim of this research was to look into the complex dynamics of translating international news items into Bangla while being sensitive to the issues related to culture. Translating international news into Bangla requires some difficult challenges and several strategies to apply. The present study aimed to take the perspective of practitioners, examples of translated news items, and theoretical frameworks that give insights into the process of translating news. In fact, the findings emphasize linguistic and contextual adaptation in translating the news to reflect the cultural sensitivities of Bangladeshi people rather than direct linguistic translation. On many occasions, translators preferred contextual translation, rather than direct linguistic translation. Translators must be able to navigate sensitive topics, linguistic nuances, and cultural references in order to help deliver information both clearly and in reverence of the norms and values of cultures. Besides, the intervention of digital platforms and social media in the course of news translation makes it very important for news translators to adapt to audience preferences and consumption pattern changes. Summing up, this piece of research tried to make sense of the complex interplay of language, culture, and journalism in the translation of international news into Bangla.

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Appendix

Survey Questionnaire Form:

Local Cultural Sensitivity in International News Translation Survey for Newsroom Editor's

Dear Participant,

We would like to ask you to participate in the data collection for a study on "**Local Cultural Sensitivity in International News Translation**", conducted by an undergraduate student of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh. You will find more information about the study on the attached project outline.

We hope to better understand the following issues:

- The significance of linguistic and contextual factors when adapting news articles for Bangladeshi audiences.
- Approaches to translation taken by the translators when rendering international news articles into Bangla.
- Identifying common challenges faced during translation, particularly concerning Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity
- How translators ensure that translated information aligns with Bangladeshi cultural values without compromising accuracy and effectiveness?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and will be of approximately 5-10 minutes in length to take place by arrangement.

Thank you for your participation.

* Indicates required question

1. Name *

Your answer

2. Age *

Mark only one circle

- ☐ 20-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50 or older

3. How long have you been working in the media industry? *

Your answer _____

4. Please indicate how frequently you employ different approaches when translating international news articles into Bangla. *

Mark only one circle

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

5. If your previous answer is 'Always', please write down the approach you typically take when translating international news articles into Bangla.

Your answer _____

6. Do you believe that digital media has impacted the cultural sensitivity of translated news articles in your work? *

Mark only one circle

- ☐ Yes, it has greatly impacted my work.
- ☐ It has somewhat impacted my work.
- ☐ No, it has not impacted my work.

7. How important do you consider linguistic and contextual factors when adapting international news articles for Bangladeshi audiences? *

Mark only one circle

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Not important at all

8. What are some common challenges you face when translating international news articles into Bangla, particularly in terms of Bangladeshi cultural sensitivity? Please explain your answer. *

Your answer

9. How do you make sure translated information is aligned with the Bangladeshi culture's values, beliefs, norms, and practices without compromising its accuracy and effectiveness? *

Your answer

10. How successful do you believe your translations are in accurately conveying *
the intended tone and message of the original English articles while also
resonating with Bangladeshi cultural norms and values?

Mark only one circle

- ☐ Extremely successful
- ☐ Moderately successful
- ☐ Not successful at all

11. To what extent do ethical considerations influence your translation process *
when dealing with cultural sensitivity in international news articles?

Mark only one circle

- ☐ Extremely
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ Slightly
- ☐ Not at all

12. Additional comments

Your answer

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