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ENGLISH–GREEK NEWS CREATING NARRATIVES: A TRANSLATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This research observes and explores how the Greek press translates news; it takes as a starting point that newspapers ‘pool in’ translation to indulge their readers in global stories packaged in a localized context, before focusing on the target text (TT) itself, analyzed as a text bracketed in the institutional space of the newspaper that accommodates it. In doing so, it mobilizes tools that enable analysis of translated language and reflection of its output(s). Although this research ranges over a variety of subjects associated to news discourse and translation, yet it chooses to privilege a narrative perspective, as it believes that it is narrative as a unit of analysis that has the power to expound the full meaning-making potential of translated language.

Two are the thematic threads that underpin this research and have offered the material for the analysis. One is political and the other biomedical, while both meet in the narratives claimed by the TT newspapers which articulate them. One explores translations that have made it in the Greek press and re-narrate the American President B. Obama, while the other generates conclusions by looking at translated news texts on health and science. The data derived from a parallel corpus of source (English) and target (Greek) texts culled from three Greek newspapers of mass circulation i.e. I Kathimerini, To Vima and Ta Nea (Greek version of the corpus 48,567 words).

Results from the political sub-corpus establish translation as a process that is not ignorant of target culture expectations and specificities. In particular, findings expose the active role of newspapers in

drawing on B. Obama's ontological narratives and in manipulating his biographical story lines. Also, the corpus yields results of a set of public narratives that move and operate above the level of single individuals and reflect collective TT cultural preferences, such as uncertainty avoidance. The political sub-corpus is also telling of how translation encapsulates representations of the voting mass and how it reconceptualises, re-frames and re-writes meaning(s) in relation the Leader and Politics.

On its part, the biomedical sub-corpus clearly shows how newspapers participate in the treatment of texts on health and science either by obturating and suppressing source narratives vis-à-vis which the target text readers are deemed to exhibit resistance or by playing up those narratives that are expected to reinforce target culture preferences. Interestingly, translation choices in this corpus oscillate between frames of risk and fear about health that is translated as being in danger by life-threatening diseases and those of hope and optimism about science that is narrated as protecting man from the fear of disease.

Apart from cross-newspaper differences in the articulation and deployment of narratives, all three newspapers share two common features. On the one hand, findings consent that all of them adopt a mediating behaviour when undertaking translation and employ, in varying degrees, framing strategies to advance their institutional agendas. On the other, results indicate that translation often exhibits both remoteness from the narratives that circulate in the source text environment and a degree of intimacy with corresponding ones that are present, and often persistent, in the target text environment.

Findings establish themselves as significant to the extent that they highlight cross-cultural variation which is landscaped through translation, identified and isolated in narrative and played out in the institutional setting of newspapers.