

# International Trans-Editing: Typical Intercultural Communication Strategies at the BBC World Service Turkish Radio

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## Abstract

Whenever a piece of local news is transmitted to the global reader, it is not simply translated into another language, but becomes part of intercultural communication. The main aim in this paper is to investigate how international news stories written in English are prepared for Turkish readers. The comparative analysis of English and Turkish news stories from the BBC World Service's websites shows that it involves a translating and an editing task, termed as "international trans-editing". This text analysis, along with an interview with the head of the BBC World Service Turkish Radio and participant observation conducted among their trans-editors, permit us to explore the peculiarities of this process and to identify some of its typical patterns.

**Keywords:** Trans-editing, radio, internet news, intercultural communication

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## 1. Introduction

In times of globalization any important incident taking place in one corner of the world is immediately reported to the other corner. Thanks to globalised media, news is no longer only confined to information about a minister's speech in one's own country or the story on a regional economic crisis, today it is world news.

The BBC World Service is just one among many media corporations which provide news from and to the globe. However, when the jingle of the BBC World Service announces, "This is the BBC World Service in Beijing, in Kampala, in Moscow, in Istanbul. Wherever you are, you are with the BBC", pronouncing the cities' names with changing accents, it implicitly acknowledges that all news still has a local provenance and needs to be transported to various local audiences throughout the world.

If all human beings on the globe spoke one language, and if they all comprehended the meaning of the news in the same way, the task of globalised media would be reduced to providing the technical equipment for transmitting their broadcasts to the remotest corners of the world. But mankind doesn't speak one language, and, moreover, they make sense of what they understand in very different ways.

Hence global media is confronted with the difficult task to transfer news into different languages and to make it comprehensible for the respective local audience. As a specific manifestation of intercultural communication this task includes both skills of translating and of editing. To underpin the link between both we have chosen to coin this task "international trans-editing". This article deals with practices of international trans-editing which we have identified during an interview and our observations at the Turkish radio station of the BBC World Service as well as by an analysis of its products, i.e. of a range of news stories which have been trans-edited by the Turkish web team at the BBC.

Before we attend to the empirical analysis of the trans-editing process at the BBC World Service Turkish radio, we would like to elaborate on the theoretical background of translation and intercultural communication via media (chapter 2). We will then start the empirical analysis with some insights into the practices of the Turkish service, as observed by ourselves and reflected in an interview with its head (chapter 3). Then, based on an analysis of a sample of Turkish news stories, which we have compared to

their English source text, we will finally identify some typical patterns of international trans-editing (chapter 4). [1]

## 2. Intercultural communication and translation via media

Global media shoulders the tasks of both intercultural communication and translation. As Bielsa & Bassnett (2009:11) underpin, in global media "translation is one element in a complex set of processes whereby information is transposed from one language into another and then edited, rewritten, shaped and repackaged in a new context". Among others, this new context is constituted by the culture of the target audience which may differ significantly from that of the place where the reported event took place. Intercultural communication refers to bridging this gap between the cultural context of the reported event and the cultures of audiences.

### Culture as Collective Experience

When analyzing intercultural communication and translation in global media it seems to be self-evident to conceive of culture as a symbolic structure that conjoins the members of one nation or ethnic group and separates them from other nations or ethnic groups. However this national-ethnic definition of culture risks to confound two interweaved but distinct aspects: differences of collective experience on the one hand and the language barrier on the other (cf. Ma 2004). We would therefore like to propose a perspective on culture which brings collective experience into focus. Such collective experience may be located on the level of national culture and linked to a distinct language, but it may also conjoin members of a generation, a milieu or a social class within one language (cf. Bohnsack/Nohl 2003).

To take an example for national collective experience, the US presidential elections, which we will elaborate on in chapter 4, are an experience actively shared by US citizens who may (or may not) engage in the primary, take part in the campaigns, choose to vote and who are excited about the election results. Such a shared experience conjoins people (even if they vote for different candidates) and separates them from outsiders, e.g. Europeans. Because the outsiders didn't actively take part in the event they lack all the practical knowledge emerging from this experience. Drawing on Karl Mannheim (1997:203) we propose to call this experience "conjunctive experience", because it conjoins, i.e. binds people together. Knowledge arising from conjunctive experience is "completely one-sided" and constitutes a "perspective", because the experience "captures only one aspect, one perspective of the vis-à-vis" (ibid.:191). Such knowledge emerges wherever people are actively involved in an event, e.g. during the financial crisis of 2008, in the negotiations about nuclear weapons with North Korea, during a murder or a major rock concert.

Now it is the task of the journalist to report any such event to an audience which may not have – and as concerns global media most probably has not – shared the respective experience and hence doesn't have the same perspective and one-sidedness. If the journalist would then only describe the event as such (for example, writing: "after a fierce campaign Obama has won the primaries in Iowa"), she would have failed to do her job. This is because for the outsider, who has never experienced US elections before, the term "primaries" would remain opaque.

### Rendering Conjunctive Experience Comprehensible

As Harold Garfinkel has shown, everyday communication is based on "background understandings" (1967:44) that are constitutive for comprehension but not explicated. These understandings – "what anyone like us necessarily knows" (ibid.:54) – are based on the assumption that one comprehends a word or term, which indicates an event, in the same way as the other. However this "indexicality" (Garfinkel) of words becomes apparent if a term refers to or 'indicates' a context of conjunctive experiences which the outsider has not shared and may not practically know (e.g. the election process in the US). As Karl Mannheim argues, words may "designate a specific thing in a specific function in its unique relationship to us and to our specific conjunctive community" (1997:196-7). Hence it is the task of the journalist (or her editor) to provide the audience with the necessary context information for indexical words in order to render it comprehensible (which would be redundant if the event would only be reported to insiders).[2]

The indexicality of words reveals that even within one language, meaning may vary from one "conjunctive experiential space" (Mannheim, 1997:194) to the other. This variation of meaning is of course increased when different languages are involved. While languages share some grammatical and semantic patterns, their peculiarities reproduce and may even boost a "distinctive terminology" (ibid.:197) with concepts that are "functionally determined in their genesis" (ibid.:199) within the conjunctive experiential space of a language community.

In the light of this indexicality of language, the task of the news corporation certainly is not confined to explaining indexical events which took place in one (larger or smaller) experiential space and which need to be reported to another audience. This is because we cannot assume that this audience consists of people who have never had any experience themselves. Indeed the audiences of global news corporations are all but devoid of their own conjunctive experiences. They have their own electoral procedure; they have visited concerts, observed political negotiations and discussed criminal offences in their own community. Differing from country to country, from community to community, they share their own conjunctive experiences. Based on these experiences, patterns of perceiving news – and even patterns of selecting and sorting out news – have emerged.

### **Avoiding Nostrification**

Hence the reader of a news story may make sense of an event with strong references to his/her own patterns of perception and selection and to his/her context of conjunctive experiences. That implies that a person initially chooses to read a news story according to his/her own patterns of perception and selection.[3] If s/he chooses to read about an event in a different country, s/he may easily assume that the facts of this event have the same meaning as they would have had in the context of his/her own conjunctive experiences. E.g. a Turk reads that Obama has been nominated as candidate by his party and subsequently – but wrongly – assumes that the selection process of candidates is as much dependent on the party hierarchy as it is in the Turkish party landscape. This kind of perception is what we have chosen to call "nostrification" (Stagl 1981:284), the direct perception of something strange within one's own patterns of common sense.

Because such a "nostrification" would lead to a misunderstanding, the journalist's task is not only to enhance the audience's comprehension of indexical content. S/he also has to clarify which information should not be reported in the terms of the audience's own experiential context. Sometimes parts of a text which lack an intercultural equivalence may even need to be omitted (cf. Catford 1965:94; Kitamura 2009). Hence conveying news from one corner of the world to the other includes two tasks: To make audiences aware of the indexicality of content in order to avoid nostrification and to provide the context information necessary for comprehending this content. [4]

### **Content and Linguistic Indexicality**

Indeed, under bi- or multilingual conditions, the indexicality isn't confined to content. It also applies to language. A literal translation of specific words, like e.g. "swing state", "primary", or "politbureau", would leave the foreign audience perplexed. Explanative information is then needed to elucidate the meaning of the respective word. However, more serious problems are caused by *hidden* than by *overt* linguistic indexicality. A word, literally translated and easily understood, may refer to a context different from the one assumed by the audience. A person socialized in the British, German or Turkish political system would thus nostrify the news that "the French premier minister has reorganized his cabinet", assuming the prime minister is the most powerful political actor in the country (which the prime minister of Turkey or the United Kingdom is, or should be, but the French is not).

Now, content indexicality and linguistic indexicality, in their overt and hidden versions, are problems for intercultural communication in general. They have to be resolved in face-to-face communication as well as in media. However, face-to-face interaction allows a person to control if his counterpart has understood what has been said (e.g. Apitzsch/Dittmar 1987, Günthner 1999, Kotthoff 1999). Media lacks this direct feedback from audiences. Hence journalists and editors have to assume their audiences' respective context of conjunctive experience. They have to imagine which contents and idioms may be indexical for their audiences and therefore need to be handled with care. In this respect, the international

journalist plays the role of an interpreter who "'mediates' rather than merely 'translates' in order to improve communication flow" (Pistillo 2003:3).

## The Task of Trans-Editing

What we so far have theoretically described are the typical tasks of what has been proposed to call "trans-editing", the "constituents" of which are to "change", to "add", and to "remove" information (Stetting 1989:378) leading to a "re-creation" of the original source "in the target language" (Bielsa/Bassnett 2009:7). Every editor is confronted with problems of content indexicality.[5] And every translator should be aware of linguistic indexicality. Word by word equivalence in translation is asymmetrical (Pym 1992:40), meaning that the "trans-editor" can not translate each word. S/he has to consider the linguistic and content indexicality differences, which are mostly in their overt and hidden forms.

A theoretical description of the trans-editor's task doesn't implicate knowledge about the patterns and strategies which trans-editors have developed and applied in their work. The BBC World Service, with its numerous language services, offers a rich field for studying strategies and patterns of trans-editing. Each and every language service draws on central English news sources, sometimes combining it with its own material, and thus writes its news stories.[6] The Turkish radio of the BBC is a perfect example to inquire into this difficult task of trans-editing. When in the following chapters we analyse the different patterns and strategies followed in trans-edition, it is not so much our aim to assess the Turkish service's practices but to learn how they accomplish this task.[7]

For this purpose, we have conducted a narrative interview (cf. Nohl 2010a) with the head of the Turkish service, Hüseyin Sükan, and have observed the trans-editing practices in situ during a day in the radio station (see chapter 3). However our main empirical source is the product of trans-editing, the news stories which were posted on the Turkish service's website and which we were able to compare with their English source texts (on the English language website of the World Service). Our analysis follows the principle corner stones of the documentary method (cf. Bohnsack et al. 2010): We do not only analyse the content of the interview (which was partly transcribed), the participant observation protocols and the news stories. We are also concerned with the way the content is elaborated by the actors, how they deal with the thematic problems and issues. Hence it is the *modus operandi* of trans-editing which we are especially interested in. Our empirical analysis then results in the construction of types (cf. Bohnsack/Nohl 2009), i.e. in describing typical patterns of trans-editing (see chapter 4).

### 3. Trans-editing in practice: News Production at the BBC WS Turkish Service

The BBC's Turkish radio is a middle-sized facility, compared to the large Arabic service on the one hand and the small Tamil radio on the other. Its staff consists of one director, one assistant director, 14 producers (including 4 senior producers) plus 3 short term producers, and one radio production assistant. All producers are able to overtake all duties (radio news, special features, and website), but there are two senior producers who have received special training for TV production and are in charge of the biweekly TV programme since its launch in June 2008.

Concerning their daily work, the director of the radio, Mr Hüseyin Sükan, explains that his staff do not perceive themselves as translators, but as proper journalists who also edit news: "We don't translate the ready-made packages of the BBC (maybe 20 % is translation) – but mostly we do 'compilation' or 'adaptation'. We collect several BBC sources and information from news agencies for one topic, edit them and prepare our own package based on these sources. In this way we tell a 'story' which is 'relevant' for our own audience. In addition we have news and packages which are completely our own production." [8]

Hence in all four of the duties mentioned above: 'compilation', 'adaptation', telling a 'story' which is 'relevant' to the audience, trans-editing is at stake. Our analysis, however, is confined to the production of the website for which we analyse our observations and interviews [9] as well as the patterns of trans-editing (chapter 4).

### Features of the Website

Cenk Erdil, the senior producer who had originally set up the Turkish website, explained its main features and tasks to us: The internet producers take their information from the EMPS (Embedded Media Player Service), a central server where all the news items can be accessed by any of the BBC employees, from the English website as well as from the scripts of correspondents. The website works on a content management system. The general frame of the website is similar for each language service although there are more and less sophisticated websites, depending on the effort and budget allocated for this task in each language service. There are a few services which had received substantial financial assistance from the BBC in order to establish their website. The Turkish service, however, had not received any additional money but used its own resources and staff.

The website is prepared by the night shift (consisting of two people from around 22:00 to 06:00) so that they have up-to-the-minute news even in the early morning. Then the website is continuously updated, first by the morning internet producer, then by the day content producer. Cenk Erdil proudly points out that the Turkish website updates news sometimes faster than that of the English team although the latter works with many more people.

The task of updating comprises several aspects: breaking news is inserted into the website, old news which has been changed in the original English source needs to be altered accordingly, and news stories which have not been completely trans-edited are now trans-edited in full. Cenk Erdil underpins that the producer in charge has to make a choice between actuality and completeness. If it would take too long to trans-edit the whole news story, and if the news is too important, it would suffice to only trans-edit parts of it. And there is another criterion for trans-editing the news to Turkish, as Mr Erdil continues to say: "Not every detail on news online (the English website; the authors) may be important for our reader. For this reason we are a little bit selective."

## **The Selection of News**

Kumru Başer, who was the morning producer of the website on 27<sup>th</sup> October, took over the work from the night shift and then controlled the stories. She checked the language of the news stories, which might have been written in haste during the night, and kept an eye on whether the news was up-to-date. Articles which were signed with name got only slightly changed if necessary, due to authenticity reasons.

When controlling the actuality Ms Başer refers to different sources, among them the top stories in the EMPS, the stories used in the morning radio broadcast, the BBC English broadcasting and website, and regional – that is: Middle East – news. If there are breaking news stories which should also appear in Turkish, she trans-edits them to the Turkish website. By doing so she ensures that she has five to six new news stories on the website by 9 a.m., which is more than the English website offers in the morning. However, Ms Başer underpins that the publication policy of the BBC Turkish service prefers to be "attentive" and "fastidious" rather than to aspire to "quickness".

The criteria for internet publishing are different to those for the radio, because the former offers more space than the latter. Kumru Başer states her criteria as follows: The global importance of a news story, its relevance for Turkey, the variety of news on the Turkish website. Her director, Mr Sükan, referring to the general broadcasting policy of the Turkish service (including the radio), goes into detail, combining the question with the problematic of which public one serves: "For the BBC in general, when it comes to deciding [on the news stories; the authors] there are some questions in the tradition of the BBC. The most important is that we are a public service corporation. Now 'public' in this sense is an interesting concept. Is it the public of England, of the United Kingdom, are we serving this public? Or are we serving the public in the country where we have our broadcasts? Of course the BBC, as a public corporation is a public service of the United Kingdom, this is 100% true for the interior broadcasts, it is also true for the international broadcasts but here it is limited. Because it is the BBC World Service, it is accepted by the world. It is an institution accepted by the world."

Mr Sükan then talks explicitly about the criteria of choosing news stories: "What are the topics which arouse interest among the audience in Turkey? Deciding on this issue we think that we are a world service ... and that our target is world news. And so we necessarily choose topics which concern the whole world, which concern the neighbouring geography of Turkey and which directly concern Turkey."

But, as Kumru Başer states, for the website there are also technical criteria to be observed. E.g. the variety of the website news is affected by differences in local time, since one has more news from Asia in the morning than from the US, and vice versa in the evening. An important criterion is also that the website offers enough background information on the top stories of the day. This background information is placed in a specific place on the website.

## Writing the Story

In the conversation with Kumru Başer we then changed topics and started to talk about the core of what we, in this article, call trans-editing. While writing up a news story, Ms Başer tries to take over the position of the listener in Turkey and asks herself what she would be interested in and what she would be able to understand. Then she states that she "automatically" uses "comparative hints" when transferring a news story to the Turkish website. E.g. if she mentions that something costs about 10 billion dollar and if she assumes that this doesn't mean anything to the Turkish audience she compares it to the state budget of Ghana which has about the same amount. Such comparisons are fed by information she gathers from the internet or from in-house experts. Sometimes Ms Başer also refers to similar events in the Turkish history and thus reminds the audience of similarities.

Another strategy of trans-editing is mentioned during the interview with Hüseyin Sükan. He drew our attention to the question of "context": "We have to estimate how much knowledge the audience has concerning the news which we are now broadcasting. That is the background knowledge. Should we say something like 'Barack Obama' out of the blue, or should we put it like 'the leading candidate in the US presidential elections to be held on 5th November', or even the 'black candidate'? How much knowledge is there and how much do we have to remind of? For this reason there are reminder sentences."

An example which Mr Sükan gave was the economic crisis in Japan. He thought that the Turkish audience knew very well how powerful the Japanese economy used to be and how important it was for Turkey. Then he went on to say that one only had to remind the audience of this importance: "If one establishes the connection with one or two reminder sentences which clarify the context, this tells the listener 'hold on a minute you have to listen to this because this is important for your life and can affect it.'"

It is clear that even where an English text is taken as the main source for the Turkish news story, the Turkish service's staff all but only translate it. To include comparisons and reminders of the context are important tools of trans-editing. But even where translation is at stake, the staff of the Turkish service have their own sensitivities. As Mr Sükan underpinned, they try to "use Turkish", i.e. "we prefer it to be purified from foreign words. But we are not very strict. For example if there are English or French words which are engrained in our language we leave them. Or if there are Arabic or Persian words engrained in the language we leave them." [10]

Another point of translation is that, as Ms Başer underlined, "a news story must not smell like translation", [11] but should sound like a Turkish original. This includes, as she went on to say, "automatically" deleting sentences and words which sound either naïve for the Turkish audience (things self-evident for Turks but important to be explained to other people) or euro-centric.

When I asked Ms Başer why she so frequently used the word "automatically", she explained this with the routine she had acquired during her 20 years of service in the BBC. However she added that within one or two years everybody would gather enough routine to "automatically" accomplish the tasks of what we call trans-editing.

## 4. Typical patterns of international trans-editing

In our analysis of the trans-edition of news stories we didn't confine ourselves to the *study of cases*, i.e. to scrutinizing how the various English news stories were trans-edited into Turkish news stories. Rather we used this case-based analysis to elicit *typical patterns* of trans-editing, as used by the staff of the BBC WS Turkish radio station web team. In the present chapter we wish to go into a variety of techniques used in order to make an understandable Turkish text out of an English language source, i.e. to adapt a text to the perception patterns of the conjunctive experiential space(s) of Turkish audiences. To typify

patterns certainly means that we reduce the complexity of the cases and single out the most significant strategies of trans-editing.[12]

In general terms we have differentiated between four different classes of typical patterns of trans-editing: During the reconstruction of the Turkish text on the basis of an English source additional information may be given (4.1), the semantics of the text may get modified or not (4.2), information may get reduced (4.3) or comprehension enhanced by omission (4.4) and, finally, the trans-editor may add input on his/her own choice (4.5). These typical patterns of trans-editing may intermingle with each other. There are also some texts which are significant examples for more than one typical pattern, e.g. additional information may also modify the semantics of a text.

#### 4.1 Versions of adding information

One of the most basic techniques to ensure comprehensibility of a text is explaining the meaning of something which might otherwise remain indexical in the sense of Garfinkel (1967). While such explanatory information can certainly be found in monolingual text production too, in trans-editions we have identified two different ways of explaining the subject-matter.

*Explicit explanation:* When on the day after the US Elections an article on the BBC World Service English website begins as "Barack Obama has started forming his administration by asking Rahm Emanuel, a former adviser to President Clinton, to be his chief-of-staff", this sentence itself includes an explicit explanation ("a former adviser to President Clinton"). But when trans-edited for the Turkish public, the sentence reads as: "ABD'nin 44. başkanı seçilen Barack Obama, yeni yönetimini oluşturmaya başladı." (English monitor translation:[13] 'Barack Obama, elected as the 44<sup>th</sup> USA President has started forming his new administration.') Whereas the information on Mr Rahm is given later, the Turkish text feels the need to inform its readers about the new role of Obama as the president-elect.

A similar explicit explanation exists in the same news story. Here the English text informs the reader about the new "daily CIA briefings" for Obama, whereas the Turkish text explicitly explains the nature of the CIA, writing "Obama bugünden itibaren Amerikan Merkezi Haber Alma Teşkilatı CIA'den günlük brifingler almaya başlayacak." (English monitor translation: "From today on, Obama will start receiving daily briefings from the American central news gathering agency CIA.")

The pivotal attribute of explicit explanations is that this clarification is openly added to the given information. The reader is provided with both the indexical word and with its explication. Hence s/he has the chance both to control the adequacy of the explanation (is "central news gathering agency" an adequate description of the CIA?) and to enhance his/her own knowledge. From now on the reader may know who Obama is and what the CIA does.

*Implicit explanations:* In contrast to an explicit explanation, an implicit explanation does not explicate that it explains something but simply does it. Reporting on the election campaign of presidential candidate McCain, an English text writes: "Mr McCain presented a plan for the US Treasury to buy up 'bad' mortgages and said Mr Obama wanted to raise taxes." In the Turkish version we find both the role of McCain explicitly explained and a further implicit explanation: "Cumhuriyetçi aday John McCain ise, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri hazinesinin sorunlu konut kredilerini satın almasını öngören bir plan ortaya koydu, Obama'yı da vergileri yükseltmek istediğini iddia ederek eleştirdi." (English monitor translation: "The Republican candidate John McCain presented a plan which foresees the US Treasury to buy the problematic mortgages and criticized Obama by alleging that he wants to raise taxes.")

As it is typical for implicit explanations, this one, too, is fairly covered in the details: Whereas the English text assumes that the reader knows that to "say" that the opponent intends to raise taxes means to criticize him, the Turkish text assumes that this is open to interpretation, i.e. that raising taxes might also be seen as a positive political move. Hence the Turkish text ensures that its reader understands the critical undertone of McCain's statement by using the word "criticized".

We have found a similar implicit explanation in a news story on the negotiations between North Korea and the international community over nuclear weapons. Here the English text only states: "North Korea said it planned to restart nuclear activities earlier this month because the US had not fulfilled its part of

the deal to remove Pyongyang from its terrorism blacklist", whereas the Turkish version puts the same subject-matter in two sentences, writing: "Ancak Pyongyang yönetimi geçen Cuma günü, 'ABD anlaşmanın koşullarına uymadığı için', tesisi yeniden faaliyete geçireceğini açıkladı. Kuzey Kore, ABD'nin kendilerini teröre destek veren ülkeler listesinden hala çıkarmamasından şikayetçi." (English monitor translation: "Yet the administration in Pyongyang last Friday has announced that it will put into action its facility again 'because the US had not fulfilled the conditions of the treaty'. North Korea complains that the US has not yet removed them from the list of countries assisting terrorism.") First of all, the Turkish text implicitly explains what North Korea has "said" as a 'complaint'. Secondly the reader is implicitly provided with an explanation of what the "terrorism blacklist" is about: a "list of countries assisting terrorism".

As is evident in the examples given above, implicit explanations, while guaranteeing a very readable text, don't enable the reader to check the correctness and appropriateness of the explanation, essentially because s/he may not even understand the explanative character of a word. The second problem of implicit explanations is that they lack any educative momentum: As the reader doesn't understand that something is explained to him because the subject-matter which the explanation refers to isn't overt (i.e. the indexical word of the source text is omitted), s/he cannot learn the connection between an indexical concept/word (e.g. terrorism blacklist) and its explanation.

*Summarizing implicit explanation:* As a subtype of implicit explanations, indexical information may also be summarized and hence explained, e.g., during the US presidential elections much importance was given to states such as Florida, New Mexico, Iowa, and Virginia, in which the political climate was likely to change (therefore called "swing states" in the US). In a news story the Turkish text summarized election outcomes in these states, which were stated separately with the state's name in the English version, as "Kritik eyaletler Obama'dan yana oldu" (English monitor translation: "The critical states were on Obama's side"). Such summarizing implicit explanations share the characteristics of other implicit explanations, except that here the explanation doesn't refer to one but to many words (e.g. the names of the states).

*Additional attribute to reinforce comprehension:* Whereas explicit and implicit explanations foster the comprehension of an indexical word of the source text (may it be given in the target text or not), comprehension may also be enhanced by providing the reader with additional information. We have found such an additional attribute in a text on the US Election day. Here the English source text writes "Mr Obama and Mr McCain voted in their respective home cities of Chicago, Illinois, and Phoenix, Arizona", whereas the Turkish trans-editors have added the information that Barack Obama will be in Illinois, the state "of which he is the senator", and that John McCain "will end his campaign in Arizona, where he is the senator".

Significantly, additional attributes lack any direct reference to the wording of the source text. Rather, comprehension is reinforced by extending the information given. For example, a Turkish text writes that the "International Atomic Energy Institution has announced that it had removed the seals and surveillance cameras which inhibit the usage of the nuclear power plant of Yongbyon", whereas the corresponding English text didn't qualify the function of the "seals and surveillance cameras". Alike explicit explanations, additional attributes are usually given in relative clauses. This doesn't hold true for the next typical pattern of providing additional information.

*Comprehensibility by supplementation:* In contrast to explanations and additional attributes the reader of a trans-edited text may also be provided with broader context information stated in sentences or paragraphs. A significant example for this typical pattern is to be found in a news story on the US elections, where the Turkish text gives context information on the electoral system (under the subtitle "Electoral System") which the English text seems to regard as knowledge taken for granted.[14] The typical task accorded to such supplements is to provide the reader with background information s/he otherwise would lack. Although the news story itself would be comprehensible without this supplement too, readers' understanding is enhanced by such additional sentences and paragraphs. As the supplementary character of such background information is explicit, it also has a significant educative effect: Having read this information, readers will then gain knowledge of, for example, the most important features of the US election system.

*Comprehensibility by reconstruction of atmospheric context:* Whereas the supplements mentioned above provide the reader with background *facts*, a news story may also try to introduce the reader into the *atmosphere* of the situation which it describes. In the following example, the English text falls short of conveying the ambiance of McCain's first post-election speech: "His rival John McCain accepted defeat, saying 'I deeply admire and commend' Mr Obama. He called on his supporters to lend the next president their goodwill." However the Turkish text makes an effort to make its readers understand the fierceness of the election campaign and the disappointment of the McCain supporters by writing: "McCain Obama'yı kutlaması sırasında salondaki kalabalıktan bir tepki yükselmesini de engelledi ve destekçilerinden Obama'ya iyi niyetle yaklaşmalarını istedi." (English monitoring translation: "While McCain was congratulating Obama, there was a disapproving reaction from the crowd in the hall, which he tried to stop. He requested from his supporters to accept Obama with heartiness.")

Although such reconstructions of the atmospheric context may especially target foreign readers, who are not acquainted with the peculiarities of the subject-matter described in a news story, this pattern may not be specific for trans-editing. If it is the concern of the news agency to introduce its readers/audience into the atmospheric contexts of an event it will be always necessary to convey such contextual information.

## 4.2 Patterns of modifying or safeguarding semantics

Additional information usually changes the semantic meaning of a text, from a minor change to semantic slippage. Although translation is always a matter of exactitude too, modifications of semantic meaning may sometimes be necessary. This is especially the case for the operation of trans-editing because here it is the task of the trans-editor not only to literally translate but to shape and edit his/her text in such a way that the reader enjoys maximum comprehension. As much as one-to-one translations may restrict understanding it may be enhanced by semantic modifications. Against this background it is interesting that we have been able to elicit typical patterns of both modifying semantics, as well as of meticulously safeguarding them.

*Stylistic adaptation:* Reporting news is a matter of style in writing. And as much as each journalist may have his or her own personal style, there are also styles typical for specific news corporations (compare, e.g., the "Guardian" against the "The Sun") as well as for language communities (e.g. the Turkish language community). Such collective styles (of both news corporations and language communities) are an implicit problem of trans-editing because here a source text of one language (and a specific news corporation too) needs to be transformed into a text of another language (and possibly a different news organization's style).

One important stylistic feature of both English language news in general and the BBC World Service's news in particular is the frequent quotations made with reference to political actors. On the other hand, in the Turkish language community quotations are less common. However the BBC World Service Turkish radio constitutes a specific mixture of the Turkish language style and the BBC style. Hence in quite a few cases we have discovered that English quotations are literally translated into Turkish, although the Turkish sentence then somehow sounds odd. In other cases the English source quotations are deleted in the Turkish text. Again there are cases where the Turkish trans-editors have tried to convey the most important information of the quotes to the Turkish reader. For example, new president-elect Mr Obama's quote "'It's been a long time coming, but tonight ... change has come to America,' the president-elect told a jubilant crowd at a victory rally in Chicago." is trans-edited into "Barack Obama ... kampanyasında vaadettiği değişim şansını artık yakaladıklarını söyledi." (English monitoring translation: Barack Obama ... said that they now have got the chance to change as he has promised in his campaign.") Such transformation from direct to reported speech is only one of a variety of stylistic adaptations.

*Semantic shift:* Whereas stylistic adaptation only indirectly causes semantic modifications (in the sense that the semantic meaning of a sentence changes if its style is adapted to the new language), there is also a typical pattern of trans-editing in which the semantic meaning of a sentence or word is directly modified. If the English text states that "North Korea said", but the Turkish news story reads as "Pyongyang yönetimi açıkladı" (English monitor translation: "The Pyongyang administration has announced"), then this is a semantic shift.

Some semantic shifts are necessary in order to adhere to a language's rules. If the English text for example writes "North Korea said it planned to restart nuclear activities earlier this month", the Turkish trans-editor has to put "earlier this month", which hasn't got an equivalent in Turkish, into a different wording. Hence s/he speaks of "geçen Cuma günü", i.e. "last Friday".

Other semantic shifts are only used in order to provide the reader with some further information, e.g. in an English news story on the US elections we read that "Voters across the United States are flocking to polling stations to choose a new president." The Turkish version is more informative, stating that the "American voters have gone to the polling stations in order to choose the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the country."

There are further examples of semantic shifts, which may have been made in order to improve comprehension. Whereas, for example, the English news story writes that Obama has "said the foreign policy approach of the Bush administration ... had made it harder for the US to address overseas conflicts", the Turkish version, on the one hand speaks of the "Iraq policy" (instead of "foreign policy") and on the other refrains from using the idiom "Bush administration", preferring to speak of "President George Bush".[15] Both reducing "foreign" to "Iraq policy" and the "Bush administration" to "President George Bush" provide the reader with information which is more concrete and hence easier to understand.

Not every semantic shift seems to be legitimate and appropriate. There are examples of wordings in the Turkish edition based on an English source where the translation just lacks the necessary exactitude. For example, whereas the English source text states that "North Korea said it planned to restart nuclear activities", the Turkish version writes that the "Pyongyang administration has ... announced that it will restart" its nuclear activities. However, the analysis of five different news stories on the Turkish website has revealed only very few instances of inadequate and illegitimate lack of semantic exactitude.

### 4.3 Versions of reducing information

In our comparative interpretation of the news in English and Turkish, investigating the editorial effects on the texts, we observed some reduction of information as well. As opposed to the supplementations discussed above, the types of the information reduction patterns will be identified below. Adding information to the texts was interpreted as editorial effects used to augment the reader's comprehension of the texts. Similarly, the reductions mostly serve to simplify the content of the news by eliminating some details for several reasons which will be discussed next. Nevertheless, the omissions in some cases may cause some influential consequences on the overall understanding of the text as well. In the following, the different impacts of the trans-editorial reductions and modifications will be introduced and analysed.

*Avoidance of content indexicality:* Some contents of the news are omitted during the trans-editing process. In other words, the decision was made that some parts of the source news were to be excluded and were therefore not placed in the Turkish text. In some cases, certain contents of a single statement were also eliminated. For instance, the English version of the news: "McCain said Mr Obama had been wrong to oppose the surge policy of sending extra troops to Iraq and accused him of lacking the knowledge and judgement to be commander-in-chief." is trans-edited as "John McCain ise rakibini dış politika konusunda bilgi eksikliği ve ülkenin baş komutanlığını üstlenmeye uygun olmamakla eleştirdi." (English monitor translation: John McCain, on the other hand, criticised his rival of lacking the knowledge about the foreign politics and not being suitable to become the country's commander-in-chief"). Regardless of some discrepancies in translation to be discussed in other parts of this paper, the omission of the information "surge policy of sending extra troops to Iraq" in the Turkish text represents an example of the type of avoidance of content indexicality. In this case, this lack of information leads to a semantic problem, because whereas the English version indicates that McCain has given Obama's oppositional stance as a proof of his lack of leadership, in the Turkish version McCain's accusations are not justified.

*Avoidance of linguistic indexicality:* Not only some *contents* of the source text, but also the *idioms* used in the news stories are omitted and not placed in the Turkish version. For instance, a statement of the US presidential Candidate McCain, "Nailing down Senator Obama's various tax proposals is like nailing Jell-O to the wall" is totally eliminated without an attempt to trans-edit the idiom of "nailing Jell-O to the

wall". The connotations of such idioms can be understood only in particular cultural contexts. In this sense, it is evident that they can not be literally translated. Thus the idioms in the source text can only be trans-edited with some additional explanations or attempts of finding corresponding idioms in Turkish language. In this example above, the reporter prefers to omit this idiom, which we name as a trans-editorial effect of *avoidance of linguistic indexicality*.

#### 4.4 Enhancing comprehension by omission:

In contrast to the avoidance of content indexicality, which may cause some semantic problems, the types of omissions discussed below aim to refine the news by eliminating some details, such as attributions to people and places. These attributions, when omitted, neither explicitly nor implicitly influence the overall interpretation of the news by the readers. Due to this reason, we prefer to describe these kinds of editorial effects as the tools used in supporting the comprehension of the news. Below we shall identify five different types of omissions generated due to cultural and local discrepancies between the English and Turkish reader profiles. These omissions as trans-editorial effects aim to avoid potential "nostrifications" (Stagl 1981).

*Omissions based on the lack of cultural relevancy:* The trans-editor is the only person who decides which parts of the source text will be included or omitted in the Turkish version. In this decision process, the trans-editor assumes the interests and the relevancies of the Turkish reader and determines which parts are to be reduced. For instance, two statements about the US presidential candidate McCain were omitted in the text in Turkish due to the lack of cultural and historical relevancy of these parts for the Turkish readers. These were Obama's two compliments to McCain about his past contributions to the USA. In the English text, the two statements are quoted as "He praised the former Vietnam prisoner-of-war as a 'brave and selfless leader'" (Obama referring to McCain) and as "He has endured sacrifices for America that most of us cannot begin to imagine". The reduction of these parts, including some positive attributions to McCain, can be classified as an *omission based on lack of cultural relevancy*, by which this part of the news was interpreted as information that was too detailed and therefore determined as irrelevant for the Turkish reader. Another omission was a statement of the former rival for the Democrat nomination, Hillary Clinton. The deletion of Hillary Clinton's statement can be interpreted as an editorial effect to keep the attention of the Turkish reader only on the presidential candidate of the Democrats. With these omissions, the trans-editor ascertains which news item is more significant for the Turkish readers and which is not. This is, in fact, an assumption of the reporter, as it is he or she who names the relevancies to the readers.

*Omissions based on the lack of cultural equivalence of a word:* Next to the omission of entire passages, there have been instances where only some words were eliminated and not reported in the Turkish version. This kind of omission is caused by the lack of the corresponding translations for these words. For instance, the source text informing the reader about the "town hall-style debate", which particularly refers to the old US-tradition of discussing public issues with the constituency in the municipality, is completely omitted in the Turkish version of the news. In another text, the metaphorical name "the UN's atomic watchdog" is converted into "UN's Atomic Energy Institution" in the Turkish version. Instead of translating the word, a corresponding denotation is developed by the trans-editor.[16] Certain words which cannot be translated due to their lack of cultural equivalence in the Turkish language are omitted. Trans-editors prefer to translate these particular words into Turkish and attempt to maintain their semantic meanings.

*Omission of contents based on local relevancies:* Some contents of the news were omitted that merely informed about the local population concerned in that text. For instance, the news with the title "The long queues for the historic US vote" is trans-edited to the Turkish version with another title: "The voters have the say in the USA." The reference to US voters who were waiting in long queues to vote is omitted in the Turkish version. In this omission, the trans-editor interprets this information as relevant only to the US electors. In this sense, the news concerning the local population is omitted, as it is not judged to be an important issue regarding the results of the elections, the main theme of the news article. Moreover, if the Turkish readers would notice that there had been long queues of voters, coming from a country where voting is obligatory they might conclude that the message is that there had been administrative problems whereas the writer of the English source text may have wished to say that voters' participation is very high. Omissions may serve to prevent such nostrifications.

Another example is the omission of instant changes in the election results. Obama's performance in the election polls is represented in the English text with percentile differences: "Other national polls indicate Mr Obama increasing his lead over his rival to as much as 13 points"[17], is completely eliminated in the Turkish text. Reporting temporary fluctuations during the vote counting (tallying) stage could probably be considered irrelevant to the Turkish readers and was omitted completely.

*Omission caused by cultural discrepancies:* The news is often reported with some descriptive details to aid the reader in reconstructing the atmospheric context of the event presented in the news. One of the most frequently observed descriptions of this kind was the presentation of the US candidates with their families during the election campaign. For instance, the news in English, "Mr Obama and his wife arrived at a polling station in Chicago with their two daughters", was trans-edited as, "Neredeyse iki yıl süren bir mücadelenin ardından Barack Obama bugün senatörü olduğu Illinois eyaletinde olacak." (English monitoring translation: „After a struggle of around two years, Barack Obama will be in Illinois State today where he is the senator"). The descriptive information about the atmospheric context of his voting moment, including the information about his arrival at the polling station with his wife and two daughters, was omitted in the Turkish version. Voting with the family members can be seen as an election tradition of the USA. Because of a difference in the relevancy patterns of the readers of both texts, this information, particularly significant for US voters, is eliminated in the Turkish version. This reduction originates from the cultural discrepancies of election traditions of both populations. Similarly, another of Obama's statement: "Sasha and Malia, I love you both more than you can imagine, and you have earned the new puppy that's coming with us to the White House." is also omitted in the following paragraph of the same news story. Obama's call, addressing his daughters, seems to be irrelevant and not understandable for the Turkish readers. In order to interpret this part of the news, the background story of Obama's promise to his daughters should have been known by the Turkish readers. Before the elections, Obama had promised his daughters that he would give them a new puppy as a present if he is elected president. Due to the need for this background information, which is probably missing, this part of the news is omitted without any attempts to utilise any trans-editing modifications.

*Omission of symbolic representation based on irrelevancy:* Some symbolic representations are also omitted in the trans-editing process. The title of "From red to blue" in the English source text is completely eliminated in the Turkish version. The colours red and blue, representing the Republican and the Democrat Party respectively, are not transferred. The Turkish readers are not acquainted with these symbolic representations of the political parties. Due to this reason the editor omitted this kind of symbolic representations.

#### 4.5 Editor's Inputs

The interpretation of the inputs of trans-editors necessitates a macro level text analysis, dealing with the discrepancies in text composition between the source text and the trans-edited version. The differences in the thematic flow of the texts caused by the editorial effects of additional and reduced information shall be investigated in order to render a large scale analysis of the trans-edited texts.

*Explicit memorandum and comparison:* The news stories that we observed during the US elections frequently included a *comparison* of the present election results with previous ones. For instance, the reference point of comparison in the English text was the 2004 elections, whereas in the Turkish version, it was the 2000 elections. It was stated in the Turkish news that "There had been a big competition between the candidates of 2000 elections" and added that "the Democratic candidate Al Gore had lost Florida against George Bush". Not only this statement but also the other statements about the 2000 elections, signify the unpredictable results of that year. Although in 2000, the Democratic candidate had been leading (as it had also been the case for the day of the election in 2008 for Obama), the Republican candidate had won the elections in the end. The Democrats were defeated at that time against the Republicans due to their insufficient number of representatives.[18] Reporting the unexpected results of past elections may generate scepticism among the readers as to the outcome of the present 2008 elections. This kind of reporting is evaluated as referencing an *explicit memorandum* to generate an *implicit impact* on the interpretation of events by the readers.

*Surrogate conclusion:* Besides this editorial input, reporters' own statements were also added in the news stories. For example, a commentary of the BBC reporter is represented in an indirect form in the source

text as “The BBC's Justin Webb says the result will have a profound impact on the US”. On the other hand, the same comment is quoted in the trans-edited text as “Webb, 'Obama'nın seçilmesiyle birlikte artık hiçbir şey eskisi gibi olmayacak, Amerika her düzeyde değişecek‘ dedi” (English monitoring translation: “Webb said ‘Nothing will be the same as before. With the election of Obama, America will change in every aspect’”). Placing this comment explicitly in the Turkish version can generate some consequential impacts on the interpretation of the article by the Turkish readers. Another example having potential impacts on the overall interpretation of the text was observed in another news item, in which the English version writes, “The moderator asked Mr Obama whether the economic crisis would affect the ability of the US to act as a ‘peacemaker‘ in the world, Mr Obama said no country could maintain the same military influence while its economy was in decline” is not translated in the Turkish version, but the same topic is discussed under a separate title of “Dış politika ayrışması” (English monitoring translation: “Dissociation in Foreign Policy”). The title itself implicitly comprises the orientation of the reporter by calling the attention of the readers to US foreign policy. Under this title, the commentary statement of the reporter is presented as “Adayların dış politikaya ilişkin görüşlerinde en keskin ayrışma Irak konusunda ortaya çıktı.” (English monitoring translation: “The sharpest dissociation has occurred in the candidates' foreign policy perspectives on the matter of Iraq”). The Turkish trans-editor in this case implicitly renders a conclusive analysis for the readers of the Turkish news. We have named these kinds of editorial inputs as *surrogate conclusions*, by which the reporter attempts to orientate the reader. This can cause some influential consequences on the overall subjective interpretation of the text by the readers.

## 5. Conclusion

Intercultural communication in media is an important task to be accomplished by journalists who have to transfer news from the experiential space of the reported event to their audience with its own distinctive conjunctive experiences. In addition, international media outlets have to translate news from one language to the other. Where translation and intercultural communication mingle, it is important “to convey the emic meaning in one to go” (Rottenburg 2003:38). Such “mimetic translation” transforms the text, “capturing the initial meaning in a Gestalt-like fashion” (ibid.). Such ‘trans-editing’ (Stetting 1989) has to take into account the indexical meaning of words and sentences of the source text, avoiding nostrification, i.e. direct perception of something strange within one’s own patterns of common sense, on the side of their audiences.

As our empirical analysis has revealed, there are different ways to convey the emic meaning to other audiences. By inquiring into the backstage of text-preparation in the BBC World Service and conducting interviews and participant observation as well as comparing the trans-edited news with their original English sources at the BBC World News, we showed the complex process of re-telling a BBC World News Story to another audience.

We found that under the circumstances of language barriers, mediated intercultural communication follows five principal strategies to facilitate comprehension on part of the audiences: adding explanative information, modifying semantics, reducing information, omitting information and, finally, adding input. These strategies were applied by the trans-editors where a direct translation would lead to either incomprehensibility or nostrification, i.e. *not* or *wrongly* understanding the text.

From the perspective of intercultural communication it is important that some of these strategies may be applied overtly or covertly. Where information is omitted or summarized (reduced), this is usually a covert strategy which doesn’t allow the recipient to control adequacy and even doesn’t inform him/her that there are aspects which haven’t been transferred into the target text due to untranslatability (Kitamura 2009). However, adding information or editor’s inputs like e.g. comparisons and explicit memorandums allows the audiences to notice that there has been a difference of understanding between the source text and the target text. If explanative information is added in an overt manner, this also enables the audiences to control the trans-editor’s work and learn from it. E.g. characterizing the CIA as “American central news gathering agency” gives the reader an idea of that institution.

The trans-editors modify the news in various forms according to the differences in the readers' conjunctive experiences. They edit the original BBC World News by assuming their reader group's patterns of perception. Factors such as cultural discrepancies and local relevancies force the trans-editors to generate explicit and implicit changes, which shall reinforce the comprehension of the texts. However,

under specific circumstances such changes may lead to semantic shifts or semantic slippages as well. This only underpins the complexity of the trans-editor's tasks.

Our paper has been confined to the typical international communication strategies of trans-editing that we have ascertained during our text analysis of the BBC World News, comparing Turkish to English news stories. Certainly further empirical investigation is needed. For one, more data material from the Turkish radio (other news stories) should be investigated. Secondly, different language services should be included in order to discover more trans-editing strategies.[19] Thirdly, comprehensive investigation into mediated intercultural communication needs to address both the communication strategies of the media outlets and the perception patterns of their target audiences.

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