

## ARTICLE

# Disseminating Fake News Through Translation: Critical and Ethical Concerns

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## ABSTRACT

Misinformation has been a global challenge for information and news exchange. Recognizing such a challenge, the UN has expressed concerns about the consequences of misinformation. Unfortunately, the problem is exacerbated when international news is subjected to deliberate modification or interference during translation culminating in reproducing fake news into the target language. The phenomenon has developed more with the spread of fake news in recent years. It is worth noting that the Arabic translation of some foreign news is significantly modified though widely spread especially in social networks. Such a situation requires serious attention to help control misleading news translation. This study addressed the spread of fake news through translation from a critical and ethical perspective. To this end, a set of original news stories and their corresponding manipulated or modified versions in Arabic were collected and examined. The modification strategies were investigated in light of Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) news translation strategies, followed by a critical discourse analysis using the sociocognitive approach proposed by van Dijk (2014, 2015). The results uncovered manipulation strategies such as Hyperbolization, negative other-presentation, framing, and blame transfer. The relevant ethical issues were stressed to raise awareness of translation ethics as a core principle in translation. The study outcomes are useful for researchers and the concerned public and private organizations as a first step toward developing tools to counter the proliferation of fake news through translation.

**Keywords:** News Translation; Translation Strategies; Manipulating Translation; Fake News

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# 1. Introduction

The rapid proliferation of misinformation in our increasingly interconnected world has become a pressing global concern, drawing attention from international bodies such as the United Nations. This issue takes on an even more complex dimension when considering the role of translation in disseminating fake news across linguistic and cultural boundaries. As information passes through languages, there arises an opportunity for deliberate manipulation, potentially leading to the reproduction and spread of misleading content in target languages. This study delves into the critical intersection of fake news and translation practices. Of particular interest is the phenomenon observed in Arabic translations of foreign news, where significant modifications often occur, especially in content disseminated through social media platforms. This situation calls for urgent scholarly attention to understand and potentially mitigate the spread of misleading information through translated news.

The concept of fake news has undergone a significant evolution over the past two decades, transforming from a simple descriptive term to a complex, multifaceted phenomenon with far-reaching implications. “Fake news”, originally used in the 1890s, initially described imitations or false information, often employed with the intent to harm reputations or generate profit. Despite lacking a universally accepted definition, the term has come to encompass various forms of misinformation, including disinformation, satire, sensationalism, and clickbait — content designed to mislead readers while lacking factual support <sup>[1]</sup>. As we entered the 21st century, fake news primarily occupied the realm of political discourse. However, its influence has since expanded dramatically, permeating various disciplines and affecting societal dynamics across cultural, intercultural, and intracultural boundaries. This widespread impact has prompted extensive study by translators, authors, philosophers, and think tanks, all seeking ways to mitigate its effects or, ideally, eliminate it entirely — a goal that seems increasingly challenging in today's interconnected world.

The evolution of fake news has been marked by shifting perspectives and definitions. What was once viewed primarily as a threat is now sometimes seen as an opportunity for fostering critical thinking and media literacy. Key factors such as competencies, honesty, originality, novelty, and resourcefulness have become central to discussions about fake news and its outcomes. Some even argue that fake news, when properly understood and addressed, has the potential to bring about positive change, optimism, and progress among people and nations. In contemporary discourse, the terminology surrounding fake news remains fluid, with concurrent meanings coexisting in literature across various disciplines. The term is often qualified with descriptors like “misinformation” or “disinformation,” reflecting a growing

recognition of its multifaceted nature. This linguistic evolution underscores the complexity of the phenomenon and the need for nuanced approaches to address it.

Fake news has emerged as a universal concept, affecting populations across all strata of society to varying degrees. Its pervasive nature necessitates a dynamic and inclusive approach to mitigation, involving efforts from individuals, institutions, and governments alike. As awareness grows and research expands, our understanding of fake news and its impacts continues to evolve, demanding ongoing redefinition and adaptation of strategies to combat its spread. In the context of this study, we focus specifically on the role of translation in the dissemination of fake news, recognizing that linguistic boundaries present both challenges and opportunities in the fight against misinformation. By examining the intersection of fake news and translation practices, we aim to contribute to the broader effort of promoting information integrity in our increasingly globalized and multilingual world.

This study, in the given context, adopts a multifaceted approach, combining critical analysis with ethical considerations. By examining a corpus of original news stories alongside their manipulated Arabic versions, we aim to uncover the strategies employed in news translation and modification. In addition, the analysis is framed within Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) news translation strategies and analyzed through the lens of van Dijk's (2014, 2015) sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis <sup>[2-4]</sup>. This research places a strong emphasis on the ethical implications of such practices, advocating for a heightened awareness of translation ethics as a fundamental principle in the field. The authors, by shedding light on the manipulation strategies and the underlying motivations, expect to contribute valuable insights to researchers, public organizations, and private entities alike. Besides, this study aims to lay the groundwork for developing effective tools and strategies to counter the spread of fake news through translation, thereby promoting more accurate and responsible information dissemination across linguistic boundaries.

The proliferation of fake news has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges in today's information ecosystem. While much attention has been given to the creation and spread of misinformation within monolingual contexts, the role of translation in amplifying this problem across language barriers remains understudied. This study addresses the alarming spread of misinformation through news translation, with emphasis on the context of the Arab world and the Arabic language. As global information exchange accelerates, there is a growing concern about the deliberate modification of international news during translation, resulting in the propagation of fake news in target languages. This issue is particularly pronounced in social media networks, where altered Arabic translations of foreign news articles gain significant traction. The problem is

multifaceted, involving not only linguistic transformation but also ethical considerations in translation practices. There is a critical need to investigate the strategies employed in manipulating news content during translation, understand the motivations behind such alterations, and examine the ethical implications of these practices. This research aims to fill a gap in our understanding of how fake news proliferates across language barriers, specifically through translation, and to explore potential measures to mitigate this growing challenge in the realm of international communication and journalism. The research objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the strategies of manipulating news translation in Arabic
2. To explore the associated ideologies that promote deliberate manipulation of translation
3. To raise awareness about the ethical implications of disseminating fake news through translation

The following research questions were developed to address the research objectives:

1. How does manipulating news translation contribute to fake news dissemination?
2. In what ways manipulating news translation may be motivated by ideologies?
3. What relevant ethical implications should be addressed and promoted?

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of fake news has evolved significantly in recent years, becoming a critical area of study across multiple disciplines. Weiss et al. (2020) conducted a survey revealing that university faculty across various disciplines, ranks, ages, and genders hold diverse conceptions of fake news, highlighting its complex nature<sup>[5]</sup>. This fragmentation in understanding underscores the need for a more unified approach to addressing fake news in academic and professional contexts. In addition, Molina, Sundar, and Lee (2019) contributed to this understanding by developing a comprehensive taxonomy of fake news, identifying seven distinct types of content often mislabeled under this term<sup>[6]</sup>. Their framework, based on message, source, structure, and network characteristics, provides a valuable tool for distinguishing between various forms of misinformation and authentic news. Then, the spread of fake news through various channels, including social media and translation, has been a focus of recent research. Al-Rawi (2018) identified a significant divide in the perception of fake news between social networking site users and mainstream media<sup>[7]</sup>, uncovering a “networked flak activity” on platforms like Twitter (now X) that aims to influence editorial stances or undermine public trust in traditional media. Likewise, Wagner and Boczkowski (2019) examined the changing landscape of news consumption<sup>[8]</sup>, finding that social media

has become a primary gateway to news, with users relying on opinion leaders as credibility assessors. This shift in news consumption patterns has implications for how fake news spreads and is perceived across different platforms and languages.

The role of technology in exacerbating the fake news problem has been highlighted by several researchers. The ethical and human rights considerations surrounding manipulated news translations have been extensively discussed in recent literature. Likewise, latest technological advancements have led to new approaches in detecting manipulated translations. Bielsa (2015) argued for a more critical approach to news translation ethics in the age of global information flows. Bontridder and Pouillet (2021) emphasized the significant impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in facilitating the creation and targeted dissemination of convincing fake content, raising important ethical and human rights concerns<sup>[9]</sup>. Similarly, Zhou and Zafarani (2020) reviewed various methods for detecting fake news<sup>[6]</sup>, categorizing them into four perspectives: analysis of false knowledge, writing style, propagation patterns, and source credibility. Their work underscores the multidisciplinary nature of fake news detection and the ongoing challenges in combating misinformation. However, Dame Adjin-Tettey (2022) opined media and information literacy education played (MIL) a crucial role in combating the spread of fake news across languages since MIL trained respondents were more likely to determine authenticity and less likely to share inaccurate stories<sup>[10]</sup>.

Rubin (2019) approached the issue of disinformation from an epidemiological perspective, conceptualizing it as a socio-cultural, technology-enabled epidemic in digital news<sup>[11]</sup>. This model identifies three interacting factors: the “pathogens” (misleading content), the “susceptible hosts” (overwhelmed readers lacking media literacy), and the “conducive environments” (poorly regulated social media platforms). Tandoc (2021) considered the popularity of fake news as a research topic, noting its assumed negative impact on various aspects of social life and its potential to weaken trust in social institutions, including science, politics, and journalism<sup>[12]</sup>.

Several studies have emphasized the importance of media literacy and critical thinking in combating fake news. Chan (2022) found that higher news literacy was related to a greater ability to discern the veracity of news headlines and an increased likelihood of authenticating information when exposed to fake news<sup>[13]</sup>. Machete and Turpin (2020) conducted a systematic literature review that revealed critical thinking as an essential skill for identifying fake news<sup>[14]</sup>. They recommended incorporating information literacy into academic institutions to encourage critical thinking skills.

The role of information professionals in addressing the fake news phenomenon has been highlighted by several researchers. Burkhardt (2017) emphasized the crucial need

for librarians to be aware of fake news and provide instruction on identifying, avoiding, and combating misinformation <sup>[15]</sup>. De Paor and Heravi (2020) explored how the field of librarianship can help counteract fake news and misinformation, focusing on defining fake news <sup>[16]</sup>, analyzing information literacy frameworks, and outlining current efforts by libraries to refute the spread of misinformation.

The difficulties in verifying information and fact-checking in the digital age have been addressed by several studies. Nounkeu (2020) found that a substantial portion of news stories shared on Facebook lack essential elements of verifiability and reliability <sup>[17]</sup>, underscoring the challenges of maintaining information integrity on social media platforms. Thomson et al. (2020) highlighted the limitations of manual detection methods for identifying fraudulent edits in news content <sup>[18]</sup>, while also cautioning against over-reliance on automated systems. This emphasizes the need for a balanced approach combining human critical thinking and technological solutions.

The broader implications of fake news for policy and governance have been explored by researchers like Hartley and Vu (2020), who argued that misinformation and fake news compromise the efficacy of evidence-based policy interventions and undermine the credibility of scientific expertise <sup>[19]</sup>. Manez, Cano, and Díez (2024) revealed that audiences tend not to cross-check information or report fake news to authorities <sup>[20]</sup>, suggesting a need for further awareness campaigns, digital literacy initiatives, and increased involvement from governments and technological platforms.

In addressing the spread of fake news through translation, various scholars have highlighted the critical and ethical implications of this phenomenon. Translation in global news often plays a pivotal role in either mitigating or exacerbating the dissemination of misinformation. Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) argue that the translation of news is a key aspect of global communication <sup>[2]</sup>, where inaccuracies in translation can contribute to the misrepresentation of facts, thus fueling the spread of fake news. Furthermore, the Anti-Rumors Commission (2022) emphasizes the need for vigilant strategies to counteract the rapid spread of misinformation across languages <sup>[21]</sup>, especially in the digital age. Their work provides practical insights into combating rumors and fake news through cross-linguistic platforms, advocating for ethical standards in media translations.

van Dijk's (2016) sociocognitive discourse studies also contribute to understanding how fake news spreads through translation <sup>[22]</sup>. He examines how cognitive processes in discourse production, including biases in the translator's interpretation, can significantly affect how news is understood and disseminated across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Moreover, van Dijk (2014) expands on the sociocognitive approach, discussing the interplay between discourse, cognition, and society <sup>[3]</sup>, which is crucial in

analyzing how translation choices impact the reception of news in various cultural settings. Additionally, van Dijk (2015) provides a critical sociocognitive perspective to discourse analysis, which can be applied to study how translations of news may carry ideological biases, further distorting the truth <sup>[4]</sup>. This framework is crucial in understanding the responsibilities of translators in maintaining the integrity of news during cross-linguistic dissemination.

The aforementioned scholarly works demonstrate the multifaceted nature of fake news as a global phenomenon, encompassing issues of creation, dissemination, perception, and mitigation. The role of translation in spreading fake news across linguistic and cultural boundaries adds another layer of complexity to this issue, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary approaches that consider linguistic, technological, and socio-cultural factors. The upcoming research should focus on developing strategies to combat the spread of fake news through translation, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, media literacy, and ethical considerations in cross-lingual information exchange. Thus, these studies collectively underscore the ethical concerns and responsibilities in translating news, especially in the context of combating fake news, where mistranslations or deliberate distortions can have widespread societal consequences. In addition, the literature reveals a complex interplay between translation practices, ideological motivations, technological factors, and cultural contexts in the dissemination of fake news across language barriers. While significant progress has been made in understanding these dynamics, there remains a need for further research, particularly in developing effective strategies to mitigate the spread of misinformation through translation.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This study integrates two key frameworks: Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) model of news translation and van Dijk's (2014, 2015) sociocognitive approach to discourse analysis <sup>[2-4]</sup>. While Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) focus on structural shifts in news translation <sup>[2]</sup>, their approach does not address cases of intentional distortion motivated by ideology. van Dijk's sociocognitive approach fills this gap by showing how ideology and cognition shape translated discourse. This combination allows for addressing the critical and ethical aspects of how interference in translation can serve misinformation for ideological purposes. This gap was not well explored in prior studies. It might be useful to introduce the operational definitions of the main elements of the theoretical framework that guide the data analysis:

*Change of title/lead:* Altering the headline or opening sentence in a way that distorts meaning.

*Elimination/addition of information:* Removing essential information or adding misleading content to affect the narrative.

*Hyperbolization:* Exaggerating elements to provoke



strong emotions.

*Negative other-presentation*: Framing certain groups or nations in a deliberately negative light.

*Framing*: Selecting specific elements to guide the audience's interpretation of events.

*Blame transfer*: Shifting responsibility from one group to another through discourse.

Furthermore, in this study, 'fake news' is viewed as an instance of misinformation and used interchangeably with it. 'Manipulated translation' is operationally defined as the modification of source news during the translation process in a way that distorts or fabricates meaning. Although not all manipulated translations qualify as fake news, in this dataset they were verified as false by fact-checkers, thus the two categories overlap.

## 4. Methods

Since the present study addresses the critical and ethical concerns associated with manipulating international news, whether deliberately or not, the analytical framework is two-fold: the first is informed by Bielsa and Bassnett translation theory (2009) whereas the second is informed by the sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis [2,4].

Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) view translation in the context of global media as a social activity influenced by bias and power dynamics and, thus, is never neutral [2]. Interference in news translation that results in fake news will be examined considering Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) view to identify the translation strategies that have been subjected to modifications to reproduce fake news [2]. For instance, these modifications may include a change of title and lead, elimination of essential information, and addition of misleading or unrelated content, processes that align with Sharma's (2015) framework of Addition, Omission, and Deletion (AOD) as core translation operations subject to manipulation [23].

The identified modifications and changes will be critically explicated through the sociocognitive approach which is widely used in media discourse studies [3,4,22]. This approach examines the interplay between discourse, cognition, and society where the influence of ideology is central in the construction of discourse. The present study will emphasize the underlying ideology and attitude that motivates manipulating news translation to spread fake news. Also, translation ethics will be discussed to raise awareness about ethical issues and professionalism among translators and social users.

## 5. Data Collection

The dataset was obtained from Hamdi et al. (2025) who

examined the translation quality of international news stories manipulated on social media [24]. It comprises a set of 10 fake news stories that have been translated by unknown users from English to Arabic and disseminated widely on social media. All the news items in the dataset were checked and verified as fake by a fact-checking website based in Saudi Arabia [21]. The news addresses diverse domains including politics, healthcare, and the economy. The present study builds on Hamdi et al. (2025) who identified manipulating strategies in the Arabic version of international news [24]; however, it approaches the phenomenon from critical and ethical perspectives.

The dataset was originally collected between January and March 2024, and it was revisited in April 2025 to ensure they are still available on social media. News items were included based on the following criteria: originally written in English, translated into Arabic and widely circulated on social media, confirmed as manipulated or fake by the Anti-Rumors Commission (2022), and covering a range of domains including politics, health, and economics [21].

The sample size of ten cases was limited due to verification challenges and the recency of the phenomenon. These cases were selected based on clear evidence of manipulation and ideological bias, offering rich material for exploring interference strategies. As a qualitative and exploratory study, the aim was not to generalize findings to all translated news, but to illustrate patterns that warrant further investigation.

## 6. Data Analysis

The following analysis is guided by Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) model of news translation strategies, which is characterized by structural and content adaptations [2]. Additionally, van Dijk's sociocognitive approach (2014, 2015, 2016) examines the modifications of translations and demonstrates the discursive strategies that inform them [3,4,22].

When examining the dataset to identify interference or modification strategies, it was observed that some strategies were consistent with Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) such as change of title and lead. However, other strategies were applied conversely [2]. More specifically, eliminating necessary information and inserting misleading or irrelevant additions reflect deliberate distortions. This aligns with Sharma's (2015) articulation of AOD (Addition, Omission, and Deletion) as critical areas vulnerable to manipulation in translation practice [23].

The following are examples of news stories that have undergone major modification and interference. **Table 1** includes selected examples for analysis purposes, and the full dataset is available in **Appendix A Table A1**.

**Table 1.** Featured Interference Strategies in Arabic Translation.

SN	Original News	Translated Version in Arabic	Interference Strategy
1	14-year-old charged with killing father sparks a protest movement	A 13-year-old American child hacked a bank and transferred all of its balance, 300 billion, to his account.	Change of title
2	Get together with your family/friends, and watch all of our testimonials from the Open Mosque Day Event!	Glory be to you Lord. In a phenomenon that is the first of its kind, hundreds of Americans leave their homes and stay in Al-Houda Mosque in one of the states, demanding to learn about the principles of Islam.	Change of lead
3	#ICYMI Along with live fire from partner nation ships and aircraft, #YourADF participated in the sinking exercise of the decommissioned ex-USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG60) in waters 15,000 feet deep, 50 nautical miles North of Kauai during #RIMPAC2022.	US Navy posts footage of the moment of hitting the US battleship (USS Carney) after an attack by Houthis in the Red Sea	Elimination and addition of information
4	A little 3D visualization of the fires in Aus. This is made from data from NASA's FIRMS (Satellite data regarding fires) between 05/12/19-05/01/20.	NASA takes a photo of the fire outbreak in Australia. The effects of the large fires that broke out in Australia, where flames rise out of control. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said that the death toll in the current fire season, which began in September, reached 23 people, including 12 in the fires this week.	Elimination and addition of information

Example 1 is the original title of a news post on social media, and it has been changed and reproduced as a new title without translating the full story. However, example 2 is more of changing the lead where the first part or sentence of the original news has been changed. These two cases are consistent with the type of modifications that occur to the title and lead, according to Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) <sup>[2]</sup>. In contrast, examples 3 and 4 deviate from the proposed strategies of omitting unnecessary information and adding relevant background details. Instead, these examples demonstrate a pattern of omitting crucial information and introducing irrelevant details, resulting in significant manipulation of the original content in the Arabic versions while maintaining the general subject matter. The changes or manipulations in the Arabic version will be critically examined in the following section to learn more about the discursive strategies (italicized) from a sociocognitive perspective.

*Hyperbolization* is a discursive strategy that refers to the exaggeration in describing certain aspects of a situation to evoke emotions. It has been employed in a post (see N5 in **Appendix A Table A1**, hereafter to refer required number with N) to invite community members to attend a gathering in a mosque in the USA. The Arabic version of the post amplified the number of attendees 'hundreds of Americans' from non-Muslims and further attributed their attendance to learning about Islam instead of attending an event. Thus, the number of attendees was the target aspect for hyperbole to emphasize the perceived importance of the claimed reason for attendance, learning about Islam motivated by a religious ideology. Also, *negative other-presentation* strategy was used in (N7) which involves a negative description or portrayal of a certain group to emphasize failure, negative traits, faults, and wrongdoing of outgroup members. Here, a

Jewish Millionaire celebrating Hanuka with his friends in Bahrain was manipulated in the Arabic version to report founding a Saudi-Israeli friendship association. The target of this negative presentation is Saudi Arabia since there is no diplomatic relationship between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Furthermore, such a negative presentation is motivated by religious and political ideologies that reject making relationships between Muslim states and the state of Israel due to the occupation of Palestine. Thus, the Arabic version of the news attempts to present Saudi Arabia negatively as violating established religious and political ideologies in Arab world. The news or post was followed by a prayer to evoke religious emotions.

*Framing* strategy was used in two news stories (N3 and N9) in which information is presented in such a way as to guide the audience to a predefined understanding. Both the American and Chinese kids were framed as geniuses though they were associated with (hacking) illegal activities. The Arabic version of the news indirectly pointed out the failings of addressing complex social problems, such as the upbringing of kids, by comparing them with claimed actions of kids from other societies. Thus, the two news stories were framed negatively in the Arabic versions to criticize social issues using outgroup members as models.

*Appealing to authority* and *emotions* was exploited in (N8 and N10). The former U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to a farm in November 2023, Lyton, Iowa was used to promote a claimed dairy factory in Boston for a Saudi businessman. The former president was involved in the Arabic version of the news as a public figure for marketing and business purposes. Appealing to religious emotions was also employed in (N10) by encouraging the audience to listen to the Holy Quran as a cure for diseases to create a connection with the Muslim audience and elicit emotional

interaction or response. Other discursive strategies such as *making analogies/comparisons* and *blame transfer* were also utilized. In (N2), a simulation post about a volcano in New Zealand was used to report a deadly volcano causing 10 casualties in the Arabic version of the news. The Arabic version urges the audience/users to see the footage of the site before and after the claimed volcano. *Moralization* is involved here by asking the audience to contemplate life and death probably for religious purposes followed by prayer. As to *blame transfer*, it can be seen in (N6) where the former U.S. president Barack Obama attending an anniversary of the 'Bloody Sunday' was reproduced as a demonstration against racism in the Arabic version. The news was exploited to blame those who attended this gathering for not maintaining social distancing during COVID-19, raising doubts about the truth of the pandemic.

## 7. Discussion

This section integrates the given findings with relevant literature, critically examines the manipulation strategies used in fake news translation and addresses some of the essential ethical implications. In addition, the findings of this study reveal a systematic manipulation of news content during translation, with specific strategies used to distort the original meaning and create misleading narratives. The interference strategies observed in the given dataset not only align with Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) news translation strategies but also extend beyond them<sup>[2]</sup>, as some strategies involve the deliberate addition of misinformation rather than objective modification. Furthermore, the sociocognitive analysis exposes the underlying ideology and attitudes driving these manipulations<sup>[4]</sup>. This section intends to synthesize the study findings within the relevant scholarly works, emphasizing their critical and ethical implications.

### 7.1. Manipulation Strategies in News Translation

The dataset analysis primarily recognized four primary interference strategies used in Arabic translations of English news articles. Firstly, the *change of title and lead* means that the titles and introductory sentences were altered significantly, sometimes completely detached from the original content. This change aligns with Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) observation that translation in news often involves restructuring to fit audience expectations<sup>[2]</sup>. However, in this case, the modifications serve ideological or political motives rather than journalistic or professional adaptation. Example 1 in **Table 1** established how a crime-related headline was repurposed into a financial cybercrime narrative, shifting the focus entirely. Secondly, the *elimination and addition of information* underscored that some translations removed critical factual details while inserting misleading or fabricated elements. Such

modifications resonate with Sharma's (2015) categorization of *addition, omission, and deletion* as translation procedures that, when misused, serve ideological or deceptive agendas<sup>[23]</sup>. Contrasting the traditional journalistic practice of omitting non-essential information<sup>[23]</sup>, these changes distorted the intended message. For instance, example 3 altered a military training exercise report into an attack narrative, changing the event's perceived intent. Thirdly, the *hyperbolization and negative-other presentation* illustrated that exaggeration was used to amplify the perceived significance of events. Example 5 in **Table 1** manipulated a mosque event, inflating attendance figures and altering motivations, reinforcing religious ideological narratives. In addition, negative other-presentation, noted (in N7), reframed an interfaith celebration as a groundless political alliance, exploiting political sensitivities in the region<sup>[22]</sup>. Finally, the *framing and emotional appeal* offered several translations to guide audience perception by strategically presenting information. N9 framed child hackers as *mastermind* figures, subtly critiquing social systems by comparison. The appeal to religious emotions in N10 used public figures to endorse unrelated events, manipulating trust and credibility<sup>[21]</sup>. We find that these manipulation strategies illustrate how news translation is weaponized to influence public perception, often deviating from ethical journalism.

### 7.2. Sociocognitive Dimensions

The sociocognitive approach to discourse analysis posits that the relationship between discourse and society is mediated through a cognitive interface<sup>[4,22]</sup>. The cognitive interface includes elements such as mental models, memory, ideologies, and attitudes. The discursive strategies of the Arabic versions of international news are informed mainly by underlying ideology and attitudes. The interference in the Arabic translation of the news appears to be driven by the translator's ideological bias, which selectively promotes or demotes specific ideologies. Consequently, social media users may circulate the manipulated version of the news in Arabic based on their ideology and attitudes toward the subject matter of the news regardless of credibility. Against this backdrop, the translator's intentional or subconscious bias affects the final representation of information. Further discussion can address three relevant aspects; religious and political ideologies; nationalistic and anti-Western sentiments; and religious sentiment as a mobilization tool.

Firstly, the religious and political ideologies state that several altered news stories targeted sensitive political relationships. The Saudi-Israeli friendship claim (N7), for example, leveraged regional hostilities to fuel opposition against diplomatic normalization which aligns with previous research showing that fake news translation is often influenced by ideological positioning<sup>[7]</sup>. Secondly, the nationalistic and anti-Western sentiments where the US Navy attack narrative (example 3) suggested strategic

manipulation aimed at reinforcing anti-Western biases in Arab media. Similar patterns have been recognized in studies analyzing Arabic and Persian-language propaganda networks [9]. Finally, religious sentiment was utilized as a mobilization tool in which emotional appeals were strategically embedded in altered translations. N10 promoted religious content by misattributing scientific claims, a trend previously noted in digital misinformation campaigns [13]. These narratives capitalize on cultural trust in religious figures and texts, making them more likely to be accepted uncritically. Therefore, the combination of sociocognitive biases and ideological motivations suggests that translation manipulation in news is not random, but follows structured patterns designed to achieve specific political, religious, or social objectives.

### 7.3. Ethical Implications of Fake News in Translation

The study finds that the deliberate manipulation of translated news raises serious ethical concerns in journalism and translation studies. These issues can be analyzed as: a breach of translation ethics; public misinformation and social consequences; and legal and policy considerations. The breach of translation ethics demonstrates that the professional translation ethics [2], which underline fidelity, accuracy, and neutrality. The example cases analyzed in this study violate these principles, as translators (or content creators) actively twisted factual information. Then, the public misinformation and social consequences show that misleading translations fuel public distrust and social unrest. For a case, misinformation about military actions (example 3) escalates political tensions, while fabricated religious claims (N10) misguide communities into making decisions based on falsehoods [10]. Finally, there come the legal and policy considerations, where some nations have introduced anti-fake news laws to combat misinformation, yet cross-border translation manipulation remains a legal gray area. Scholars argue that existing policies focus on original content creation rather than mistranslation as a misinformation tactic [19]. Addressing this regulatory gap is crucial to mitigating the spread of false news through translation.

The aforesaid study's findings reinforce existing research on news translation and misinformation while introducing new insights on manipulation strategies. The research confirms that fake news in translation exhibits structured patterns, supporting Molina et al.'s taxonomy of misinformation [25]. Similarly, unlike prior studies that focus on social media sharing, this study highlights how linguistic modifications actively create fake news, expanding our understanding of misinformation's origins [8]. The findings underscore Bielsa's argument that news translation is never neutral, but further demonstrate how it can become an intentional tool for disinformation [26]. Thus, the research

contributes to critical discourse analysis in translation studies by offering empirical evidence of manipulated news translation practices.

Although the small dataset of this study is a limitation, future studies could expand the dataset using several languages to explore patterns of manipulating international news translations. Additionally, this study focuses on the production side of manipulated translation and does not address how audiences receive or verify such content. Future research could address the reception side and explore how cultural and ideological backgrounds shape acceptance of translated misinformation.

## 8. Conclusions

Against the backdrop, this study presents how news translation serves as both a tool and mechanism for fake news proliferation and propagation. The results reveal systematic manipulation strategies, driven by political, ideological, and social motivations. By integrating news translation theories with critical discourse analysis, the research provides a novel framework for understanding misinformation transmission across languages. To address and mitigate these ethical and informational challenges, we propose that future research should explore: AI-based solutions for detecting manipulated translations [6]; training programs on translation ethics and media literacy [15]; and stronger international regulations on misinformation translation [19]. Finally, by underscoring, addressing and challenging the translation factor in fake news dissemination, this study flags the way for more transparent, ethical journalism in multilingual contexts.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.A.H., V.K.S., and W.A.H.; methodology, S.A.H., V.K.S., and W.A.H.; validation, S.A.H., V.K.S. and W.A.H.; formal analysis, S.A.H., V. S.; investigation, S.A.H.; resources, S.A.H.; data curation, S.A.H.; writing—original draft preparation, S.A.H., V.K.S., and W.A.H.; writing—review and editing, S.A.H., V.S; visualization, S.A.H.; supervision, S.A.H.; funding acquisition, S.A.H. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.



## Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

## Data Availability Statement

The dataset is available in Appendix A, including the links. Interested researchers or readers can contact the corresponding author for further communication.

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## Appendix A

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

**Table A1.** List of News.

SN	Original News	Candidate Translation	Candidate Translation (Ar-Eng)	Reference/Google Translation	Link
1	#ICYMI Along with live fire from partner nation ships and aircraft, #YourADF participated in the sinking exercise of the decommissioned ex-USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG60) in waters 15,000 feet deep, 50 nautical miles North of Kauai during #RIMPAC2022.	البحرية الأمريكية تنشر لقطات للحظة إصابة البارجة الأمريكية (يو أس اس كارني) بعد استهدافها من قبل الحوثيين في البحر الأحمر	US Navy posts footage of the moment of hitting the US battleship (USS Carney) after an attack by Houthis in the Red Sea	إلى جانب النيران الحية #ICYMI من السفن والطائرات التابعة للدول #YourADF الشريكة، شاركت في تمرين غرق السفينة الأمريكية USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG60) التي خرجت من الخدمة في المياه بعمق 15000 قدم، على بعد 50 ميلاً بحرياً شمال #RIMPAC2022 كواي خلال	<a href="http://norum.ors.net/?rumors=888711">http://norum.ors.net/?rumors=888711</a>
2	Hey guys. This is an volcanic simulation from the Auckland War Memorial Museum.[THIS VIDEO WAS NOT USED IN THE MUSEUM!] And one more thing, this video was made by Brandspank.	هذه مشاهد من كاميرا مثبتة على إحدى المنازل في الجزيرة البيضاء في نيوزيلندا والتي حصل فيها انفجار بركاني في التاسع في هذا الشهر كانون الأول قضى فيه ما يقارب من 10 سياح كانوا هناك..... انظروا للحياة في ثوان... ثوان معدودة فقط قبل وبعد البركان..... شيء لا يتخيله عقل سبحان عظمته! شوفوا المقطع للأخر	This is footage from a camera fixed on one of the houses on the white island in New Zealand where the volcano erupted on the 9th of this month, December, causing 10 tourists to die. Look at life within seconds. Just a few seconds before and after the volcano. It's imaginable, glory be to his(Allah's) greatness! View the full video.	مرحباً شباب. هذه محاكاة بركانية من متحف أوكلاند التذكاري للحرب. [لم يتم استخدام هذا الفيديو في المتحف!] وشيء آخر، هذا الفيديو من إنتاج براندسبانك.	<a href="http://norum.ors.net/?rumors=9941">http://norum.ors.net/?rumors=9941</a>
3	14-Year-Old Charged with Killing Father Sparks A Protest Movement	طفل أمريكي عمره 13 سنه مهكر على بنك ومحول كل رصيد البنك 300 مليار \$ في حسابه	A 13-year-old American child hacked a bank and transferred all of its balance, 300 billion, to his account.	طفل يبلغ من العمر 14 عامًا متهم بقتل والده بثير حركة احتجاجية	<a href="http://norum.ors.net/?rumors=8985p">http://norum.ors.net/?rumors=8985p</a>
4	A little 3D visualization of the fires in Aus. This is made from data from NASA's FIRMS (Satelite data regarding fires) between 05/12/19-05/01/20.	وكالة ناسا تلتقط صورة لإندلاع الحريق في أستراليا. آثار الحرائق الكبيرة المندلعة في أستراليا، حيث تتصاعد أسنة اللهب الخارجة عن السيطرة. وقال رئيس الوزراء الأسترالي، سكوت موريسون، إن عدد القتلى في موسم الحرائق الراهن الذي بدأ في سبتمبر بلغ 23 شخصاً، منهم 12 في حرائق الأسبوع=	NASA takes a photo of the fire outbreak in Australia. The effects of the large fires that broke out in Australia, where flames rise out of control. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said that the death toll in the current fire season, which began in September, reached 23 people, including 12 in the fires this week.	تصور ثلاثي الأبعاد للحرائق في أستراليا. يتم ذلك من بيانات من التابعة لناسا (بيانات FIRMS الأقمار الصناعية المتعلقة بالحرائق) في الفترة ما بين 19/05/12-20/01/05.	<a href="https://twitter.com/No_Rumors/status/1214521679793266689?s=20">https://twitter.com/No_Rumors/status/1214521679793266689?s=20</a>

Table A1. Cont.

SN	Original News	Candidate Translation	Candidate Translation (Ar-Eng)	Reference/Google Translation	Link
5	Get together with your family/friends, and watch all of our testimonials from the Open Mosque Day Event!	سبحانك يا رب في ظاهره هي الاول من نوعها مئات الامريكان يغادرون منازلهم ويمكنون في مسجد الهدى في أحد الولايات مطالبين بالتعرف على مبادئ الاسلام	Glory be to you Lord. In a phenomenon that is the first of its kind, hundreds of Americans leave their homes and stay in Al-Houda Mosque in one of the states, demanding to learn about the principles of Islam.	اجتمع مع عائلتك/أصدقائك، وشاهد جميع شهادتنا من حدث يوم المسجد المفتوح!	<a href="http://norumors.net/?rumors=c8uij">http://norumors.net/?rumors=c8uij</a>
6	President Barack Obama, center, walks as he holds hands with Amelia Boynton Robinson, who was beaten during “Bloody Sunday,” as they and the first family and others including Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga, left of Obama, walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., on Saturday. It was the 50th anniversary of “Bloody Sunday”, a landmark event of the civil rights movement. From front left are Marian Robinson, Sasha Obama, first lady Michelle Obama, Lewis Obama, Boynton Robinson and Adelaide Sanford, also in wheelchair. (Associated Press)	مظاهرات في امريكا ضد العنصرية يتقدمها الرئيس السابق اوباما م علينا من اوباما وغيره بس السؤال وين التباعد بينهم طيب وين الكمادات؟ بعد أسبوعين رح تظهر حقيقة كورونا بعد المظاهرات والتجمعات ف امريكا، انتشار كورونا تعني كارثة إنسانية وإذا كان العكس فالعالم يعيش اكبر خدعة فالتاريخ	Demonstrations in America against racism are led by former President Obama, never mind Obama or someone else, but the question is, where is the distance between them? Ok, where are the masks? After two weeks, the truth about Corona will emerge after demonstrations and gatherings in America. The spread of Corona means a humanitarian catastrophe, and if the opposite is the case, the world is living the biggest hoax in history.	الرئيس باراك أوباما، في الوسط، يسير وهو يمسك بيد أميليا بوينتون روبنسون، التي تعرضت للضرب خلال "الأحد الدامي"، حيث يسيرون هم والعائلة الأولى وآخرون بما في ذلك النائب جون لويس، الديمقراطي عن ولاية جورجيا، على يسار أوباما، عبر جسر إدموند بيتوس في سلمى، علاء، يوم السبت. كانت هذه الذكرى السنوية الخمسين لـ "الأحد الدامي"، وهو حدث تاريخي لحركة الحقوق المدنية. من اليسار الأمامي ماريان روبنسون، وساشا أوباما، والسيدة الأولى ميشيل أوباما، ولويس أوباما، ويوبونتون روبنسون، وأديلايد سانفورد، وهي أيضًا على كرسي متحرك. (وكالة أنباء)	<a href="http://norumors.net/?rumors=98i9">http://norumors.net/?rumors=98i9</a>
7	American Jewish millionaire Lazer scheiner and his friends throwing a Hanukkah party in Bahrain with the local Arabs isn't it amazing	احتفال بمناسبه تأسيس جمعيه الصداقه السعوديه الإسرائيلييه بالرياض...حسبي الله ونعم الوكيل	A celebration on the occasion of the founding of the Saudi-Israeli Friendship Association in Riyadh... Allah suffices me, and He is the best disposer of affairs	المليونير اليهودي الأمريكي لازر شينر وأصدقاؤه يقيمون حفل حانوكا في البحرين مع العرب المحليين، أليس هذا رائعًا	<a href="http://norumors.net/?rumors=ii875">http://norumors.net/?rumors=ii875</a>
8	Earlier today, former President Trump visited a farm in Leighton, Iowa, and spoke to farmers and signed a John Deere combine.	دونالد ترمب في حفل افتتاح شركة السعودي الدكتور عواد مناحي البلوي لإنتاج الألبان ومشقاتها في ولاية بوسطن	Donald Trump at the opening ceremony of the Saudi Dr. Awad Manahi Al-Balawi Dairy and Dairy Products Production Company in Boston	في وقت سابق من اليوم، زار الرئيس السابق ترامب مزرعة في لايتون، أيوا، وتحدث إلى المزارعين ووقع على اتفاقية جون ديري.	<a href="http://norumors.net/?rumors=676788">http://norumors.net/?rumors=676788</a>

Table A1. Cont.

SN	Original News	Candidate Translation	Candidate Translation (Ar-Eng)	Reference/Google Translation	Link
9	The kid is widely renowned in China as a computer genius. However, what stands out most about him is his ability to crack through codes and systems. Yes, Wang is one of the youngest hackers in the country, and his story is a remarkable one indeed. It all began for the kid, as an attempt to get away from spending hours on doing homework. And so Wang hacked into the school's online homework system and took the easy way out.	الهكرز الصيني سن جي سو المسؤول عن إيقاف خدمات الفيسبوك وواتساب وانستغرام يبلغ من العمر 13 سنة صورة الطفل الصيني الهكرز الذي عمل على إيقاف البرامج؟! واحنة اطفالنا شنو اقوى شي عدهم؟	The Chinese hacker Sun Ji Soo, who is responsible for stopping Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram services, is 13 years old. A photo of the Chinese child hacker who worked to stop the programs (social media platforms)?! How about our children, What is the strongest/most powerful thing to them?	ويشتهر الطفل على نطاق واسع في الصين باعتباره عبقرى الكمبيوتر. ومع ذلك، فإن أكثر ما يبرز عنه هو قدرته على اختراق الرموز والأنظمة. نعم، يعد وانغ أحد أصغر الهكرز سنًا في البلاد، وقصته رائعة بالفعل. بدأ الأمر كله بالنسبة للطفل، كمحاولة للابتعاد عن قضاء ساعات في أداء واجباته المدرسية. وهكذا اخترق وانغ نظام الواجبات المنزلية عبر الإنترنت في المدرسة واتخذ الطريق السهل للخروج.	<a href="http://norumors.net/?rumors=gfhg78">http://norumors.net/?rumors=gfhg78</a>
10	Quran Is Cure And Cure Is From Allah surrender to your Lord and listen it with close eyes for consecutive 7days thrice time in a day after listening say thrice time ALLAH in heart and drink water in three sips	لجأت السلطات الصحية في الهند إلى تشغيل تسجيلات صوتية من القرآن الكريم في غرف العناية المركزة وخاصة سورة الرحمن لما له أثر في شفاء المرضى على حد سواء سواء كانوا مسلمين أو بوذيين أو هندوس.	Health authorities in India have resorted to playing audio recordings of the Holy Qur'an in intensive care rooms, especially Surah Ar-Rahman, because of its impact on healing patients, whether they are Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus.	القرآن العلاج والشفاء من الله أسلم لربك واستمع إليه بأغصص العيون سبعة أيام متتالية ثلاث مرات في اليوم بعد الاستماع قل الله في قلبك ثلاث مرات واشرب الماء على ثلاث رشفات	<a href="http://norumors.net/?rumors=jhjhk8">http://norumors.net/?rumors=jhjhk8</a>

Note: This table is adapted from the work of Hamdi et al. (2025) <sup>[24]</sup>.

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