

# **Bridging the ideological abyss - translation strategies in politically sensitive texts**

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# Maps

Showing / hiding, naming

Major Lefkosia (Nicosia), Lefkosia (Nicosia) City Centre  
- Area under Turkish occupation since 1974

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus vs North Cyprus  
vs north Cyprus

# Sensitivity - mass media

*The Economist* 20 April 2013, p. 58

A flurry of unusual articles in official newspapers on April 15th about a reformist former party leader has raised eyebrows among China-watchers. .. Hu Yaobang ... there has always been sensitivity about the mention of his name ...

*The Economist* 13 April 2013, p. 40

The body language gave Vladimir Putin away. In a German television interview he was not at all his composed self. Everything irritated him: the calm, smiling interviewer questioning him about a crackdown on civil society ...

# Sensitivity - mass media

*Der Spiegel* 8 April 2013

- Interview with an historian on anti-German attitudes in European countries in context of euro-crisis (p. 98ff)
- Article on situation of Afghan interpreters who worked for German military in Afghanistan and who are now seen as enemies by compatriots and feel neglected by Germany (p. 86ff)
- Short article on requirement to use gender neutral language in official documents (e.g. traffic regulations, 'wer zu Fuß geht', p. 17)

# Political Sensitivity

conflicts in the domain of politics (politics is widest sense)

Different opinions/feelings/attitudes among people

How to cope with it? How to speak about it?

How to deal with problem/conflict in discourse (public discourse, political discourse, media discourse, journalistic discourse)?

Text not sensitive by itself, but texts/discourse reflect sensitivity of people (due to attitude, ideology, religion, identity [ethnic group, race, gender ...])

# Discursive strategies

- texts explicitly/directly address the topic (text about a conflict, conflict as topic) – contrasting labels / explicitly addressing labelling strategies ('politically sensitive terms')
- texts indirectly / implicitly refer/allude to conflict (text about another topic, cross-reference)
- topic avoided in text (self-censorship, caution)
- topic prevented/prohibited to be addressed in text (censorship)

Discourse and texts as carriers of national or group ideologies and/or reflecting institutional practices (speech in parliament, press conference vs report in mass media)

# Recontextualisation in media

= transfer of (extracts) of a communicative/discursive action from its initial context into another one

Strategies:

- selection of information (omissions, additions)
- restructuring, re-ordering, rearrangement of information
- transformation of genre (e.g. interview into report on interview)
- Incorporation of (selected) information in a new text, including syntactic (and stylistic) adaptation

Determined by purpose, [institutional] practices and policies, time, ideologies, ...

# Information selection

The long-standing relationship with South Korea is particularly important to the United States, especially in light of the recent actions by North Korea, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said today. At a joint Pentagon press conference with Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hagel stressed that the United States and its allies are prepared to address any threat to the Asia-Pacific.

On Monday, North Korean media announced [...]

“I think their very provocative actions and belligerent tone, it has ratcheted up the danger [...], Hagel said.

(Defence.gov News Article, 31 March 2013 - 1 print page of which one third direct quote vs 7.5 pages of full transcript of News Briefing)



# Information selection and presentation

The North Korean regime is guilty of “paranoid rhetoric” after warning last week that it could not guarantee the safety of embassy staff in the event of a war, William Hague has said. [...] Speaking on the BBC’s Andrew Marr Show, Hague said: “We have to be concerned about the danger of miscalculation by the North Korean regime, which has worked itself up into this frenetic state of rhetoric in recent weeks, and the danger that they would believe their own paranoid rhetoric.” [...] The foreign secretary declined to comment on British and other intelligence about the military threat from North Korea. But he indicated that intelligence suggested Pyongyang did not pose a major threat [...]

*(The Guardian, 7 April 2013)*

# Information selection and presentation

[...] before I turn to your questions, let me say just a few words about the rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

[...] Aggressive rhetoric and military posturing only result in counter-actions, and fuel fear and instability. Things must begin to calm down, as this situation, made worse by the lack of communication, could lead to a path that nobody should want to follow.

(UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, opening remarks at a press conference with Prime Minister Antoni Martí of Andorra, 2 April 2013)

# Lack of communication

[no missile launch as expected] This must have been a relief for John Kerry, America's new secretary of state, who visited Seoul, Beijing and Tokyo from April 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, warning on the way that the launch would be a “huge mistake”.

Nothing suggested, however, that Kim's grandson, North Korea's incumbent tyrant, Kim Jong Un, was listening to Mr Kerry. (*The Economist* 20 April 2013, p. 53)

How do politicians, journalists, public get access to North Korean discourse?

# Information selection - multiple sources

North Korea could be preparing to conduct a fourth nuclear test [...] South Korea's unification minister, Ryoo Kihl-jae, said on Monday. Ryoo told a meeting with MPs at the national assembly [...] the Yonhap news agency said. [...]

Ryoo's comments came after a South Korean newspaper quoted an unnamed government source as saying [...]

Last week, North Korea warned foreign embassies in Pyongyang [...]

The allies would “respond more forcefully than in the recent past but in a limited way intended to prevent an escalation to broader war”, the New York Times said, citing Pentagon officials. [...]

# Cont.

The Chinese president, Xi Jinping, alluded to North Korean provocations when he said no country “should be allowed to throw a region and even the whole world into chaos for selfish gain” in a speech on Sunday.

In a telephone conversation with the UN secretary, Ban Ki-moon, at the weekend, China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi, said Beijing “opposed provocative words and actions from any party in the region and do not allow trouble-making on China’s doorstep”, according to the ministry’s website.

*(The Guardian, 8 April 2013)*

Original languages?????

# Interpreting implicit information

Over the weekend, China's foreign minister said it would not allow "trouble making" on its doorstep, while President Xi Jinping appeared to rebuke North Korea during a speech in which he said no country should be allowed to cause chaos "for selfish gain".  
(*Reuters*, 8 April 2013)

[...] President and CCP Secretary General Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech [...] yesterday, and western media coverage has focused on subtle hints in the script indicating concern with North Korea's behavior. The Washington Post reports [...] Bloomberg explains why Xi's comments should be interpreted as directed at North Korea, despite the fact that he didn't mention the country by name.  
(*China Digital Times*, 7 April 2013)

# North Korean voice?

Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)

Korean News Service (KNS) in Tokyo provides home page ([www.kcna.co.jp](http://www.kcna.co.jp)): Texts in English and Spanish (for Spanish-speaking people) and Russian according to website

Pyongyang, March 29 (KCNA) -- It was reported through media Friday that Marshal Kim Jong Un, supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA), convened an urgent operation meeting on the KPA Strategic Rocket Forces' performance of duty for firepower strike and finally examined and ratified a plan for the firepower strike. Upon hearing the news, servicepersons and civilians of the DPRK have become more convinced of victory in the ongoing showdown with the U.S. imperialists.

Kye Sang Col, a KPA officer, told KNCA: "It is ...."

# North Korean voice in translation

Pyongyang, March 29 (KCNA) -- The Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) released its information bulletin No. 1027 Friday which says as follows:

The service personnel and people of the DPRK have turned out as one in the sacred war for annihilating the enemy, their hearts burning with towering hatred and resentment at the U.S. imperialists and south Korean group of traitors going reckless in their moves to destroy the symbol of the supreme dignity of the DPRK, not content with staging war exercises against the north.

Upon hearing the statement of the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army, all service personnel and people are renewing their firm resolution to deal merciless and retaliatory blows at the vicious provocateurs and achieve a final victory in the war for national reunification. [...]



# Cont.

Pyongyang, April 7 (KCNA) -- It is the steadfast resolution of the Workers' Party of Korea to enable the Korean people to fully enjoy a socialist cultural life under the highly civilized conditions and environment and to make a beautiful and sound way of life prevail throughout society, Rodong Sinmun Sunday says in an editorial.

It goes on:

The U.S. imperialists and south Korean warmongers have gone to extremes in their moves against the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). [...]

# Translating

Languages of translation (as Source Language and/or as Target Language) - reflect dynamics of culture (Lambert) **and ideologies**

Which sources do mass media use?

New Year's Address by Kim Jong Un (1 January 2013)

Pyongyang, January 1 (KNCA) -- The dear respected Kim Jong Un made a New Year address on January 1, 2013. The following is its full text: (8 print pages)

# Contextualisation of extracts

*CNN* (2 January 2013): 1.5 pages, 4 lines direct quote

[...] In his speech, Kim celebrated North Korea's controversial launch last month of a long-range rocket that put a satellite in orbit. Condemned by the United Nations, the move was widely considered to be a test of ballistic missile technology. The launch was "a great event which inspired all the service personnel and people with confidence in sure victory and courage and clearly showed that Korea does what it is determined to do," Kim said, according to a transcript of his speech published by the state-run Korean central news Agency. [...]

# Contextualisation of extracts

*Daily Telegraph* (online 1 January 2013): 1.5 pages, 14 lines direct quotes, also link to video of speech (extracts), with voice-over into English

Extracts of speech in different order, reference to South Korea moved up and given more prominence

It was the first New Year's Day broadcast for 19 years [...]

He also held out an olive branch to South Korea [...] “An important issue in putting an end to the division of the country and achieving its reunification is to remove confrontation between the north and the south,” Mr Kim said. “The past records of inter-Korean relations show that confrontation between fellow countrymen leads to nothing but war.” He added that it was South Korea’s responsibility “to unclench its fist first, so that the leader of the weaker state can outstretch his hand.” (last bit not in speech on KCNA website)

# Contextualisation of extracts in translation

*Die Welt* (1 January 2013) - 27 lines text, 4 lines direct quote

[...] Nordkoreas Machthaber Kim Jong-un hat sich für einen “radikalen” Wechsel in der Politik seines seit Jahrzehnten abgeschotteten Landes ausgesprochen. “Es ist wichtig, die Konfrontation zwischen dem Norden und dem Süden zu beenden”, sagte Kim in seiner am Dienstag im Staatsfernsehen gesendeten Neujahrsbotschaft. So könne “die Teilung des Landes beendet und seine Wiedervereinigung erreicht werden.” Die Vergangenheit zeige, dass Konfrontation zwischen Landsleuten zu “nichts als Krieg” führe.

Who produced the German text? What was source text/language?

# KCNA self presentation

The Korean Central News Agency is the state-run agency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It speaks for the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK government.

It was founded on December 5, 1946.

It is located in the capital city of Pyongyang. It has branches in provincial seats and in some foreign countries.

News is transmitted to other countries in English, Russian, and Spanish.

The KCNA is in charge of uniform delivery of news and other informations to mass media of the country, including newspapers and radios.

It develops the friendly and cooperative relations with foreign news agencies. (<http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm>)

# News translation

Are texts used by foreign media? How contextualised? Accepted?

Who produces translations for KNCA? Guidelines/instructions?  
How is “uniform delivery” achieved? Translation strategies? No  
explicitation for foreign addressees?

Floros (2011): Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) -  
‘the pseudo-state’, ‘illegal government’, ‘so-called TRNC’

News translation: normally done by bilingual journalists (Bielsa and  
Bassnett 2009)

# Ethics

Politically sensitive texts - translators need to make decisions, act 'ethically'

Whose voice do we hear? who speaks in a text? Friend or foe/enemy?

Translators need to negotiate 'truths' - 'truth' elaborated in the ST, 'truth' translator believes in, 'truth' presented in TT (Floros 2011)

Need to reflect on potential consequences of decisions for TT (and also on consequences of choice of sources, also issue for journalists and journalistic ethics - e.g. use of Social media)



# Ethics

For translators (and students of translation)

For journalists

BBC values: truth and accuracy, independence,  
impartiality, accountability and public interest

For researchers

# Ethics policies and approval of projects

Research projects involving human participants and human data and records

The types of research that will always need to be reviewed are

- Interviews (both formal and informal conversations)
- Questionnaires
- Observations or recording of speech or behaviour
- Use of personal documents, such as diaries

# Cont.

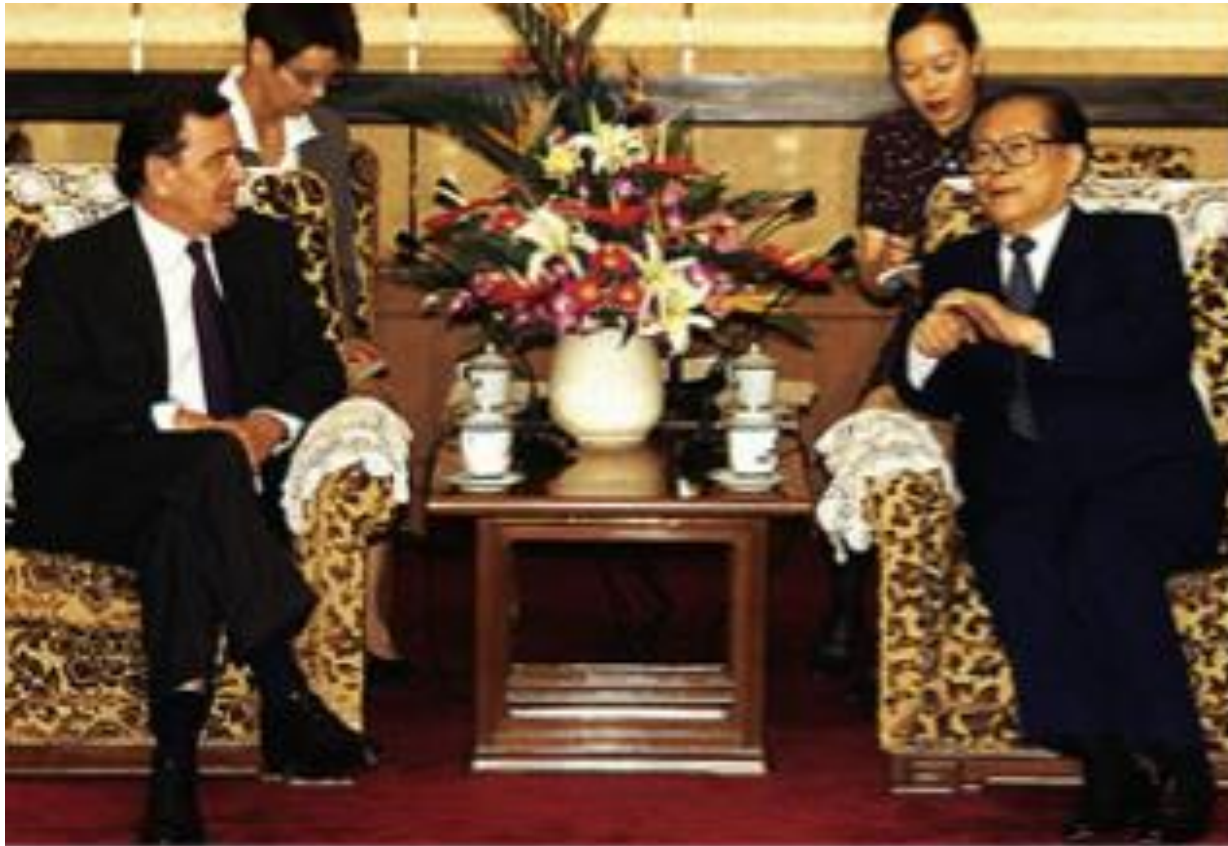
Among the research that will not need ethical review:

- Literary or artistic criticism
- Research using material already in the public domain such as biographies, newspapers, interviews broadcast on radio or television or online, and diaries or letters in the public domain

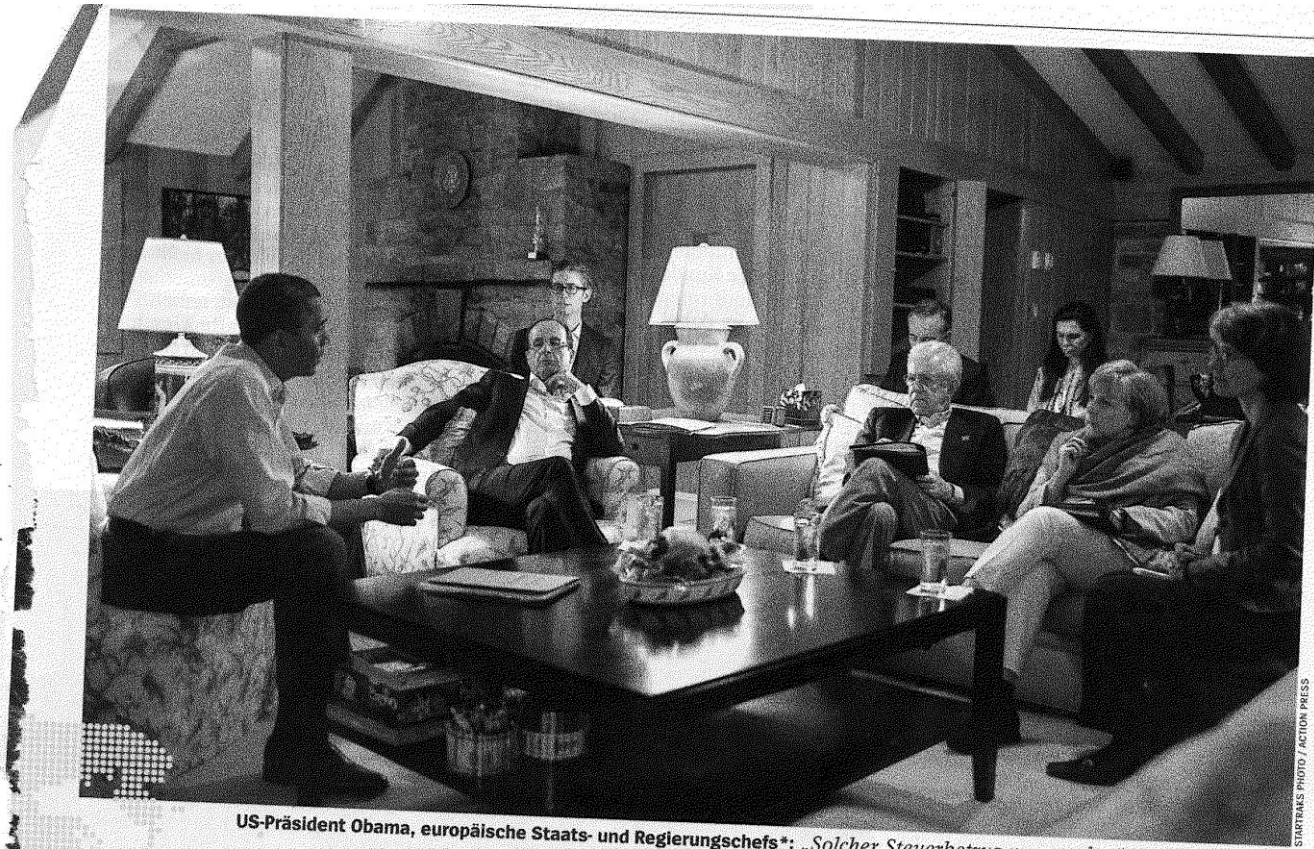
Among areas normally considered to involve more than minimal risk :

- Research involving sensitive topics such as sexual behaviour, illegal activity, experiences of violence, abuse or exploitation, mental health
- Research involving access to records of personal or confidential information, including genetic or other biological information, concerning identifiable individuals
- Research which would induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or physical pain

# Chancellor Schröder, host Jiang (1999) - AND???



# Press conferences vs internal meetings



US-Präsident Obama, europäische Staats- und Regierungschefs: „Solcher Steuerkataloge...

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# Researching (translated) politically sensitive texts?

- Processes in non-accessible contexts?
- Complex processes from internal settings to publication / having texts in public domain? Who are the people involved? How do texts emerge? Motives for information selection and presentation (including explicitation)?
- Analysing texts in public domain – multilingual texts in various contexts/media - readers (may) react differently
- Analysing translation strategies into several target languages – purposes, agents (translator, revisor, editor...)
- Researching processes and products as actions and results of actions of people? How to account for this in terms of ethics (including researchers as audience of analyses)?

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