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## **Cross-cultural engagement through translated news: A reception analysis**

Claire Scammell and Esperança Bielsa

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### **Abstract**

Scholars in journalism and media studies have reflected on the cosmopolitan potential of the media and of news in particular to facilitate cross-cultural engagement. However, the key mediating role that translation plays when the news crosses linguistic and cultural borders has remained largely unexamined. This article considers how different translation strategies can maximise or minimise the potential journalism holds to facilitate cross-cultural engagement and approaches the still widely unexplored area of the reception of translated news. It relates existing debates in the discipline of translation studies to current approaches to the domestication of news in journalism research, paving the way for synergetic research across traditional disciplinary boundaries. The article explores how the news has the potential to equip readers with the cultural competence they need in a world that they share with others they do not understand, but only if journalistic translation practices promote rather than prevent engagement with the foreign cultural context. It discusses the findings of an exploratory focus-group study that compares the response of readers to news reporting translated according to the current norm for domesticating translation strategies with the response of readers to the same reports translated using an experimental ‘foreignised’ approach. The focus-group investigation, which takes Reuters’ English-language reporting on news from France as a case study, finds indications that the foreignised approach, by exposing the reader to the foreign cultural specificity rather than domesticating the news information using terms available in the target culture and language, is successful in facilitating cross-cultural engagement.

### **Keywords**

global journalism, mediated cosmopolitanism, domestication of news, news translation, reception

## **Introduction**

In the context of widespread social processes of cosmopolitanisation of reality, there is a need to reflect on how journalism contributes to the perception of growing transnational connexions and to the subjective consciousness of the world as a whole, which is an important feature of globalisation (Robertson, 1992; Steger and James, 2019). Approaches to global journalism and mediated cosmopolitanism have recognised the significance of an emerging reality that challenges the traditional dichotomy between domestic and foreign news and have sought to specify the ways in which journalistic practices and texts can effectively seek to represent it (Berglez, 2008; Orgad, 2012; Rantanen, 2005; Robertson, 2010, 2015; Silverstone, 2007; Tanikawa, 2019; Van Leuven and Berglez, 2016). Yet, this has not been accompanied by an account of the linguistic transformations that enable such global and cosmopolitan perspectives, while the need to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers for the production and circulation of news has remained unexamined within journalism studies, even in cross-national accounts and comparative research.

This article analyses the role of translation in making possible cross-cultural engagement through the news by focusing on the still widely unexplored area of the reception of translated news. A first section discusses existing approaches to global journalism and mediated cosmopolitanism. Then, translation is introduced as a mostly invisible but also inevitable process that mediates news production in multilingual contexts. In this section, existing debates in the discipline of translation studies are related to current approaches to the domestication of news in journalism research, paving the way for synergetic research across traditional disciplinary boundaries. A final section discusses the findings of an exploratory focus-group study that compares the responses of readers to news reporting translated according to the current norm for domesticating translation strategies and to the same reporting translated using an experimental ‘foreignised’ approach.

## **Global and cosmopolitan perspectives on news and the media**

The news both expresses increasing global interconnectedness and the cosmopolitanisation of reality and is a significant factor in producing this reality. If newspapers, and print capitalism more generally, made it possible to imagine the nation (Anderson, 1983), a new global consciousness and subjective globalisation (Robertson,

1992) are furthered by the global exchanges that, since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have given rise to the modern journalistic field. Globalisation has, in this context, been described in terms of Westernisation or homogenisation, as Anglo-American ideologies, genres and organisations prevail and news standardisation coexists with the multiplication of available texts (Boyd-Barrett, 1997: 143; Chalaby, 1996; Marchetti, 2002; Paterson, 1998; Schudson, 1995). Yet it is undeniable that what Michael Palmer (1983: 213) already approached in terms of the globalisation of the event – in relation to the interest created in Europe by the Cuban war (1898) and the siege of Beijing (1900) – puts readers in contact with distant realities to which they otherwise would not have access, thus contributing to an enlarged global consciousness. On the other hand, an emerging reality of increasingly global risks and widespread transnational connections pushes the news beyond traditional conceptions of the domestic and the foreign, challenging the very structures that have shaped the production and circulation of news since the inception of modern journalism.

Approaches to global journalism such as those cited above typically refer to this new emerging landscape while often downplaying the significance of remaining differences and existing limits to cross-cultural understanding. Peter Berglez (2008) is a case in point. In proposing a notion of global journalism in order to conceptualise some of the news which falls outside the traditional conceptual framework of domestic vs foreign, he approaches the former in terms of its particular epistemology, defined as the global outlook. In opposition to the national outlook, primarily centred on a perspective which puts the nation-state at the centre, the global outlook

seeks to understand and explain how economic, political, social and ecological practices, processes and problems in different parts of the world affect each other, are interlocked, or share commonalities. News information with a global outlook establishes knowledge of how our lives in Copenhagen, Cairo, Brisbane and Mexico City are intertwined, causally and dialectically speaking. The global outlook produces information of the intercontinental kind, potentially including both international relations (between nation-states) and transnational processes, such as ecological and pandemic threats, or unrestricted economic and social flows. (Berglez, 2008: 847)

In this approach, the global outlook is a news style that emanates from journalists' intellectual labour and is not simply presupposed by either the existence of global events or even a global public sphere. It is thus the journalist's chosen angle, selection of sources and mode of explanation (Berglez, 2008: 847), not just a pre-existing transnational reality, that define its conditions of possibility. The global outlook is thus presented as an alternative to national domestications and to the dichotomy of domestic vs foreign news (2008: 847). Further, Berglez distinguishes the global outlook from the look of global news organisations such as CNN International and, surprisingly, also from global ethics, multicultural society or a cosmopolitan lifestyle (2008: 848).

But if the global outlook is understood as the capacity 'to journalistically explain and understand the world as a single place' (2008: 848), in Berglez' account the conditions which render it a real possibility remain unaccounted for. It all seems to boil down to journalists' intellectual efforts or privileged perspectives, to their will to present local realities through a transnational perspective (rather than a national one) that connects them to distant places. However, even in a world that is in many ways increasingly experienced as a single place (Robertson, 1992), the difficult task of interpreting and communicating foreign realities and perspectives remains, as cultural distance is not simply overcome by growing interconnectivity or by increasing consciousness of common problems and risks. Critics of global journalism precisely question its assumed global outlook by showing the persistence of widespread cultural stereotypes and of still prevalent forms of domestication, through which foreign events are made to conform to dominant domestic frames (Clausen, 2004; Hafez, 2007; Nossek, 2004; Tanikawa, 2019). From this perspective, 'it seems crucial to note that while globalization has brought people closer together in a physical sense, little suggestion has been made that humanity is coming to understand each other better due to globalization' (Tanikawa, 2019: 1435).

Although directly indebted to Ulrich Beck's conceptualisation of the global, Berglez does not refer to Beck's closely related notion of cosmopolitanisation and, as indicated above, even wishes to distance a global outlook from a cosmopolitan ethics. Nevertheless, by emphasising the degree of '*internal* globalization' or '*globalization from within* the national societies' (Beck, 2002: 17, original emphasis), cosmopolitanisation introduces valuable nuances to the concept of the global, calling attention to the fact that globalisation does not only involve interconnections across borders, but also causes fundamental transformations inside national societies. Most significantly, the notion of

cosmopolitanisation reveals the extent to which globalisation has created a new reality of cultural mixing and contradiction in heterogeneous and diverse societies in which ‘local, national, ethnic, religious *and* cosmopolitan cultures and traditions interpenetrate, interconnect and intermingle’ (Beck, 2006: 7, emphasis in original). From this perspective, the possibility of inscribing a global outlook in the news both presupposes and cannot be divorced from a cosmopolitan outlook that opens people’s eyes to an already existing cosmopolitan reality. For Beck, the cosmopolitan outlook explicitly demands cosmopolitan competence which, significantly,

forces us to develop the art of translation and bridge-building. This involves two things: on the one hand, situating and relativizing one’s own form of life within other horizons of possibility; on the other, the capacity to see oneself from the perspective of cultural others and to give this practical effect in one’s own experience through the exercise of boundary-transcending imagination. (Beck, 2006: 89)

Accounts centred on the potential for cosmopolitanism in the media have been more attentive to the significance of cultural difference for global journalism and to the difficulties involved in the need to interpret and communicate foreign realities. Alexa Robertson has focused on the media’s capacity to create solidarities and connections with distant others. Her comparative analysis of television news shows how different newsrooms provide very different reporting, thus questioning widespread claims about the homogenisation of news (Robertson, 2010). Global news channels such as BBC World, Al Jazeera English, Russia Today and CNN International also have different perspectives on the news that can be conducive to or hinder cosmopolitan outcomes (Robertson, 2015). In particular, it is Al Jazeera English’s explicit attempt to tackle cultural difference through strategies that include making ‘the local international’, fostering diversity among its journalists and attending to the perspectives of ordinary people on events that leads to more cosmopolitan-orientated news, which often make more demands on the audience (2015: 30–32, 56–57). Shani Orgad has examined how texts, images and discourses that originate in one culture are reappropriated and transformed in a different locale (2012: 39), offering a penetrating reflection on how the media represent us and others, and of the possibility of distancing ourselves from our taken-for-granted beliefs through forms of estrangement promoted by the media.

A key issue of concern is whether we can become aware and hospitable to others without erasing their difference, an issue which has been expressed in considerations of ‘proper distance’ (Chouliaraki 2011; Orgad 2011, 2012: 352; Robertson 2015: 65; Silverstone, 2007: 47). Moreover, othering techniques can have surprising outcomes when applied to familiar social realities viewed through the eyes of others (for a consideration of Europe as other in this light see Robertson, 2015, ch. 5), a perspective-taking exercise that Beck’s notion of cosmopolitan competence also explicitly refers to. A memorable example of othering is found in Roger Silverstone’s opening reflections in the book *Media and Morality*, where he recalls an interview broadcast on BBC Radio 4 during the war in Afghanistan with an Afghani blacksmith who explained that his village was being bombed because ‘Al Qaeda had killed many Americans and their donkeys and had destroyed some of their castles’ (2007: 1; see also Bielsa, 2016: 206-207). Silverstone’s example is rare in many respects. It not only emphasises ‘the blacksmith’s capacity to offer an account *of* us as well as *to* us’ (Silverstone, 2007: 1, emphasis in original), but it also gives visibility to translation in making intelligible the news that come from different linguistic regions – against a dominant trend that privileges fluidity and transparency. The next section reflects on different strategies for translating the other and their implications for notions of mediated cosmopolitanism and domestication of news.

### **Journalistic translation: an invisible and forgotten process**

Translation is part of the ordinary processes of news production at all levels, from the acts of mediation undertaken by local interpreters and journalists, often simply known as ‘fixers’ and reduced to the role of mere technical aids to international journalists (Murrell, 2015; Palmer and Fontan, 2007; Palmer, 2018), to the news writing and editing tasks of journalists working at multilingual news organisations (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009; Cortés Zaborras and Hernández Guerrero, 2005; Davier, 2017; Davier et al., 2018; Hernández-Guerrero, 2009; Matsushita, 2019; Schäffner, 2012; Valdeón, 2015, 2020; Van Doorslaer, 2010). It entails the interpretation of otherness and the writing and rewriting of texts so as to make them suitable to different audiences across linguistic divides. If the task of translation as such is often not recognised within journalism it is because translation is normally understood to refer to simple, straightforward processes of word substitution between different languages, as opposed to the more active transformative role that is

attributed to journalists (Davier, 2014). In this way, journalism participates in a more widespread social mystique concerning translation that reduces it to a transparent, mechanical operation which is perhaps most clearly expressed in the apparent automatism of common translating apps (Bielsa, 2021: 3).

If translation and translators have generally been characterised as invisible and subservient (Simeoni, 1998; Venuti, 2008), processes of news translation can be approached as doubly invisible in relation to two different factors: on the one hand, the prevalence of a strategy that conforms to the expectations of the target reader, privileges fluency and hides translation's very intervention and, on the other, the very successful integration of translation within journalism, reflected in the fact that it is not perceived as being in any way different than the writing or editing of original news reports (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009). It is thus hardly surprising that the significance of translation within journalism has rarely been approached by journalism and media scholars. Translation has been typically forgotten, even in empirical and comparative research entailing cross-country samples, as linguistic diversity and the multilingual operations that are involved in news production are often either simply erased or glossed over. This is perhaps most striking in the global and cosmopolitan approaches that have been discussed above, revealing that an interest in specifying how the news can establish meaningful connections between distant others rests on a simultaneous forgetting of the processes of linguistic transformation that make such connections possible. Similarly, the multilingual operations of global news organisations have not attracted significant attention within journalism research (but see the special issue of *Journalism* on transcultural journalism and the politics of translation in the BBC World Service edited by Baumann, Gillespie and Srebeny in 2011 for a relevant exception).

Nevertheless, significant parallels can be found between what is involved in translation and the conceptualisation of news domestication processes within journalism and media research. The notion of domestication of the foreign describes how news events are 'told in ways that render them more familiar, more comprehensible and more compatible for consumption by different national audiences' (Gurevitch et al., 1991: 205), thus facilitating reception. The concept has served to question views about news homogenisation in the context of globalisation and led to fruitful empirical research on the nature of global news transmission and circulation (Alasuutari et al., 2013; Clausen, 2004; Nossek, 2004). This research has shown that the need for objectivity and neutrality in interpreting foreign events can often be seen to clash with demands to conform to the

values and preferences of domestic audiences. Furthermore, domestication techniques often persist even in purportedly global news, together with enduring or even growing practices of cultural stereotyping of foreign others (Tanikawa, 2019). Establishing connections with distant others across linguistic and cultural boundaries can thus be less straightforward than initially assumed, and the role of journalists in interpreting and translating foreign realities needs to be closely examined if they are seen to be the key agents for developing a global or cosmopolitan outlook in the news. Relevant work regarding the habitus and cosmopolitan orientations of foreign correspondents has already been produced (Hannerz, 2004, 2007). This research not only shows that foreign correspondents are among the most celebrated transnational migrants of our times, but also how their personal orientations and experiences shape how they report from one part of the world to another, often overcoming great geographical as well as cultural distances (2007: 300). The need remains, however, to examine how journalists' specific textual practices contribute to making possible or can rather be seen to prevent cross-cultural engagement with distant others through translated news.

At a more general level, an analysis of the politics of translation can reveal the wider cultural and ethical implications of domesticating the foreign. In Lawrence Venuti's influential account, a domesticating translation reduces the difference of the other to a false familiarity and hides translation's intervention under the appearance of fluency, producing the illusion of transparency. Foreignising translation, by contrast, disrupts the cultural codes that prevail in the translating language in order to do justice to the difference of the foreign text (2008: 15–16). The central issue behind the distinction between domestication and foreignisation is how to approach the difference of the foreign text. The history of translation reveals that the dominant mode has been one of domestication, where the author is brought closer to the reader (in Schleiermacher's formulation, 1992), whereas the marginal mode of foreignisation brings readers closer to the author, even at the peril of making reception more demanding (Venuti, 2008). The problems of domestication are twofold. Firstly, by making the other falsely familiar it ends up reducing the difference of the other to sameness. Secondly, it hides translation's very intervention under the appearance of fluency, masquerading 'as a true semantic equivalence when it in fact inscribes the foreign text with a partial interpretation' (Venuti, 2008: 16).

News domestication processes and the politics of translation are intimately related. Researchers have identified a norm for domesticating translation strategies,

whereby foreign news is communicated using language and conventions available in the receiving culture (Bassnett, 2005; Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009; Schäffner, 2005). Foreignising translation strategies which, by contrast, involve retaining something of the foreignness of the source text, are considered less viable for newswriting on the basis of the need to conform to readers' needs and expectations. However, it is only foreignisation that, in deviating from domestic norms to signal the foreignness of the foreign text, can help to create a readership that is more open to linguistic and cultural differences (Venuti, 1998: 87). Domesticating translations, by contrast, in eliminating what in the literature on mediated cosmopolitanism has been approached in terms of proper distance, irrevocably end up falsifying an image of the other as a familiar presence and denying any real access to the other as other. If cosmopolitanism is approached as an ethical commitment to open ourselves to the world and to others, a type of translation that does not seek to suppress but rather productively engages with the opacity that results from cultural and linguistic difference thus emerges as a crucial manner in which this commitment can be materialised, promoting a form of reflexivity that can lead to the transformation of self through engagement with the difference of the other (Delanty, 2009).

This is why an empirical examination of news translation processes brings new light on notions of global journalism and mediated cosmopolitanism. In particular, it shows how prevailing translation norms within the journalistic field, as mostly unconscious structured patterns of behaviour that serve to limit the great variability of understandings and practices relating to translation (Toury, 1998, 2012), can prevent a cosmopolitan commitment of openness to the world and occlude, rather than facilitate, cross-cultural engagement with the realities of distant others. Thus, the study of news translation brings primarily descriptive and explanatory research to bear on theorising on the globalisation and cosmopolitanisation of news. Conversely, the normative claims of a cosmopolitan approach can contribute to generalise Venuti's argument about the ethical relevance of foreignisation, which has been challenged in translation studies, particularly with reference to its suitability in the case of subaltern cultures (Hatim, 1999: 219; Pym, 1996; Shamma, 2009; Tymoczko, 2007: 211–12).

Authors like Berglez and Robertson have remarked on the need for yet relative lack of empirical investigations of news production and reception processes in accounts of global journalism and mediated cosmopolitanism (Berglez, 2008: 855; Robertson, 2010, 2015). More generally, the lack of a conceptual framework and the fragmentation

of knowledge regarding transnational audiences has been remarked upon in relation to a still prevalent methodological nationalism that assumes culturally homogenous publics as the norm (Athique, 2014). In absence of such conceptual and empirical work, the effects of global or cosmopolitan orientated news can only become a matter of theoretical speculation. An approach that presents news readers with translated texts can precisely allow us to investigate the effects of different translation strategies and the extent to which they make possible cross-cultural engagement, thus fostering a cosmopolitan consciousness through increased awareness of and engagement with the realities of foreign others.

### **Foreignising the news: a reception analysis**

The focus-group research presented here is the first to engage real readers as active participants in order to examine the reception of translated news (author). From the perspective that domesticating strategies limit the potential of translation to facilitate cosmopolitan connections, this analysis sets out to explore the ethical and practical potential of certain foreignising strategies in the news. Venuti's (2008) notions of 'foreignisation' and 'domestication' are employed as two ends of a scale rather than as binary opposites, and it is taken as a foregone conclusion that strategies at the foreignising extreme are unviable for a journalistic context, where clarity is paramount.

Taking Reuters English-language news reporting, British native English-speakers and news from France as a case study, we examine readers' responses to news reporting translated according to the domestication norm and a 'foreignised' alternative approach. The foreignised approach consists of a set of five proposed updates to guidance related to translation in the *Reuters Handbook of Journalism* (2014). Broadly speaking, these changes – addressing the translation of culture-specific terms and quotations as the key sites of translation in the news – involve the retention of foreign language (with a translation or explanation in brackets) and strategies to improve the accuracy of reporting of translated speech and to signal the translation process to readers (see author for a detailed account).

Prior to conducting the reader-response investigation, the updates were implemented on a corpus of four Reuters news reports (producing a 'foreignised' set of reports for use in the focus groups). These reports were generated from a search in the Factiva database targeting reports relating to France's *banlieues* (poor, high-immigration

residential areas on the peripheries of major cities), typically rendered in English using the domesticating translation ‘suburbs’.

Three broad *a priori* themes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003) relating to the project’s research questions were explored in the focus group data: Translation Awareness, Reading Ease and Cosmopolitan Openness. Analyses within the first two themes (see author for a discussion) found no clear indications that the foreignised approach either heightened readers’ awareness of the translation process (no direct reference to the translation process was made in any of the groups) or reduced the readability of the news reports (based on reports of reading ease/difficulty and indications of participants struggling [or not] with foreignised parts). The focus here is on the third theme – Cosmopolitan Openness – defined as a type of consciousness that makes us more aware of others, their different voices, priorities and needs, and the challenges they pose to the often unexamined ways through which we define our reality. This theme uncovered rich data offering insights into the inability of news reporting translated according to the current domestication norm to foster openness to the world and to others among its readers, and the potential of a foreignised approach.

The theme of Cosmopolitan Openness explores the idea that news translation as a tool of intercultural communication has the potential to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and engagement by allowing readers to come into contact with foreign cultural concepts and language, exposing rather than obscuring cultural and linguistic difference. The change in strategy proposed involves retaining and explaining culture-specific concepts (Pedersen, 2005) rather than removing or replacing them with a target-culture ‘equivalent’. Table 1 below presents examples of this element of the foreignised approach implemented on the Reuters corpus.

<b>Original segment</b>	<b>Foreignised segment</b>
[...] a call to rid the Paris suburbs of [...]	[...] a call to rid the Paris banlieue – the high-rise residential areas on the outskirts of the city – of [...]
“We want calm, we want justice to be done, we want the riot police to leave [...]	“We want calm, we want justice to be done, we want the CRS (riot police) to leave [...]
[...] in France's poor suburbs, many of which have faced sporadic violence since riots in 2005.	[...] in France's poor banlieues, residential areas on the outskirts of big cities, many of which have faced sporadic violence since riots in 2005.

Table 1. Retention and explanation of culture-specific concepts

Tentative findings on the impact of the foreignised approach within the theme of Cosmopolitan Openness are discussed in the second and third of three subsections below. The first subsection immediately below presents the focus group method used to conduct the reader-response investigation.

#### *The focus-group method*

In an entry entitled ‘Reception and translation’ in the Benjamin’s *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Brems and Ramos Pinto (2013: 145) describe two types of reception study within translation studies. The first type ‘looks at the reception of translations at a social level and focuses on “theoretical readers”’. The current study neatly fits the description of the second type, termed ‘reader response and assessment’:

this second perspective focuses on the “real reader” and how specific translation strategies affect readers’ response and assessment. Researchers try to answer questions related to (a) the cognitive processes invoked at the moment of reception of translated material; (b) the effect of specific contextual, sociological, technical or linguistic aspects on reception; and (c) the readers’ assessment of particular translation strategies. (Brems and Ramos Pinto, 2013: 145)

In a comparative, task-based design, 24 participants in three sets of two focus groups were asked to read and discuss the corpus of four Reuters news reports. Within each set, one group (the ORIGINAL group) read the original Reuters news reports, while the other (FOREIGNISED) group read foreignised versions of the reports. Group size was kept to a minimum of four (Krueger and Casey, 2009) with a view to generating natural discussion (Bloor et al., 2001). In addition, a semi-structured format was used, allowing any discussion of translation to be prompted by the news reports rather than the investigator.

A convenience sampling method (Saldanha and O’Brien, 2013) and eligibility questionnaire aimed at recruiting homogenous, pre-existing groups of non-expert readers (no experience/expertise on journalism, France/French politics or translation/foreign languages). Using homogenous groups reduces the likelihood of a ‘false consensus’ (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 185) since participants are less likely to worry that other

participants have more experience or knowledge, and therefore more valid views than their own (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013: 183). Similarly, pre-existing groups are more conducive to promoting natural discussion (Bryman, 2008) as the participants are more likely to feel relaxed and comfortable contributing in a group of people they know (Bloor et al., 2001).

The focus groups were conducted in August 2013 (pilot study), December 2013 (Set A) and January 2014 (Set B). The pilot study groups were conducted in London with participants in their early to late 20s. With the exception of one participant (employed in market research), all were employed/self-employed in the arts (usually alongside additional employment). The groups in Set A were held in Newcastle and Exeter with participants in their late 20s/early-mid 30s, predominantly medical professionals – four pharmacists in the ORIGINAL group and three GPs and one sports development officer in the FOREIGNISED group. Both groups in Set B were conducted in Southampton. The ORIGINAL group comprised four nurses in their 40s/50s, while the FOREIGNISED group comprised two secondary-school teachers and one customer complaint handler (all in their early 30s) and one accountant (early 40s). Only two of the 24 participants were male.

Participants' individual reading abilities (roughly estimated here on occupation alone) cannot be discounted as a factor impacting the data collected. This is an unavoidable limitation of reader-response research generally, since there is no way of reliably assessing a potential participant's reading ability. Asking the participants' education level would have been informative but risked the impression that they themselves were being tested in some way, which was important to avoid if the participants were to feel comfortable expressing, for instance, that they found something difficult to understand.

Observations and impressions noted while conducting and transcribing the focus groups were then explored as part of a qualitative content analysis (Wilkinson, 2004) involving 'cutting and sorting' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 94) the data in Nvivo. Following Ryan and Bernard (2003), a distinction was made in the analysis between '*a priori*' (theory-generated) themes and 'inductive' (data-generated) themes in order to recognise the part played by *a priori* thought in theme development.

### *A non-cosmopolitan status quo*

Discussing the potential for the media to promote a cosmopolitan outlook, Robertson (2012: 185) relates an interview with a television audience member who describes the ‘obligations’ she feels to keep informed about world events and the guilt of not being as ‘moved’ by stories involving high death tolls as by stories told from the perspective of one individual, which make it ‘easier to put yourself in the tragedy’. In a study by Szerszynski and Urry (2002), focus group participants indicate being less affected by events the more distant and abstract they are. These are sentiments echoed by the participants in the current focus groups:

it’s human nature isn’t it to kind of care about what is close to you or what you can relate as close to you, and because some things are so horrific, the further they are removed, the easier it is on you, and when it comes to your doorstep you really can relate to that. [‘V’, ORIGINAL group, Pilot Study]

Comments about not being interested in foreign news events because ‘it’s not something that directly affects me’, were often expressed apologetically – ‘it doesn’t really carry an emotion because, it’s not our country so... it’s awful to say’. The participants also talk about not having time to follow news from abroad – ‘I don’t have the time or interest really to sit and read about this sort of thing’ – and of feeling detached from news events because they are ‘too far from home’.

In addition to these comments, a non-cosmopolitan status quo is observed across the groups in a tendency the participants had to relate to the news reporting by bringing it ‘back home’. This was seen in instances where participants discuss inflammatory comments made by UK or US politicians in relation to comments made by former French president Nicholas Sarkozy; immigration problems in the UK in relation to a report about France’s immigration policy and the 2011 London riots in relation to the 2005 Paris riots covered in the reports. The researcher’s impression that the ORIGINAL groups had a greater tendency to bring the discussion around to UK issues rather was not explored for want of a systematic way of doing so (or perhaps a third-party analyst who is unaware of the project’s research questions).

The foreignised approach explicitly intends to increase readers’ awareness of the foreignness of the cultural reality being reported on rather than relying on concepts the

reader will recognise. A potential impact is observed at points in the data where participants discuss the foreign cultural concepts that have either been domesticated to a target-culture term (in the reports read by the ORIGINAL groups) or retained with an explanation (in those read by the FOREIGNISED groups). As discussed below, there are indications that being exposed to the difference of the other can increase readers' interest in, engagement with and knowledge of unfamiliar realities. By contrast, the effect of a domesticating approach may be to leave the reader feeling disconnected from the foreign news event, and result in the tendency described above for readers to bring the news 'back home' to a domestic context.

*Reader engagement as indicative of the potential for cosmopolitan openness*

As mentioned earlier, the Reuters corpus features *banlieue* as a central culture-specific concept that is typically translated using a domesticating strategy to 'suburb'. By translating *banlieue* as suburb, and thus reporting to a UK audience, for instance, that the riots in Paris occurred in the 'suburbs' of the city, the reader's understanding is limited to the cultural reality attached to the English word, which, as discussed earlier, is distinct from the reality of France's *banlieues*. The following excerpt from one of the ORIGINAL groups indicates that the effect of the domesticating translation can be to leave the reader disconnected from the reality of France's *banlieues*:

It feels like it's people from the 'poor suburbs' because in [paragraph] 8 it says the government has failed to address their problems, and then quotes these two people, so to me it feels like they're part of these poor suburbs [air quotes] that aren't getting any backing from the government ['C', ORIGINAL group, Pilot Study].

By contrast, participants in each of the FOREIGNISED groups – who have read news reports where the culture-specific term is retained with an explanation – directly engage with the reality of France's *banlieues* in an interrogative way:

The outskirts of the city, that's where true France is, it's not in these posh cities where the tourists go to, it's where the people are, on the outskirts, if you think about it. ['E', FOREIGNISED group, Pilot Study]

there was that technical term and I thought I don't know what that is but then it explained it, the name for the suburban ghettos, I can't remember what it was. ['J', FOREIGNISED group, Set A]

I'm sure there are many French people as well [as immigrants] living in these quarters, that unfortunately have nothing as well. ['D', FOREIGNISED group, Set B]

The impression that the groups of participants who read the foreignised reports were more engaged was first noted whilst collecting and transcribing the data. Discussions in the ORIGINAL groups required more prompting and dried up more quickly, and participants seemed to read verbatim from the reports more often. By contrast, participants in the FOREIGNISED groups appeared to be more likely to paraphrase the content or discuss the report in their own words. As shown in Table 2 below, counting the number of instances of verbatim reproduction and paraphrase confirmed this impression. Participants in all FOREIGNISED groups reproduced the reports verbatim far less than the ORIGINAL groups (79 instances compared to 150 in total). The instances of paraphrase were far lower generally, and less marked between the groups, but higher in the FOREIGNISED groups overall (16 compared to 13).

	Verbatim reproduction		Paraphrase	
	FOREIGNISED	ORIGINAL	FOREIGNISED	ORIGINAL
<b>Pilot Study</b>	28	63	4	3
<b>Set A</b>	23	37	11	8
<b>Set B</b>	28	50	1	2
<b>Total</b>	79	150	16	13

Table 2. Instances of report content being reproduced verbatim/paraphrased

A high level of engagement with the foreign cultural context is indicated in the comments of two participants in the FOREIGNISED group of Set A in particular, who show a strong awareness of the cultural knowledge they lack and would need in order to fully understand the complexities of France's *banlieues* and the social realities being reported on. A lengthy discussion begins by 'A' commenting:

I feel I probably don't have a very balanced view of what's going on and I probably don't truly understand it from just reading this, it has given me more insight but I don't think I truly understand the difficulties that are being experienced in the suburban areas of Paris.

And concludes with 'J' commenting 'I came away wanting to know more about what life is like, like you say for the people in those suburbs and what the difficulties are'.

Later, the discussion returns to the same reflections on what has been learned and what more there is to know; 'A' makes a comment indicating that she has understood the reality of the *banlieues* in France very well, and how it is distinct from the reality she can relate it to at home:

it's quite interesting as well, because in this country, I don't know, maybe I'm a bit more naïve, I haven't lived very many places other than sort of down in Devon and Hampshire [laughs] but it seems in France that the real problems are suburban areas outside of the city whereas in England a lot of problems are inner city, I don't know, that's something new that I've learnt from reading that that I didn't necessarily know before.

In light of the importance the literature on cosmopolitanism attributes to individuals having the *ability* to make cosmopolitan connections, the cosmopolitan potential of a foreignised strategy becomes clear. By exposing the reader to the foreignness of the source culture (a foreignness which a domesticating approach seeks to obscure), the foreignised strategy *enables* rather than prevents the reader's engagement with the foreign culture, thus allowing cosmopolitan connections to develop through the experience of reading news from abroad.

Needless to say, this study's tentative findings cannot be generalised since it has examined a particular case and with a limited number of participants. Further focus group research examining different language pairs, different target audiences and/or different news media (which may find very different audience responses) would be needed before beginning to extrapolate any findings to other settings. Additional focus groups investigating the same news context but including readers in other English-speaking countries could reveal if the responses to the foreignised news reporting observed in the data may be typical of the response of Reuters' global English-language audience.

Given the dominance of English as a global lingua franca and the demand from publishers in the English-speaking world for literary translations that bring the author to the reader (Venuti, 2008), the native English speakers in this study may be expected to be less receptive to news translation strategies that take the reader beyond the familiarity of their mother tongue. Investigating the response of readers from other linguistic groups may reveal if this is indeed the case or if audiences of news reporting in less dominant languages are in fact more resistant to a foreignised approach due to a sense of linguistic insecurity prompted by the threat of anglicisation. In particular, reversing the case examined in this study and looking at the response of readers in France (where there is a long-standing and active commitment to protecting the national language) to foreignising translation strategies in news reporting from the UK, could provide comparative data that is insightful in this regard.

## **Conclusion**

As Beck and Grande have highlighted, we live in an age of cosmopolitanisation because the ‘global other’ is in our midst. This refers not just to the creation of new global risks and problems that demand global awareness, but also to manifestations of diversity in which dynamic intermingling between societies is emphasised and the very position of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is changed (2010: 417–18). Translation offers a way of empirically examining processes of cross-cultural engagement, and of specifying reflexive and deliberate, as well as passive and unintended, processes of internalisation of otherness.

In the context of a widespread rise of populism across the world and what has been described as a globalisation backlash (Crouch, 2019), the media’s capacity to promote cosmopolitan openness through cross-cultural engagement with the realities and perspectives of distant others becomes even more urgent and timely. This article has argued for an approach to mediated cosmopolitanism that benefits from the empirical examination of translated news and their effects on actual readers, calling attention to the fundamental role of translation in enabling cosmopolitan competence as an exercise in self-relativisation and cultural perspective-taking.

Domestication is generally accepted as a necessary norm for journalistic translation because it purportedly facilitates easy access for readers. Yet the virtues of domestication are often conceived with reference to imagined readers and not empirically

tested. Moreover, a reality that is characterised by heightened cultural contact and widespread processes of cosmopolitanisation is making assumptions based on the national orientations of readers and audiences increasingly flawed. The news has the important task of promoting understanding of growing transnational connections and their localised effects, but this demands an explicit attention to, rather than the obliteration of, persisting cultural differences. Exploratory focus group research discussed in this article has shown that foreignising techniques, by taking audiences beyond the confines of the familiar, can increase rather than preclude readers' engagement with translated texts and contribute to the realisation of the limits of our taken for granted notions and the existence of a widely different reality outside our grasp, thus facilitating deeper forms of engagement with the circumstances of others whom we do not understand.

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