

Translating Allegory in Digital Journalism: A Skopos-Theoretical Perspective

ترجمة المجاز في الصحافة الرقمية: منظور وظيفي

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Abstract:

Translating digital journalism is a major dilemma in modern translation studies. Allegory, described as a culturally rooted symbolic narrative device, plays a pivotal role in framing public opinion, and reinforcing ideological positions. The present study inspects the way allegories are functionally modified to meet the requirements of the TL audience while preserving their figurative power. In terms of methodology, the research attempts to coalesce a purpose-oriented qualitative analysis of strategies with a review of the relevant literature on news translation. A study of practical examples demonstrates that the choice of strategy—whether direct transfer, substitution, or clarification through paraphrase—depends on the extent to which it achieves the desired functional efficiency. The findings reveal the role allegories play in the context of digital journalism, and how translation strategies—communicatively shaped by their purpose—mediate the transmission of symbolic meaning across global media platforms. The research emphasizes the centrality of "Skopos Theory" as a fundamental frame of reference for unraveling the complex and teleological nature of allegory translation in multimedia texts.

Keywords: Allegory; Digital Media; Skopos; Contiguity; Figurative Language**ملخص:**

تُعدّ ترجمة الصحافة الرقمية معضلةً رئيسيةً في دراسات الترجمة الحديثة. فالجهاز، الذي يوصف بأنه أداة سردية رمزية ذات جذور ثقافية، يؤدي دورًا محوريًا في تشكيل الرأي العام، وتعزيز المواقف الأيديولوجية. تفحص هذه الدراسة كيفية تعديل المجاز وظيفيًا لتلبية متطلبات جمهور اللغة الهدف مع الحفاظ على قوته. من حيث المنهجية، يحاول البحث دمج تحليل نوعي للاستراتيجيات مُوجّه نحو الهدف مع مراجعة للأدبيات ذات الصلة بترجمة الأخبار. تُظهر دراسة الأمثلة العملية أن اختيار الاستراتيجية - سواءً أكانت نقلًا مباشرًا أم استبدالًا أم توضيحًا من خلال إعادة الصياغة - يعتمد على مدى تحقيقها للكفاءة الوظيفية المرجوة. تكشف النتائج عن دور المجاز في سياق الصحافة الرقمية، وكيف تساهم استراتيجيات الترجمة - المشكّلة تواصلًا من خلال غرضها - في نقل المعنى الرمزي عبر منصات الإعلام العالمية. يؤكد البحث على مركزية "نظرية الوظيفة" كإطار مرجعي أساسي لكشف الطبيعة المعقدة والغائية لترجمة المجاز في النصوص المتعددة الوسائط.

كلمات مفتاحية: المجاز، الوسائط الرقمية، الوظيفة، التجاور، اللغة المجازية

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation in the field of digital journalism has undergone a fundamental transformation, from a mere process of transferring content between languages to a complex practice whose roots are intertwined with cultural systems, institutions, and ideologies. In this changing context, the role of translators is no longer limited to conveying meaning; rather, they have become active mediators between cultures and partners in shaping the news narrative. In this regard, the Skopos theory, founded by Vermeer (1978) and later expanded by Reiss and Nord, emerges to present a functional model that places communicative purpose at the core of translation strategies. According to this framework, the success of a translation is not measured by its fidelity to the ST, but rather by its effectiveness in the receiving culture and its ability to produce the desired communicative impact.

Allegory has an influential presence in this field, as its role is not limited to being a rhetorical device alone, but rather a symbolic tool that weaves a world of figurative and literal meanings. This world is often formed based on collective cultural references, mythological frameworks, and established metaphorical structures. In the context of digital journalism, allegories are evident in news headlines, textual narratives, visuals, and multimedia news content, giving them exceptional impact. Allegory is employed as a narrative or rhetorical device to achieve conceptual clarity, conveying a secondary symbolic meaning derived from a literal, primary meaning. Its effect often extends across a sentence or an entire text. Allegorical density indicates the level of cultural and symbolic encoding it contains, reflecting the amount of shared knowledge required to decode it. Allegory is typically more continuous and narrative than metaphor, and clearer in its implications than symbolism. Establishing clear, working definitions in this way provides more explicit and applicable analytical criteria, making it easier for readers to follow the application of Skopos's theoretical framework to these specific figurative formations. Therefore, translating these allegories into another language is not limited to mere formal conformity; rather, it requires functional adaptation to ensure they resonate with the target audience. In this context, Skopos theory provides a suitable theoretical basis, as it places the communicative intent of allegory at the forefront and highlights strategies for maintaining or even enhancing its symbolic power across various linguistic and cultural frameworks.

Allegory translation has long received extensive scholarly attention in the fields of literature, rhetoric, and philosophy, yet its role in the context of digital journalism remains in need of further research and scrutiny. Previous research in the field of news translation has focused on textual editing practices, ideological reframing, and adaptation to the demands of multimodality (Davies & Van Doorslaer 2018; Valdeon 2019, 2020; Schäffner 2018). In contrast, Skopos theory has only been systematically applied to allegorical translation in the digital age in a limited number of studies. The present study seeks to address this shortcoming by analyzing allegory as a tool in journalistic translation and investigating the impact of Skopos-based strategies on

conveying meaning across multilingual media channels. Moreover, it seeks to achieve two main goals: the first is to frame the theoretical issues related to allegory translation in the context of digital journalism through the perspective of Skopos theory, while the second focuses on analytically revealing the mechanisms that control the transmission of allegory across cultures, whether through direct transfer, functional adaptation, or reformulation within new cultural contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of digital journalism marked a crucial turning point in the patterns of news content production, distribution, and reception, providing a complex semiotic system in which textual, visual, auditory, and interactive elements intertwine (Jacobson, 2012; Schäffner, 2018). In this context, allegory— as a long-standing rhetorical device with multiple semantic dimensions—emerges as a source of particular translation challenge, particularly when SL texts contain deeply personal cultural connotations and are addressed to audiences of diverse backgrounds (Guerrero, 2019). The transfer of allegorical structures in the digital environment requires elaborate communicative mechanisms to ensure the preservation of implicit and explicit content. This mechanism aligns with the principles of Skopos theory, which places the communicative intent of translation at the center of guiding strategies between the source and target texts (Pan, 2015; Valdeón, 2019).

Studies in news translation highlight that translators not only act as linguistic mediators, but also act as "ideological agents" who actively reshape news discourses to align with institutional norms and target audience expectations (Davies & Van Doorslaer, 2018; Pan, 2015). In this regard, when analyzing evaluation mechanisms in news reports on China, Pan (2015) notes that translation transformations often involve "softening or mediating criticism, emphasizing positive language from local actors, and toning down foreign criticisms," practices that embody forms of strategic adaptation guided by societal, cultural, and political constraints. The editorial interventions are particularly prominent in the context of digital journalism, where factors such as the accelerated pace of publication, the multimodal nature of content, and interactive audience participation amplify the effects of misinterpretation of allegorical connotations (Davidov & Vojinović, 2025). These dynamics emphasize the need for a translation methodology based on Skopos theory, which places the intended function of the target text at the forefront of translation strategy, rather than being confined to a literal commitment to formal equivalence.

The interplay of multimodal elements adds additional layers of complexity to the allegory translation process. In this regard, Jacobson (2012) notes that news coding on digital platforms—such as the New York Times website—reshapes news discourses by integrating visual, auditory, and interactive components, creating intertwined semantic systems. In this context, translators must consider linguistic precision alongside the semantic and symbolic dimensions of visual, auditory, and interactive content. Consistent with this perspective, Schäffner (2018) emphasizes the multiple

levels of translation in the digital media environment, where professionals and non-professionals engage in processes that blur the lines between interpretation, paraphrasing, and editorial adaptation. Given the figurative and culturally contextualized nature of allegory, translators must unpack semantic networks across textual and visual channels to ensure that the intended conceptual content is communicated to the target audience while preserving the rhetorical power (Guerrero, 2019).

Applied research on digital news translation, particularly that focusing on text-intensive forms such as tweets and real-time news coverage, provides insight into actual strategies for dealing with allegory (Guerrero, 2019; Valdeón, 2019). The incorporation of English-language tweets into Spanish news articles discloses, to illustrate, a contrast in translation methodologies between direct transposition, paraphrasing, and selective deletion, often accompanied by visual cues such as screenshots to enhance credibility and ensure source transparency. These editorial mechanisms highlight the dual nature of the translator's role: on the one hand, they must preserve the original allegorical structure while, on the other, ensuring the functional clarity of the content for the TL reader. In this context, the importance of Skopos theory emerges as a crucial reference, as the communicative purpose of the target text—whether informative, instructive, or evaluative—constitutes a fundamental axis in translation decision-making and determining the extent of the permissible interpretive space without compromising communicative purposes (Valdeón, 2020).

Allegory in digital media discourse is not limited to textual components, but extends to intertextual references, multimedia formations, and rhetorical exaggerations that are increasingly prevalent in the content-saturated digital space (Jacobson, 2012). Cognitive processing of allegorical meaning requires the activation of symbolic indicators, cultural patterns, and connotative links. In this context, Mutar (2015), through an analysis of Nawawi's Hadiths, demonstrates how allegorical content can be preserved through a careful synthesis of pragmatic functions such as instructing, persuasion, and warning. This insight is particularly important in digital journalism, where interaction with and interpretation of content is linked to the audience's reception of the symbols presented. In parallel, an analysis of BBC News and BBC Mundo's reporting of Margaret Thatcher's death reveals how the narrative structure and ideological framework in translation can shape the audience's perception of events, with translators selectively emphasizing specific evaluative aspects that align with the target audience's cultural expectations (Valdeón, 2019). These practices underscore the interpretive flexibility offered by skopos-based translation strategies, which prioritize communicative purpose and the recipient's response, overriding a literal commitment to formal equivalence.

Methodological approaches in the field of news translation studies contribute to shedding light on the complexities associated with allegory transfer. Davier and Van Doorslaer (2018) demonstrate that traditional models based on the duality of source and target remain inadequate in the context of news translation, where texts are

composed of multiple sources, accumulated layers of authorship, and successive editorial interventions. In these contexts, the translator's role is not limited to linguistic transfer, but rather becomes a partner in textual formation, mediating meaning production beyond the constraints of editorial policies and audience expectations and sensitivities. Consistent with this conception, Schäffner (2018) draws attention to the unspoken nature of translation practices in digital newsrooms, where professionals and non-professionals alike play crucial intermediary roles without clear attribution, reinforcing the need to adopt purpose-based translation methodologies to ensure the preservation of allegorical content. The interactive nature of digital journalism contributes to enriching the social context influencing allegory translation. Davidov & Vojinović (2025) assume that digital news platforms are reshaping audience interaction and cultural mediation, which in turn impacts how allegories are structured, interpreted, and transmitted across languages. Therefore, translators must consider linguistic and semiotic factors, along with the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions contextualizing the text.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate the complex nature of allegory translation in the context of digital journalism. Translators navigate a complex landscape that combines multimodal content, cognitive symbolic interpretation, institutional controls, audience expectations, and technological mediation. Skopos theory offers a robust analytical perspective for understanding these mechanisms, favoring functional equivalence and communicative purpose-based decision-making over literal adherence to linguistic forms. As Valdeón (2020) notes, the globalization of news translation research calls for flexible and interdisciplinary methodological approaches that integrate sociology, discourse analysis, and media studies, enabling translators to address the complex interplay between semantics, symbolism, and reception in the context of digital news.

In conclusion, allegory translation in digital journalism represents an ideal model of purpose-driven translation. Diverse evidence from discourse analysis, multimedia studies, and applied research demonstrates that translators play a dual role as cultural mediators and interpreters, maintaining a delicate balance between preserving the original symbolism of the SL text and meeting the communicative requirements of the TL audience. Using Skopos theory as an analytical perspective demonstrates how translation strategies can be guided by reliance on functional criteria and receiver response, contributing practical and theoretical insights into the effective preservation of allegorical connotations in increasingly complex and interactive digital news context. The scientific literature, based on a meta-analysis of the above studies, confirms that effective allegory translation is not simply a matter of language, but rather a cognitively adaptive, culturally and socially attuned process. This process relies critically on intentional mediation mechanisms and careful attunement to audience response (Jacobson, 2012; Schäffner, 2018; Mutar, 2015; Pan, 2015; Hernández Guerrero, 2019; Valdeón, 2019; Davidov & Vojinović, 2025).

3. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative comparative approach based on discourse analysis within the framework of Skopos theory. The research design combines corpus analysis, multimodal discourse study, and contextual research to monitor and analyze the mechanisms through which allegories are employed in digital media. A specialized corpus was created, focusing on news events characterized by significant allegorical density, such as financial crises, and geopolitical conflicts framed within significant metaphoric frameworks. The corpus comprises approximately six carefully selected digital media documents from leading global media outlets (such as Reuters, Al Jazeera, and The New York Times) along with their translated counterparts, covering a five-year period. The selection was based on the presence of clear allegorical phrasing in headlines, reports, and opinion pieces addressing critical international issues such as economic crises and geopolitical conflicts. This deliberate selection is not aimed at achieving statistical generalizations but rather at conducting an in-depth analytical examination grounded in the Skopos theoretical framework to support planning decisions. The scope, diversity of sources, and selection criteria enhance the robustness of the methodology and provide a reproducible methodological framework for similar qualitative studies within transformative contexts, ensuring that the analytical findings are based on a valid and meaningful set of indicators. All six case studies involve English-language allegories translated into Arabic which narrows the scope of the study, the other direction of translation is left open for other studies. The analysis examines textual components and headlines, embedded as multimedia units.

The analysis proceeds through three integrated layers. First, the textual-level analysis monitors the rhetorical devices—allegories, symbols, and textual references—in the source text and the translated text. Next, the multimodality analysis examines the mechanisms of allegories within semantic formations, drawing on the analytical model of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). Finally, the contextual framework analyzes translation choices in light of institutional constraints and audience characteristics, drawing on Nord's (1997) concept of translation briefs, which highlights the communicative purpose of the translation process. The classification criteria used include the allegorical pattern, its mode of expression, translation methodologies (such as literal transliteration, contextual adaptation, substitution, omission), and functional compatibility. Each translation option is evaluated based on its effectiveness in achieving the intended communicative goal within the recipient culture. Insights from institutional frameworks and editorial practices in newsrooms are also incorporated, where data are available, to contextualize translation decisions.

By systematically combining textual, multimodal, and contextual analysis, the methodology integrates the theoretical principles of the Skopos framework with the practical applications of allegorical discourse analysis in the media. This research is based on the following investigative framework:

1. What explanatory role does Skopos theory play in revealing the mechanisms used to translate allegories within the digital media context?

2.To what extent are allegorical contents subject to preservation, reworking, or replacement to serve communicative requirements?

3.What are the most prominent institutional and cultural factors that determine the purposes of allegory translation within transnational news networks?

4. RESEARCH GAP AND RATIONALE

Despite widespread research interest in news translation, particularly in its ideological, multimodal, and institutional aspects, the field of allegory translation has remained largely unexplored. Existing research often addresses allegory or cultural references in isolation, without addressing them as unique rhetorical and symbolic devices operating across multiple semantic levels. Furthermore, the analytical potential of Skopos theory has not been sufficiently exploited in this field, despite its focus on teleological strategies, which are a central element of allegorical mediation. This work seeks to address these gaps by combining the theoretical framework of Skopos with applied models from digital journalism, integrating the functional perspective on translation with actual practices in current news flows.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The subsequent analytical procedure is based on applying the Skopos framework to a selection of significant examples of media discourse. It analyzes the underlying allegorical structure, develops a translational summary appropriate to the digital media context, evaluates the methodologies used, and selects translation solutions that achieve functional adaptation in line with the organizing principles of the Skopos theory.

5.1 “the writing was on the wall.”

This English phrase is a popular trope that functions as a powerful allegory: it condenses the idea of transcendent fatalism into a condensed visual image (visible writing on a wall), evoking a cultural reference to graffiti in ancient civilizations as prophetic signs. In a journalistic context, the phrase denotes retrospective certainty—the speaker claims that indicators of an outcome were publicly available before the event occurred. From a textual linguistics perspective, this allegory operates across three overlapping analytical levels: (a) conceptual metaphor (knowledge is embodied as vision; evidence represents visible signs), (b) a conventional pragmatic dimension (asserting a priori inevitability), and (c) discursive framing (portraying actors as oblivious or blind to signs). In practice, its role is not limited to conveying factual information but extends to assigning knowledge responsibility and moral accountability.

The translation problem lies in the cultural nature and semantic pluralism of the trope. A literal rendering may lead to ambiguity or literal expression (e.g., a translation of "writing on the wall" into Arabic may remain comprehensible, but may lose its allegorical connotation and become literal), while the allegorical equivalent in Arabic

differs in terms of semantic resonance or allegorical load. Furthermore, the term conveys situational connotations—it reflects the speaker's prescient superiority—and Arabic languages/styles express these connotations in different ways (e.g., the use of emphatic devices or verb conjugations), necessitating careful selection of vocabulary and grammatical structures to maintain the expressive stance.

Three translation proposals reveal the following exchanges: (a) Literal rendering: "كانت الكتابة على الحائط"—preserves the original English structure and may remain legible but lacks contextual relevance in Modern Standard Arabic and may be understood literally by readers with limited knowledge of foreign expressions. (b) Functional equivalent: "كانت الاشارات واضحة منذ البداية" (lit. "the signs were clear from the very beginning")—clarifies the meaning while preserving the propositional function; it abandons the metaphorical imagery but retains the force of the argument and is appropriate for the journalistic context. (c) Rhetorical innovation: "كانت النهاية واضحة" (not recommended—due to its departure from the norm).

Option (b) is considered the most appropriate for academic journalistic translation into Standard Arabic, and this choice can be justified on four grounds. First, this approach preserves the narrative content (foreshadowing of the inevitable outcome) and the pragmatic situation (claiming foresight) by emphasizing clarity and temporal dimension. Secondly, it avoids the semantic ambiguity resulting from literal translation, which might confuse an Arab reader unfamiliar with the English expressive heritage, thus limiting the risk of misunderstanding in the field of translation studies and journalistic applications. Third, it celebrates the style appropriate to formal Arabic media: concise, objective, and free of verbal flourishes. Fourth, from the perspective of the principle of purpose, this expression captures the same communicative effect—directing the target reader toward the corresponding inferential conclusion—rather than adhering to external form at the expense of functional substance. If the translator's intention were to preserve literary resonance or rhetorical texture (as in free-form articles or newspaper columns with a creative scope), a hybrid expression such as "كانت علامات النهاية مرئية لكل من أراد أن يراها" might best convey the rhetorical image while retaining its allegorical character. However, in the context of academic translation, news reports, and systematic analyses, the functional, illustrative alternative achieves the highest degree of compatibility with the affirmative and pragmatic effects of the source text, while adhering to Arabic stylistic norms.

5.2 "A 'ticking time bomb'" (Describing a national debt / political risk)

The "ticking time bomb" allegory is a symbolic device that re-presents abstract risks in social or economic spheres within a tangible image bound by a limited time, bound to explode unless defused. In a media context, this conceptual trilogy combines: the embodiment of the threat as a physical object (the threat as an explosive device), the representation of time as a countdown process (time as a temporal mechanism), and the depiction of inevitability resulting from inaction (inaction leads to destruction).

This allegory has several salient features: tangible materiality (the bomb), dynamic movement (the sound of the countdown), temporal dimension (the specific time frame), and a sense of surprise (the moment of explosion). In practice, this allegory creates a sense of urgency and evokes multiple emotions (such as anxiety and the need for immediate action).

The problem of translating this expression into Arabic is evident on two levels. First, the lexical concept (bomb) and its connotations are universal, yet interactions with it are subject to diverse cultural specificities and political contexts. Second, the semantic correspondence between the allegorical elements (ticking + bomb) remains coherent in English, while there may be no precise equivalent in Arabic. Therefore, translators find themselves faced with the task of balancing between maintaining sharpness of the image and the risks of exaggeration or unacceptable sensationalism, especially given the Arab media system's frequent tendency to use softened expressions to avoid incitement or sensationalism. Possible translation alternatives include: (a) a direct linguistic equivalent: "قنبلة موقوتة على وشك الانفجار"—a formula widely used in Arabic political and media discourse; (b) a clarifying formulation: "قنبلة موقوتة ستنفجر ما لم تُعالج"—a longer formulation that maintains the urgency and conditionality; and (c) a more pared-down formulation: "مخاطرة متزايدة وعواقبها وخيمة"—a technical expression devoid of emotion.

The optimal translation in an academic journalistic context remains option (a), "قنبلة موقوتة على وشك الانفجار", for three fundamental reasons: First, this expression constitutes a well-established allegorical construction in contemporary Standard Arabic and media language. Second, it preserves the semantic network related to imminent inevitability and destructive potential. Third, it aligns precisely with the rhetorical intent of the source text, making it most appropriate for analytical and academic contexts. This alternative is characterized by its brevity, which allows it to be employed in news headlines, while maintaining the intended emotional load of the SL. From the perspective of descriptive translation studies, this example represents a case in which the borrowed allegory is an appropriate translation, as the recipient language has already adopted the term, and the semantic connotation closely matches that of the SL. In the same vein, when specific publications require a less intense impact (such as conservative analytical reports or official statements), alternative formulation (c) can be used to tone down the intensity while maintaining descriptive accuracy. Finally, ethical considerations (such as avoiding incitement) can be addressed by contextualizing the source of the description. The translator may add a reference to the source of the assessment (e.g., "The situation is described by analysts as a 'قنبلة موقوتة'"), reflecting cognitive distance and ensuring professional objectivity.

5.3 “Could be the auto industry's 'canary in the coal mine' moment”

This expression employs a culturally specific allegory—the "canary in the coal mine" analogy—repurposed to refer to critical facts that portend systemic danger. The underlying conceptual representation is based on a small, sensitive element (the

canary) that detects early toxicity before serious damage is evident in the larger system. Thus, the allegory reduces a complex predictive reasoning process to a symbolic story of a watchful animal. This allegory has three main characteristics: temporal sequencing (the collapse of the system is preceded by the disappearance of the guard), sensory sensitivity (the high diagnostic value of secondary signals), and normative reasoning (the need to respond to warning signals).

The translation problem arises on two main levels: cultural axis and pragmatic flexibility. In many Arabic contexts, coal mining does not constitute a prominent cultural reference, which may cause the guard canary symbol to lose its familiar semantic resonance. The original phrase also carries a degree of cognitive weight (it might be... a moment) - an element of modal uncertainty that must be preserved in the translational rendering. In light of this, the available translation alternatives include: (a) direct borrowing: " لحظة دخول الكناري الى منجم الفحم " (unfamiliar); (b) the Arabic formulation commonly used in some works: " لحظة تسلل الكناري الى منجم الفحم " (partially present but not smooth); (c) a functional rewording that preserves the warning role: " قد تكون هذه هي اللحظة التي تنذر بكارثة في صناعة السيارات " (e.g., "It may constitute an early warning for the industry, a preemptive signal of broader disturbances"); (d) a culturally appropriate equivalent: " قد تكون هذه ناقوس الخطر لصناعة السيارات ".

Among these alternatives, formulation (d) "This may be a warning bell for the automobile industry" remains the most appropriate for the official Arabic media context. This choice can be justified based on linguistic and practical criteria: (1) The expression " علامة/جرس الانذار " represents a culturally neutral form while retaining the functional allegorical equivalent, serving as a warning and early warning without the need for the unfamiliar coal mining imagery. 2) The expression maintains the original probability formula by retaining the probability tool "قد تكون," which preserves the nature of uncertainty in the original discourse. 3) The chosen formulation is typically appropriate for news discourse, and its brevity is suitable for headlines and quick texts. 4) On a conceptual level, this formulation embodies the principle of pragmatic implication (early indication → response imperative), enabling the target reader to access the same meaning. Within the framework of translation theory, this model embodies the principle of functional equivalence: the allegorical form is not preserved literally, but the communicative function is faithfully conveyed. If the target audience of researchers is familiar with Anglo-Saxon terminology, an explanatory note can be included in parentheses: " قد تكون هذه علامة قرع جرس الانذار لصناعة السيارات " (the canary in the coal mine)," thus striking a balance between preserving the cultural flavor of the source text and ensuring semantic clarity.

5.4 "China is the elephant in the room."

This rhetorical construction employs a combination of two allegories: the "elephant in the room" (a glaring issue that is deliberately ignored) and a clear geopolitical reference (China). As an allegorical entity, the expression combines the immensity of scale (the elephant) and social evasion (the space of the room) to suggest that the

parties involved are pretending not to see a serious reality that cannot be ignored. Descriptively, the allegorical mechanism operates through two cognitive mappings: physical size equates to political weight (elephant = huge and powerful), and the contrast between material presence and conscious attention (a massive being physically present but cognitively ignored). Practically speaking, the expression accuses actors (governments and analysts) of maneuvering or tactical denial; it also reifies China as a passive subject rather than an active actor, thereby depersonalizing geopolitical relations or objectifying them. Translating this expression faces a complex problem because (a) the phrase "elephant in the room" is frequently used in Arabic discourse in various forms, sometimes with different animal (such as the uncommon "الحوت في الغرفة"); (b) a literal rendering of "الفيل في الغرفة" would be clear but could sound trite or exaggerated; and (c) the need to maintain the geopolitical weight and implicit criticism without invoking nationalist sensitivities or misleading the context.

Suggested alternatives include (a) a literal rendering: "الصين هي الفيل في الغرفة"—clear but blunt; (b) a functional formulation: "الصين تمثل المارد في القمقم الذي يتجاهله الجميع"—which preserves the critical essence; (c) a direct formulation: "الصين هي القضية العظمى التي تقف أمامنا ولا يتناولها أحد الصين عنصر محوري لم يناقش"; and (d) a neutral formulation: "الصين تمثل المارد في القمقم". In the context of academic media translation, option (b) "الصين تمثل المارد في القمقم" is recommended for balancing clarity and cultural acceptability while preserving the original critical message.

This switch maintains the critical intent of the original—pointing to a clear problem that everyone is overlooking—while adopting a fluid Arabic syntax and avoiding animalistic allegories that might be interpreted as inappropriate or incoherent. The alternative formulation manages to retain the connotation of collective disregard ("يتجاهله الجميع") and evaluative force ("المارد في القمقم"), while maintaining its appropriateness for use in formal textual contexts. Theoretically, this decision represents a further manifestation of the principle of function: the translator prioritizes the communicative effect (readers' awareness of a central issue that has been deliberately overlooked) over the literal reproduction of the allegory. If the target audience is more specialized, or if the translator wants to preserve the vibrancy of the original expression, a compromise formula can be adopted: "الفيل في الغرفة — أي الصين — الذي يوشك ان يداهمنا" (however, this formulation may lack fluidity in contemporary Arabic and confuse levels of discourse). Finally, given the performative, which is the central point in skopos theory, dimensions of geopolitical terms, the enumerator may choose to include explanatory context or add expanded phrases in subsequent sentences to avoid misattribution of intent or unwanted escalation of diplomatic discourse.

5.5 "The glass ceiling that holds back female entrepreneurs remains intact."

The term "glass ceiling" represents a prominent allegory for the hidden barriers in structural frameworks that hinder women's advancement. As an allegory, this image combines physical embodiment (the transparent barrier) with institutional critique: the

barrier remains present and visible, while its beneficiaries are neither aware of nor acknowledging its existence. This allegorical mechanism evokes a cognitive paradox (visibility versus barrier), structural dimensions (the ceiling as an institutional limit), and a critical gender perspective. In media practice, the use of this term serves a normative role: by presenting the problem as systemic, readers are encouraged to discern the imbalance in power relations and moral imperatives. Therefore, the Arabic translation must accurately convey the concept (an invisible but real barrier), while maintaining its relevance to the gender equality discourse and its cultural relevance. Arabic feminist terminology is witnessing an increasing prevalence of the concept of "الحاجز الزجاجي" as a standard term, as this expression appears in both academic and media discourse in Arabic. Proposed alternatives include (a) linguistic borrowing: "الحواجز غير", (b) interpretive phrasing: "المرئية التي تحول دون تقدم رائدات الأعمال لا تزال قائمة الحدود" and (c) cultural equivalents: "الخفية التي تمنع المرأة من التقدم في عالم الأعمال".

Option (a) "الحاجز الزجاجي الذي يعيق رائدات الأعمال لا يزال قائماً" is most appropriate when the target audience are familiar with feminist concepts and contemporary business lexicon, as it maintains the allegorical structure and reinforces deeply rooted societal connotations. This preference is based on three justifications: First, the expression "الحاجز الزجاجي" has gained lexical legitimacy in both academic and media discourse in Modern Standard Arabic, accurately conveying the characteristics of transparency and prohibition. Second, preserving the allegory contributes to the continued connection with global feminist discourse (conceptual equivalence across borders), which is what comparative studies rely on. Third, the construction "لا يزال قائماً" maintains the assertive tone of the original formula ("لا يزال قائماً"), eliminating semantic tension and affirmative character.

However, when translation is directed at readers unfamiliar with the term or in contexts that require clarification (such as policy briefs), alternative (b) is preferred due to its ability to simplify the process, thus increasing its chances of acceptance by practical decision-makers. In academic research examining translation strategies, the source text can be cited followed by an analysis of the varying degree of its acceptance across Arab societies depending on the prevalence of feminist discourse. This makes this case an instructive instance of how allegory can convey new concepts, sometimes with the need to reinforce them with explanatory explanations.

5.6 "160 yen ... the 'line in the sand'" (Market-intervention)

In this context, the expression "line in the sand" represents an allegory for fixed, non-negotiable boundaries—standards established to define acceptable behavior that entail consequences. In the financial sphere (such as the 160 yen exchange rate limit), this expression combines a numerical threshold with moral/strategic firmness: the line signifies commitment and the possibility of intervention. This allegory relies on three pillars: the boundary representation (the line), the timeframe (the immediate definition), and the normative imperative (consequences are linked to its crossing). Its

translation faces challenges related to matching the firmness of the expression (the degree of strictness of the "line") and the stylistic alignment between English financial reports and the terminologically diverse Arabic economic literature.

Several boundary allegories are available in Arabic (such as "خط أحمر"—which carries similar but more military or political connotations; or "حد فاصل"—a more neutral expression). As regards proposed translation alternatives: (a) The literal borrowing "خط على الرمال"—directly mimics the English text but is not rooted in the Arabic expressive repertoire. (b) The common equivalent "خط أحمر"—widely used in Arabic media and political discourse to express uncrossable boundaries. (c) The neutral technical formulation "حد سعر محدد/عتبة سعرية عند ١٦٠ ين". (d) A technical-terminological hybrid: "الحدّ الفاصل (أو 'خط أحمر') عند 160 ين".

Optimal choice seems (b), "خط أحمر عند 160 ين", which is most appropriate for news coverage and academic economic analysis. This preference is based on several practical and rhetorical grounds: the term "خط أحمر" has gained widespread legitimacy in contemporary Arabic discourse, carrying connotations of seriousness and stability. This alternative maintains the rhetorical framework of the authorities' intolerance of crossing a threshold. Furthermore, the political connotations associated with this expression may be substantially consistent with the intent of the source text, especially when the original term reflects a strong political will that supports the numerical determinant.

In cases where the source text intends a neutral, technical financial threshold without political connotations, the translator should adopt option (c) and the technical formulation to avoid amplifying the political connotations. Therefore, the translation decision depends on the context: when the English text treats the 160 yen price as a politically imposed limit, the term "خط أحمر" becomes an appropriate functional equivalent; if the intended meaning is a purely technical intervention rule, "عتبة سعرية" " عند 160 ين" is more accurate. In all cases, it is essential to accurately determine the numerical value, as numbers embody the allegorical implications of monetary policy, and any mistranslation results in a fundamental shift in the actual content of the text.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explores the transfer of allegory in digital media through the lens of purpose theory (Skopos), emphasizing the centrality of communicative intent in shaping translation decisions. The role of allegory in news discourse is not limited to rhetorical decoration, but extends beyond that to become a functional tool that produces multi-level content, arouses collective emotions, and shapes intellectual frameworks. The analysis reveals that dealing with it requires functional adaptation across linguistic, cultural, and multi-media levels. The research findings reveal that allegorical dimensions can be preserved through established functional synonyms, adapted using culturally appropriate alternatives, or clarified through explanatory paraphrasing—depending on the intended purpose of the text and the characteristics of the recipient audience. An examination of multimedia components shows that

cognitive elements, titles, and interactive capabilities amplify or modify allegorical resonance, highlighting the need to adopt integrated translation methodologies in the context of the digital news environment.

This study sheds light on the teleological principles of Skopos theory, linking theoretical aspects to practical applications in the field of translation studies. It reveals that allegory transfer is not merely a matter of formal equivalence, but rather constitutes a deliberate mediation process, during which symbolic load and functional relevance are reconciled. The research thus contributes to enriching translation theory and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of cross-border news discourse circulation and its reproduction of symbolic content in the digital era. The study demonstrates that allegory transfer goes beyond the search for single encounters, reaching into deliberate choices that effectively convey symbolic content across cultural systems. The «Skopos "perspective reconciles the theoretical foundations of functional translation with the demands of professional practice in the media field, where speed, clarity, impact, and cultural relevance are top priorities. Adopting this approach remains vital for both translation theorists and practitioners to keep pace with the intertwined complexities of the ideologically charged, multi-channel global digital news landscape. Future research can benefit from this framework by applying it to a broader, systematically designed news corpus, while continuing to investigate how "purpose" guides allegory transfer across diverse semantic patterns.

7. References

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