

TRANSLATION, EMOTION, AND IDEOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION: TRANSLATING POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN JOURNALISTIC CONTEXTS

ÇEVİRİ, DUYGU VE İDEOLOJİK YENİDEN İNŞA: SİYASAL SÖYLEMİN GAZETECİLİK BAĞLAMINDA ÇEVİRİLMESİ

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Abstract

The translation of political discourse has lately received growing scholarly attention, particularly in journalistic mediation and transnational communication. This study approaches translation not as a neutral transfer of meaning, but as an ideologically and emotionally charged process capable of remaking public narratives and redefining political discourse in significant and often subtle ways. The theoretical framework relies on the concepts of performativity of discourse, affective resonance, and translation as a political act. The research focuses on the translation strategies employed by Greek media when rendering German political speeches into Greek, focusing particularly on the period 2019-2025. Based on actual data from television news broadcasts, online news portals, and newspaper publications, the study examines how rhetorical political oratory is translated across languages and cultures. Through qualitative analysis of selected case studies, it investigates how emotional intensity is amplified, diluted, or reframed in translation, as well as how ideological shifting happens. Particular attention is paid to lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical choices which modify the emotional impact of the original discourse and affect reception of political messages by target publics. By positioning translation at the intersection of rhetoric, media, and politics, this study aims to contribute to the fields of political translation studies and the rhetoric of emotion. It emphasizes the importance of critical consciousness and ethical action in translating political discourse under journalistic conditions. In an era of increasing political polarization and growing reliance on translated news content, recognizing the affective and performative dimensions of translation is essential for both media professionals and translators. The study calls for inter-disciplinary discussion and enhanced translator training in a bid to reverse the ideological effects of political translation and create more transparent, accountable practice.

Keywords: political discourse translation, media translation, emotional valence

Öz

Siyasal söylemin çevirisi, özellikle gazetecilik aracılığı ve ulusötesi iletişim bağlamlarında, giderek artan akademik ilgi görmektedir. Bu çalışma çeviriye anlamın tarafsız bir aktarımı olarak değil, kamusal anlatıları yeniden şekillendirme ve siyasal söylemi önemli ve çoğu zaman örtük biçimlerde yeniden tanımlama gücüne sahip, ideolojik ve duygusal yük taşıyan bir süreç olarak yaklaşmaktadır. Kuramsal çerçeve; söylemin icracılığı, duygusal yankı ve çeviriyi siyasal bir eylem olarak ele alma kavramlarına dayanmaktadır. Araştırma, Yunan medyasının Alman siyasal konuşmalarını Yunancaya aktarırken benimsediği çeviri stratejilerine odaklanmakta, özellikle 2019–2025 dönemini incelemektedir. Televizyon haber bültenleri, çevrimiçi haber portalları ve gazete yayımlarından elde edilen gerçek verilere dayanarak, siyasal hitabetin diller ve kültürler arasında nasıl çevrildiğini incelemektedir. Seçilmiş örnek olayların niteliksel analizleri yoluyla,

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duygusal yoğunluğun çeviride nasıl artırıldığı, seyreltilip yeniden çerçevelendiği ve ideolojik kaymaların nasıl gerçekleştiği araştırılmaktadır. Özgün söylemin duygusal etkisini değiştiren ve siyasal iletilerin hedef kamuoyunca nasıl alımlandığını etkileyen sözcüksel, sözdizimsel ve söylemsel tercihlere özel önem verilmektedir. Bu çalışma, çeviriyi hitabet, medya ve siyaset kesişiminde konumlandırarak siyasal çeviri çalışmaları ve duygunun hitabeti alanlarına katkı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Gazetecilik koşullarında yapılan siyasal söylem çevirilerinde eleştirel farkındalığın ve etik eylemin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Artan siyasal kutuplaşma ve çevrilmiş haber içeriklerine duyulan bağımlılığın arttığı bir çağda, çevirinin duygusal ve icracı boyutlarının farkına varmak hem medya profesyonelleri hem de çevirmenler için hayati önem taşımaktadır. Çalışma, siyasal çevirinin ideolojik etkilerini tersine çevirmeye ve daha şeffaf, hesap verebilir bir uygulama oluşturmaya yönelik disiplinlerarası bir tartışma ve gelişmiş çevirmen eğitimi çağrısı yapmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: siyasal çeviri, söylem, duygu

Introduction

Political discourse translation is one of the most challenging and high-risk areas within the field of translation studies, aligning the linguistic, ideological, and affective levels with the understanding that this act of communication moves beyond the simple decoding of meaning from one language to another. Rendering political speech across linguistic boundaries is a performative act with significant ideological, emotional, and diplomatic ramifications that goes beyond simple semantic transfer, in contrast to literary or technical translation (Baker, 2006). Within the international mediascape of the contemporary world, in which political utterance can circulate instantly throughout transnational networks, the translator becomes both linguistic intermediary and agential player within the making of how political worlds are viewed, debated, and emotionally lived.

This study examines the translation of German political discourse in Greek media contexts, focusing specifically on how translational choices systematically alter the emotional valence, rhetorical force, and ideological framing of source texts. The selection of German-Greek political discourse as the object of analysis is driven both historically and contemporarily the historically fraught relationship between the two nations, particularly following the 2010-2015 Eurozone crisis; the asymmetric power dynamics within the European Union framework; and the documented tendency for Greek media to frame German political positions within specific historical and emotional narratives (Kontos & Sidiropoulou, 2012).

The central research question guiding this study is therefore how translational choices in Greek media systematically reconstruct the emotional and ideological dimensions of German political discourse. This broad inquiry is accompanied by subsidiary questions that aim to operationalize and specify the mechanisms of this reconstruction: What specific linguistic strategies enable emotional modulation or ideological reframing in translation? How can these shifts be documented and measured systematically? And what are the broader implications of such translational interventions

for intercultural understanding, democratic transparency, and media ethics within the European political sphere?

By combining theoretical viewpoints from affect theory, performativity studies, and critical discourse analysis, this research seeks to study translation as a political act. In order to empirically identify emotional and ideological shifts in translated political discourse, it aims to use a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative discourse analysis with computational sentiment analysis. Additionally, it seeks to examine the moral implications of translation activities carried out by journalists and translators working in environments of political polarization and institutional stress. Lastly, it seeks to investigate how translational practices affect media literacy and the caliber of democratic discourse.

By combining framing theory (Entman, 1993) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003), the current study expands on Baker's narrative framework. According to this theoretical synthesis, translation is viewed as recontextualization, in which translators move utterances within new interpretive frameworks, rearranging their pragmatic functions and semantic boundaries rather than transmitting fixed meanings. The target context's ideological orientations, power dynamics, and discursive norms all structurally influence this process. Every translational choice—lexical, syntactic, or omission—activates the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure, as defined by Fairclough (2003), producing effects that go beyond the text and into broader sociopolitical spheres.

Translation as Political Act and Ideological Intervention

The conceptualization of translation as transparent and neutral transfer of reference has been thoroughly deconstructed within recent translation studies. The ideological implications of domesticating translation techniques that prioritize target-language fluency over cultural differences were made clear by Venuti's (1995) groundbreaking work on translator invisibility. Building on this framework, Baker's (2006) narrative theory of translation shows that translators actively contribute to the creation and dissemination of narratives that influence societal perceptions of reality rather than merely conveying meanings. According to Baker, translation becomes a site of narrative contestation in political conflict situations, where conflicting frameworks for understanding events are imposed, negotiated, and resisted.

The political aspects of translation practice have been further developed by recent research. In their examination of political white paper translations from Chinese to English, Zhao and Wang (2025) show how translation serves as a tool for shaping national identity and controlling global perceptions. Likewise, Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) demonstrate how journalistic translation in international news settings results in hybrid discursive forms that are more reflective of editorial

policies, institutional priorities, and target-audience expectations than of source-text fidelity. Shah (2024) applies this analysis to the emotional aspect of political discourse, contending that affect translation is never neutral but rather always reflects and supports particular affective regimes.

Translation becomes an intrinsically politicized practice in the realm of political rhetoric. The translator resolves opposing demands of fidelity, institutional loyalty, and cultural appropriateness rather than acting as a mechanical middleman. Translators “speak with a double voice,” ventriloquizing the source while enscribing their own positionality onto the target text, as noted by Hermans (1996). This double-voicing takes on institutional dimensions in political journalism since translators work within media systems that favor some interpretive frames over others. Thus, news organizations use translation as a tool for ideological reproduction to support, strengthen, or refute prevailing political discourses.

Understood in these terms, translation constitutes a form of ideological labor: the sustained discursive work of reconstructing meaning within a field structured by asymmetrical power relations. This viewpoint makes it possible to analyze how German political discourse is methodically recontextualized within the Greek public sphere using local interpretive frameworks influenced by political animosity, historical memory, and national sentiment. Thus, every act of translation becomes a microcosm of larger ideological processes, enacting in language the conflicts and compromises that define political communication in modern-day Europe.

Performativity, Discourse, and the Construction of Political Reality

Political rhetoric's performativity has long been acknowledged as a key component in explaining how discursive practice constructs rather than merely represents social and political worlds. Words have illocutionary impact, which means they enact material effects in addition to designating pre-existing referents, as Austin's seminal speech act theory from 1962 showed. Butler (1997) extended this notion by extending the idea of performativity from the individual speech act to the field of social and political discursive practice. She argued that language uses the power of citability and iterability to produce subjects, identities, and power relations. According to this explanation, political statements are not so much objective depictions of the world as they are actions that define the parameters of political participation, legitimize certain actors, and disempower others.

When political discourse is translated, the original spoken word's performative force is not only preserved but also reenacted in new sociolinguistic and ideological contexts. A new speech act that re-constitutes the illocutionary and perlocutionary elements of the source text within a new communication regime is what we can refer to as a second-order performative upon translation. An example of this would be a political statement translated from German to Greek, which, depending on the translator's textual choices and the media context in which it is placed, may lose, retain, or

change its performative force. As Hermans (1996) describes it, the translator will act as a “ventriloquist”—someone who speaks in the voice of the Other while also producing an utterance that reflects their own position within the institution and ideology. Therefore, translation is a new performance that is situated within the limitations, expectations, and strategic applications of its own set of conditions rather than a replication of the original utterance.

Research on framing and discursive mediation sheds more light on how translation can reshape performative force. Depending on the discursive lens used, the same policy may be viewed as either progressive reform or authoritarian overreach. Framing shapes how audiences understand political issues. With lexical substitutions, syntactic restructuring, and pragmatic modulation, translation functions as a particularly powerful site of reframing, redefining the limits of affect and meaning. A political statement's illocutionary power can be significantly changed by adding or removing evaluative adverbs, modal verbs, or hedging devices. The framing choices made in translation are never ideologically neutral, as Mohammed (2025) shows in his comparative analysis of Western and Eastern media. Instead, they are influenced by institutional affiliations, geopolitical alignments, and cultural histories that shape the cross-border production of meaning.

In order to comprehend translation as a performativity of discourse, one must be aware of the practice's dual orientation: it can subvert or reorder established discourse habits while also repeating assumed power regimes. The practice of political journalism is where this ambivalence is most noticeable. In the receiving culture, the translated utterance transforms into a new performativity that can re-inscribe various perlocutionary forces, such as indignation, pity, mockery, or solidarity. Translating a German political figure's terms into Greek results in a discursive act that gets entangled in the continuous debate over Europe's political identity rather than objective reporting. Therefore, translation plays a role in the creation of political reality by re-performing speech within a new ideological and emotive economy, rather than just repeating it.

By considering political translation as a performative activity, it becomes possible to move past static equivalency models and investigate the dynamic interactions among power, affect, and discourse. Every utterance that is translated is a performative intervention that mediates the emotional experience, assessment, and memory of political events in addition to their narrativeization. The performative aspect of translation thus emphasizes its political agency: translation serves as a tool for rearticulating historical narratives in transnational public spheres, forming political alliances, and mobilizing collective emotions.

Emotion, Affect, and the Translation of Political Discourse

The affective turn in social theory (Wetherell, 2012) has generated renewed attention to the role of emotion in political life. Ahmed (2004) conceptualizes emotions not as private psychological states

but as socially circulating forces that bind subjects to collectives and orient them toward specific objects. In her framework of “affective economies,” emotions do not simply reside in individuals or texts but circulate between signs, bodies, and social formations, gaining intensity through circulation. Political discourse is fundamentally affective discourse: it seeks to mobilize fear, anger, hope, solidarity, and other emotions in service of political projects.

The translation of political discourse thus necessarily involves the translation of affect. However, as Mochtak et al. (2025) demonstrate in their computational analysis of sentiment in political discourse, emotional valence is not a stable textual property but emerges from the interaction between linguistic features and interpretive contexts. What reads as ironic humor in one cultural context may be perceived as insulting provocation in another. What functions as reassuring paternalism in the source culture may be received as condescending arrogance in the target culture.

This study employs emotional valence analysis as a quantitative measure of affective difference between source texts and translations. Drawing on the methodological framework developed by Mohammad and Turney (2013) and implemented through computational tools such as the Julius sentiment analysis model, we measure emotional valence on a scale from -1 (intensely negative) to +1 (intensely positive), as well as emotional intensity (the absolute magnitude of emotional content regardless of valence). This quantitative approach complements qualitative discourse analysis by providing systematic evidence of affective shifts that might otherwise remain impressionistic.

By considering emotion as a social and linguistic phenomena, this method emphasises how important it is for translators to control the emotional tone of political discourse. Emotional resonance may be amplified or muted by translation, turning neutral policy language into heated ideological expression or conciliational speech into conflict. Such emotive modulation is not accidental; rather, it is a component of the reinterpretation of political reality across cultural divides. Political translation ultimately entails understanding how emotion itself, which circulates via media systems, gestures, and words, contributes to the ongoing reconstruction of political meaning.

The European Context: Historical Memory and Asymmetric Power Relations

Any study of the translation of political discourse between German and Greek must be placed in the larger historical and geopolitical framework of Europe, which shapes the two countries' communication connection. In addition to being institutional or economic, the imbalance that defines this connection is also profoundly historical and emotive, ingrained in societal recollections that still influence how political language is understood today. The effects of the German occupation of Greece during World War II, which are still clearly visible in popular culture, have created a storehouse of moral and emotional allusions that are used to filter later political exchanges. During the 2010–2015 Eurozone crisis, when Germany—who was seen as the main force behind European austerity—was

portrayed in Greek public discourse as a punishing and controlling force, these memories were reactivated and repoliticized.

In the framework of this historical conditioning, political discourse in Germany about Greece is seldom seen as being ideologically neutral (Tsakas, 2021). Instead, historical memory and the structural asymmetries present in European integration processes are used to construct the interpretative frameworks through which it is filtered (Tsakas, 2021; Schoeller, 2022). Although Germany has considerable discursive power due to its status as the largest economy in the EU and the main developer of fiscal governance mechanisms, its political communication is also more closely examined and contested, especially by member states that are economically peripheral. This dynamic appears in the Greek media ecosystem as an ambiguous connection marked by resistance and dependency at the same time: German policy discourse serves as an essential reference point for understanding European economic governance while being actively contested as representing external hegemonic influence (Tzogopoulos, 2013).

At the core of this conflict lies translation. Political translation, according to Schöffner (2012), is a place where historical narratives are reactivated and renegotiated. Every act of language mediation is influenced by a complex intertextual network of earlier discourses, such as postwar reparations, wartime occupation, and austerity politics, which translators working in this environment must traverse. When translated into Greek, even ostensibly administrative or technical statements take on moral and emotional significance since they speak to shared experiences of oppression and humiliation. Therefore, translation serves as a kind of historical reenactment as well as linguistic transfer: every choice of word, register, or tone reopens the conversation between the past and present.

As a result, any analysis of German-Greek political discourse translation must take into consideration the confluence of historical memory, emotive resonance, and institutional imbalance. Translation in this setting is never a neutral bridge, but rather a politically charged act that recasts old tales in new ways. Through these translations, the ghosts of Europe's past continue to speak in the current tongue, influencing how countries see Europe, comprehend one another, and navigate their position within its asymmetric communication system.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Building on the theoretical framework outlined above, this research examines the ways in which translation serves as an emotive and ideological mechanism to moderate German political discourse in Greek media. In order to frame translation as a discursive process that shapes meaning, emotion, and power internationally rather than just a linguistic act, the main research question explores how Greek journalistic translations recreate the emotional and ideological aspects of German political discourse.

Research questions focus on: how translations modify the emotional valence of German discourse; which lexical, syntactic, or pragmatic strategies drive these shifts; how these strategies reflect institutional and ideological tendencies in Greek media, particularly regarding historical narratives of dependency, moral critique, or national identity; and the broader communicative and diplomatic consequences of such transformations for European political discourse.

The study formulates four working hypotheses. First, Greek translations systematically intensify negative affect, often eliminating German linguistic features that mitigate assertion, turning conditional or analytic propositions into categorical, emotionally charged statements. Second, translational choices align with pre-existing frames portraying Germany as authoritative or coercive, reinforced via lexical substitution and syntactic restructuring. Third, affective and ideological shifts vary according to media outlet orientation, with populist or nationalist outlets showing stronger polarization and deviation from source pragmatics than centrist or public-service outlets. Finally, these transformations shape political communication and public perception, influencing citizens' interpretation of foreign political actors' intentions, credibility, and legitimacy.

Research Design and Corpus Selection

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative critical discourse analysis with quantitative assessment of emotional valence. The study focusses on extensive case studies of particular instances of German political discourse and their Greek translations, allowing for a thorough evaluation of translational tactics and their effect.

The full corpora consist of a large set of examples spanning the past fifteen years (2010–2025), selected according to the following criteria: (1) statements by prominent German political figures addressing issues relevant to German-Greek relations or broader European policy; (2) availability of both the original German text and its published Greek translation; (3) statements that attracted significant public attention or diplomatic response; (4) thematic diversity, covering economic policy, energy, immigration, and interpersonal political communication; and (5) temporal distribution to allow analysis of trends across different political contexts. From this larger corpus, the five most representative case studies have been selected for detailed analysis in this paper.

The chosen cases are: (1) Wolfgang Schäuble's 2015 remarks about Yanis Varoufakis during the Eurozone crisis; (2) Schäuble's 2022 comments on energy conservation amid the European energy crisis; (3) Christian Lindner's 2022 statements on EU fiscal policy; (4) Friedrich Merz's January 2025 announcement on immigration policy; and (5) Merz's August 2025 remarks on the sustainability of the welfare state. These examples cover a wide range of communication contexts—press conferences, television interviews, party events, and official statements—and use a variety of rhetorical registers, including sarcastic, funny, technocratic, and formal approaches.

Official transcripts video recordings, and recognised German media sites provided source texts. Greek translations were obtained from major television networks, news websites, and online portals. In cases where video material was provided, transcriptions were independently confirmed for correctness.

Analytical Procedures

The analysis proceeded through four distinct, yet interrelated stages designed to capture both the linguistic and translational dimensions of the material.

Stage 1: Source text analysis. The linguistic characteristics, rhetorical devices, and pragmatic components of every German source text were investigated. The following were given special consideration: (a) register and formality level; (b) modal and hedging expressions; (c) agency construction and person deixis; (d) metaphorical language and figurative expressions; (e) ironic or humorous elements; (f) contextualising and qualifying clauses; and (g) speech act functions.

Stage 2: Translation analysis. The same categories were applied to Greek translations, and specific areas of divergence were identified through a methodical comparison. The traditional typologies of addition, omission, substitution, explicitation, implicitation, modulation, and transposition were used to categorise translational decisions. Decisions that affected ideological framing and emotional tone were given particular consideration.

Stage 3: Measurement of Quantitative Emotional Valence. The Julius sentiment analysis model, which was implemented in Python, was used to analyse both source texts and translations. This method uses lexical features, syntactic patterns, and semantic linkages to analyse emotional valence (positive vs. negative affect) and emotional intensity (the amount of affective content). Measures of valence and intensity ranged from 0 to 1, and from -1 (very negative) to +1 (extremely positive). Because of its demonstrated reliability in multilingual political discourse analysis (Mochtak et al., 2025) and its capacity to handle both Greek and German texts, the Julius model was selected.

Stage 4: Contextual and Intertextual Analysis. Every case was analysed in light of the broader historical, political, and media backdrops. This includes an evaluation of: (a) the political events surrounding the remark; (b) the media outlet's editorial viewpoint and intended audience; (c) other media coverage of the same event in both German and Greek settings; and (d) any recorded diplomatic or political reactions to the translation.

Case Studies: Detailed Analysis

Case Study 1: The Schäuble-Varoufakis Incident (March 2015)

The first case study is based on a press conference that German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble gave after the Eurozone Finance Ministers' meeting. It should be mentioned that Schäuble was generally regarded in Greek media discourse as the main instigator of the austerity measures that were forced upon Greece. During the negotiations, Yanis Varoufakis, the recently appointed Greek Finance Minister, took a notably combative approach, which heightened tensions and caused significant disagreements with Greece's European allies.

After the meeting, Schäuble stated about his conversation with Varoufakis: “Also, dass er jetzt plötzlich naiv in Sachen Kommunikation wäre, hab’ ich gesagt, das ist mir ganz neu.” (“So, that he would now suddenly be naive when it comes to communication, I said, that's completely new to me.”). Several important discursive characteristics linked to evaluative stance in political communication are revealed in this statement. The use of the subjunctive “wäre” functions as a marker of semantic distance, allowing the speaker to mitigate the force of evaluation and preserve plausible deniability. The evaluative content is further embedded within a secondary narrative frame (“hab ich ihm gesagt”), which enables Schäuble to maintain institutional authority while indicating pragmatic detachment. The phrase “in Sachen Kommunikation” limits the scope of critique to communicative behaviour, thereby softening the interpersonal impact. Furthermore, the expression “ganz neu” functions as an instance of ironic litotes. These strategies together exhibit ironic bureaucratise, a kind of language that mixes administrative formality with controlled sarcasm in order to preserve protocol, manage interpersonal placement, and protect the political image.

A Greek private television channel (MEGA) translated the statement as follows: “Το να είναι τόσο ανόητα αφελής, δεν το περίμενα.” (“To be so foolishly naive, I didn’t expect it.”). This translation introduces a series of notable shifts in modality, evaluation, and pragmatic impact. The original hypothetical observation is transformed into a categorical assertion, as the modal transition from the subjunctive to the indicative removes semantic hedging. The addition of “ανόητα” (“foolishly”) amplifies the evaluative intensity, converting subtle irony into overt disparagement. Additionally, the omission of the limiting phrase “in Sachen Kommunikation” broadens the criticism from professional conduct to personal character, altering both the target and the tone of the evaluation. The humorous tone is reduced by removing “ganz neu”, and a literal and emotionally charged interpretation takes its place. Therefore, Schäuble's position is reframed from bureaucratic sarcasm to direct personal judgment, as the speaker's position changes from detached institutional criticism (“that's new to me”) to personal engagement (“I didn't expect it”).

A quantitative sentiment analysis supports these qualitative findings.

- German source text: Valence = -0.35, Intensity = 0.28
- Greek translation: Valence = -0.62, Intensity = 0.55

The results confirm that the translation is significantly more negative and affectively charged, showing a 77% increase in negative valence and a 96% increase in emotional intensity in the Greek version.

The consequences on communication were instantaneous. Perceiving Schäuble's purported remark as a personal jab at Varoufakis, the Greek government sent a formal diplomatic protest to Berlin. German officials, citing the original German wording, said they were confused by the response and insisted that no offense had been meant. A statement that, in its original linguistic and cultural context, served as a restrained and ironic remark was turned—through minor changes in modality, tone, and register—into a perceived insult, elevating a discursive nuance into a global incident. This episode exemplifies the material and diplomatic ramifications of translational shifts.

Case Study 2: Schäuble's Sweaters – Energy Crisis (October 2022)

The 2022 European energy crisis, which was brought on by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing disruption of Europe's natural gas supplies, is the subject of the second case study. German politicians publicly urged citizens to conserve energy as worries about possible winter energy shortages and rising energy prices grew. In this regard, Wolfgang Schäuble made an appearance on Bild-TV to talk about doable tactics for situational adaptation. The interview took place amid the crisis's pervasive anxiety in Europe and discussions about government accountability, solidarity, and self-sufficiency.

During the interview, Schäuble stated: “Dann zieht man halt einen Pullover an. Oder vielleicht noch einen zweiten Pullover. Auch sollte man ein paar Kerzen, Streichhölzer und eine Taschenlampe zu Hause haben – für den Fall eines Stromausfalls.” (“Then you just put on a sweater. Or maybe even a second sweater. You should also have a few candles, matches, and a flashlight at home – in case of a power outage.”). He concluded with the remark: “Lachen befreit und entspannt. Wir haben keinen Grund zu resignieren.” (“Laughter liberates and relaxes. We have no reason to resign.”).

This statement has several noteworthy linguistic and pragmatic elements. First, by presenting the advice as a common social norm rather than a personal command, the impersonal form (“man zieht an”) creates an atmosphere of generality and inclusivity. Schäuble is able to maintain institutional authority while avoiding an authoritarian posture thanks to this impersonal form, which is characteristic of German bureaucratic and advisory discourse.

Second, the modal particle “halt” creates a conversational tone linked to pragmatic realism and moderation by communicating pragmatic resignation, while the word “vielleicht” creates a humorous and introspective awareness of the suggestion's modesty. Furthermore, by placing the statement within a discourse of caution rather than an impending crisis, the preparedness frame (“für den Fall

eines Stromausfalls”) keeps the tone upbeat and reasonable. Schäuble's overt allusion to laughter and the somewhat ridiculous image of “multiple sweaters” indicate a purposeful use of humor as a rhetorical strategy—a way to defuse public anxiety through irony and lightheartedness while still providing useful information.

ERT (Greek public television) translated the statement as follows: “Μην γκρινιάζετε, φορέστε πουλόβερ, πάρτε κεριά και σπίρτα.” (“Stop complaining, wear sweaters, get candles and matches.”). A number of significant changes in tone, modality, and framing appear in this translation. The directive phrase “Μην γκρινιάζετε” (“stop complaining”), which is completely missing from the German original, changes the pragmatic register of the statement from advisory to admonitory, suggesting a moralizing critique toward the general public. Furthermore, a more authoritarian tone that upsets the balance of relationships between speaker and audience is imposed by turning the impersonal constructions of the German text into direct imperatives. Besides that, the translation simplifies the original by eliminating contextual cues like the flashlight and the phrase “für den Fall eines Stromausfalls”, which had presented the advice as cautious and prudent rather than dismissive or alarmist. These translational changes add up to a flattened and literalized text devoid of rhetorical nuance, turning a playful act of assurance into a severe and emotionally detached admonition.

Computational sentiment analysis confirms these qualitative observations:

- German source text: Valence = -0.15 , Intensity = 0.50
- Greek translation: Valence = -0.45 , Intensity = 0.98

These numbers show a 96% increase in emotional intensity and a 200% increase in negative valence. Due to its allusion to adversity, the German source text already had a moderate level of emotional intensity, but its positive tone and humorous framing reduced the negativity. The tone is noticeably harsher and more emotionally charged in the Greek translation, which retains the referential content but eliminates the affective and rhetorical softeners.

The translated version went viral in Greek media. The public opinion saw it as a symbol of German political apathy toward the struggles of common people. Invoking past memories of German insensitivity and arrogance, a number of media outlets strengthened stereotypes in Greek public discourse. The loss of irony and humor was particularly significant because what was meant to be a humorous, optimistic remark was reframed as an act of elitist disregard. Thus, this case demonstrates how translational changes in modality, register, and evaluative framing can drastically change the pragmatic force and reception of political discourse, turning a reassuring rhetorical strategy into an act of perceived condescension.

Case Study 3: Christian Lindner's “Trick or Treat” – EU Fiscal Policy (2022)

The third case study examines an interview given by the German Finance Minister, Christian Lindner, to “Handelsblatt” in October 2022, in which he discussed possible changes to the EU's fiscal policy framework following massive public spending linked to the pandemic. His statements focused on technical issues concerning debt sustainability and the future of the EU's Stability and Growth Pact.

In the interview, Lindner stated: “Nach der Pandemie sind die Schuldenquoten so hoch, dass diese Vorgabe bestimmte Länder objektiv überfordern würde.” (“After the pandemic, debt ratios are so high that this requirement would objectively overwhelm certain countries.”). He continued by calling the suggested actions “Süßes und Saures,” which translates to “trick or treat” or “a mixed bag”. His linguistic and rhetorical choices exhibit a distinctly technocratic and depoliticized register. The use of specialised economic terms such as “Schuldenquoten” (debt ratios) and “Vorgabe” (requirement/target) situates the statement within the discourse of financial governance and bureaucratic assessment. By indicating hypothetical reasoning, the conditional modal “würde” (would) frames the statement as an analytical assessment rather than a political declaration. Furthermore, by using the word “objektiv”, the statement is presented as data-driven rather than ideological. Using the phrase “bestimmten Länder”, Lindner preserves diplomatic discretion by avoiding direct mention of any particular member state. Lastly, the idiom “Süßes und Saures” suggests a pragmatic rather than combative posture and softens the tone of criticism with a hint of colloquial understatement.

Lindner's comments were translated by the Greek news portal “Reporter.gr” under the headline, “Εμπρός... πίσω στη λιτότητα” (“Forward... back to austerity”), which was enclosed in quote marks as if it were taken directly from minister's interview. Both linguistically and semantically, this translation reflects a significant reinterpretation of the original statement. The politically charged word “λιτότητα” (austerity), which is completely absent from the German source, replaces the technocratic and conditional analysis of financial language. By misattributing the phrase to Lindner, the headline's format and quotation marks turn an economic observation into an ideological statement. Furthermore, the ironic phrase “εμπρός...πίσω” (“forward... back”) adds an interpretive layer that is not present in the original text by taking a critical stance toward European financial policy and suggesting hypocrisy or contradiction.

The Greek translation also eliminates all markers of epistemic caution and rhetorical mitigation. The absence of the qualifier *objektiv* and the conditional *würde* collapses analytical nuance into aggressive judgment. What in German reads as a cautious evaluation of possible outcomes becomes, in Greek, an unequivocal advocacy of austerity policies. In addition to causing linguistic distortion, the translation stirs up strong emotional and historical resonances in Greek public discourse. For

example, the word “austerity” conjures up the painful memories of the financial crisis that lasted from 2009 to 2018 and the perceived role that German politicians played in imposing severe economic measures. As a result, the translation not only puts Lindner's statement in a new context, but it also brings back a whole story about moral blame and economic dominance.

Quantitative sentiment analysis confirms the extent of this transformation.

- German source: Valence = -0.01 , Intensity = 0.12
- Greek translation: Valence = -0.50 , Intensity = 0.60

The Greek version exhibits a 400% increase in emotional intensity and a 5000% increase in negative valence, whereas the German original registers as essentially neutral—appropriate to a technocratic discussion of fiscal parameters. As a result, the translation transforms a statement that is analytically detached into a politically charged provocation.

This case illustrates how translation can serve as an editorial intervention, changing the discursive purpose of a text from technical commentary to ideological criticism. In addition to misrepresenting Lindner's meaning, the Reporter.gr headline engages in a form of media framing that plays into domestic political sensitivities. Since it misleads the public about the speaker's true position and puts their reputation at risk, such false attribution presents ethical and professional issues. The case highlights how translation functions in the political sphere not only as linguistic mediation but also as an arena of power, interpretation, and ideological negotiation.

Case Study 4: Friedrich Merz – Immigration Policy (January 2025)

Friedrich Merz, the German Chancellor, is the subject of the fourth case study. According to the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the broader research corpora, Greek news media have frequently misrepresented Merz's claims, which date back to the pre-election era. In January 2025, CDU leader and German Chancellor candidate Friedrich Merz issued a formal press release outlining new immigration policy proposals in response to public concerns regarding irregular migration and integration challenges. In this statement, Merz declared: “Es wird ein faktisches Einreiseverbot in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland für alle geben, die nicht über gültige Einreisedokumente verfügen oder die von der europäischen Freizügigkeit Gebrauch machen. Das gilt ausdrücklich auch für Personen mit Schutzanspruch.” (“There will be a de facto entry ban to the Federal Republic of Germany for all who do not possess valid entry documents or who make use of European freedom of movement. This applies explicitly also to persons with protection claims.”).

Using terms like “faktisches Einreiseverbot”, “gültige Einreisedokumente”, and “Schutzanspruch”—all of which have distinct meanings under German and EU immigration law—the original German text demonstrates exact legal and bureaucratic characteristics. Using the

impersonal phrase “Es wird... geben,” (“there will be”) creates bureaucratic distance by portraying the policy as a systemic result rather than a subjective choice, and the reference to the exercise of European freedom of movement calls upon technical provisions of the Schengen Agreement. “Schutzanspruch” highlights the procedural rather than the individual nature of the policy by referring to people claiming protection or asylum whose applications have not yet been decided.

The Greek public television channel SKAI rendered the statement as: “de facto απαγόρευση εισόδου σε όλους τους παράτυπους μετανάστες—Ακόμα κι αν είναι σε καθεστώς προστασίας” (“de facto entry ban on all irregular migrants—Even if they are under protection status”). Both the semantic content and the evaluative orientation are radically modified by the numerous significant changes brought about by this translation. The stigmatizing nominal construction of “παράτυποι μετανάστες” (irregular migrants) replaces the formal neutral phrase “die nicht über gültige Einreisedokumente verfügen”, demonstrating legal transgression as an inherent personal characteristic rather than an administrative one. The original formulation's technical specificity and crucial legal nuance are eliminated when the German distinction between people with no documentation and those exercising their right to free movement is collapsed. Furthermore, “Schutzanspruch” is incorrectly translated as “καθεστώς προστασίας” (protection status), implying that the policy extends to those with already recognized refugee rights rather than to applicants with pending claims. This dramatizes and exaggerates the policy's reach. While all technical legal terminology is eliminated in favor of informal, emotionally charged language, the addition of the conjunction “ακόμα κι αν” (even if) adds a sense of heightened severity lacking from Merz's original, suggesting an unexpectedly harsh application. A measured, legally accurate policy statement is turned into a sensationalized and provocative political declaration.

Sentiment analysis quantifies this shift:

- German source: Valence = -0.23, Intensity = 0.02
- Greek translation: Valence = -0.47, Intensity = 0.75

The statement's formal, administrative nature is reflected in the German source's mildly negative valence and extremely low intensity. In contrast, the Greek translation has much more negativity and emotional intensity, which is a 3,650% increase in intensity and essentially doubles the negative valence. Consequently, the translation increases emotions and ethical assessment by transforming a restrained bureaucratic statement into a highly charged political message.

This case has particularly important ramifications because the incorrect translation could lead to widespread misunderstandings among Greek audiences. Although Merz's policy might have been controversial if it had been put into effect, it would not have violated international refugee law by

specifically targeting people with recognized protection status, as the translation implies. Instead, the Greek translation minimizes the actual legal and procedural issues and gives the public an unjustified reason for criticism through creating the false impression of extreme policy intent. This case demonstrates how translational changes in terminology, modality, and evaluative framing can have a significant impact on how politically sensitive discourse is interpreted and received, turning administrative communication that is meant to be neutral into a source of sentimental controversy and misinterpreted threat.

Case Study 5: Friedrich Merz – Welfare State Sustainability (August 2025)

During a CDU party event in August 2025, Friedrich Merz spoke about Germany's long-term financial difficulties in light of changing demographics, growing healthcare costs, and rising pension obligations. His statements were part of a larger intra-party discussion about the nation's long-term economic goals and the viability of the social model. Merz stated: “Der Sozialstaat, wie wir ihn heute haben, ist mit dem, was wir volkswirtschaftlich leisten, nicht mehr finanzierbar.” (“The welfare state, as we have it today, is no longer financeable with what we achieve economically.”).

The original statement is distinguished by traits of political discourse that are consensus-oriented and technocratic. Temporal and structural specificity are secured by the qualifying relative clause “wie wir heute haben” (“as we have it today”), which restricts the claim to the welfare state's current configuration rather than completely rejecting the idea. The statement is further constrained by the prepositional phrase “mit dem, was wir volkswirtschaftlich leisten” (“with what we achieve economically”), which frames the problem as a function of present productivity levels while subtly acknowledging that future economic growth may change the situation. The statement evolves from a top-down criticism to a shared reflection on national capability by the repeated use of “wir” (we), which positions the speaker and audience as jointly accountable. The passive construction “finanzierbar” (financeable) moves the emphasis from political agency to structural limitation, while the technical term “volkswirtschaftlich” grounds the argument in the field of economic analysis. A well-balanced, depersonalized, and conditional formulation that presents financial unsustainability as a technical-structural problem rather than a moral or ideological assessment is the result.

The statement was translated as follows in Greek by Bankingnews.gr: “Η Γερμανία δεν μπορεί να χρηματοδοτεί άλλο το κράτος πρόνοιας.” (“Germany can no longer finance the welfare state.”). The original's modality, tone, and framing are all significantly changed in this translation. A conditional claim becomes an absolute one when all qualifying clauses are removed, eliminating the contextual precision. The expression “wie wir heute haben” and the economic situation “mit dem, was wir volkswirtschaftlich leisten” are eliminated, transforming a particular evaluation of financial sustainability into a generalization that the welfare state is unaffordable in its entirety. The

nationalized subject “Γερμανία” (Germany) takes the place of the collective “wir” (we) of the source text, transferring accountability from a collective societal viewpoint to a single state actor. An oppositional “Germany versus others” framing that is highly effective in Greek political discourse is reinforced by this reconfiguration, which externalizes the problem. The active verb “μπορεί να χρηματοδοτεί” (can finance) adds a sense of agency and choice that is lacking from the German “finanzierbar,” which describes structural feasibility rather than volition. However, the addition of “άλλο” (any longer) intensifies the temporal sense, suggesting a decisive breaking point. Lastly, the reference is universalized by using the definite article “το κράτος πρόνοιας” (the welfare state), which removes any nuances that might restrict the claim to particular welfare configurations or structures.

Quantitative sentiment analysis confirms the extent of this mistranslation.

- German source: Valence = -0.40, Intensity = 0.88
- Greek translation: Valence = -0.55, Intensity = 0.92

The Greek translation increases the negative valence to -0.55 and intensity to 0.92—a 38% rise in negativity and 5% rise in intensity. The qualitative change is significant, even though the numerical variations are slight in comparison to other situations. The translation minimizes analytical balance while increasing perceived severity by transforming a nuanced, technocratic statement into a categorical political assertion.

This case demonstrates how Greek media translations of German political discourse typically ignore the hedging, qualification, and collective framing that characterize German political communication, which is in line with the larger pattern seen throughout the corpus. Merz's statement, which was intended to communicate analytical objectivity and shared responsibility, loses its technocratic precision and depersonalized tone in favor of a declarative, politicized tone that emphasizes finality and national agency. The end effect is a rhetorical simplification that turns intricate structural reasoning into combative discourse, changing the original message's meaning as well as its moral and political resonance.

Systematic Patterns in Emotional and Ideological Reconstruction

Corpora's analysis reveals recurring patterns regarding the reconstruction of German political discourse in Greek media translations. These patterns lead to systematic shifts in rhetorical impact, ideological framing, and emotional valence at several linguistic levels.

Pattern 1: Elimination of Hedging and Modalization. Possibly the most persistent translational pattern is the methodical elimination hedging techniques, and specialized modal statements. Subjunctive mood (Konjunktiv), conditional constructions, qualifying relative clauses, restricting prepositional phrases, and specialized terms are all often used in German political discourse,

especially in its formal-technocratic tone. Among other pragmatic goals, these rhetorical strategies maintain diplomatic ambiguity, demonstrate political objectivity, permit debate, and present controversial claims as technical assessments rather than ideological positions.

The research has revealed that Greek news media, when translating German political discourse, consistently eliminate these elements, turning hedged statements into categorical claims, conditional forecasts into firm assertions, and cautious criticism into outright denunciations. This pattern is consistent with Hyland's (2005) study on hedging in academic discourse, which shows that hedging plays important interactional roles in face-saving, politeness, and epistemic authority negotiation. Thus, the interpersonal aspect of political communication is radically changed when hedging is eliminated in translation.

Pattern 2: Intensification of Negative Affect. Greek translations exhibit a systematic intensification of negative emotional valence, according to quantitative analysis. In the five cases, emotional intensity increased by an average of 156% (from mean 0.36 to 0.76), while negative valence increased by an average of 104% (from mean -0.23 in German to -0.52 in Greek). By adding negatively valenced lexical items (e.g., stop complaining), replacing neutral terms with stigmatizing labels (e.g., “irregular migrants”), removing positive or mitigating elements, and turning ironic or humorous registers into literal negative statements are some of the ways this pattern is expressed. According to Shah (2024) emotional intensity in political discourse is not simply translated but actively reconstructed according to target-culture affective norms and political contexts. The Greek translations exhibit what Inouye and Mills (2021) call “affective amplification”—a process through which repeated emotional attributions increase the intensity of affect associated with particular objects (in this case, German political figures and policies).

Pattern 3: Register Shift from Technocratic to Populist. A consistent downward register shift from formal-technocratic to colloquial-populist discourse is evident in several cases. Everyday language takes the place of technical legal and economic jargon; bureaucratic passive constructions give way to direct imperatives; and impersonal formulations turn into personal accusations. Significant ideological ramifications result from this register shift: populist discourse asserts authority through genuine representation of “the people” and frames policy as an ideological choice, whereas technocratic discourse asserts authority through expertise and frames policy as technical optimization. Fairclough's (2003: 35) concept of “conversationalization”—the propensity for public discourse to take on characteristics of informal conversation—helps explain the tone shift. To challenge the technocratic authority of the source speaker and recast policy statements as ideological mandates, conversationalization is purposefully used in translation in these situations.

Pattern 4: Elimination of Humor and Irony. The methodical removal of ironic and humorous elements in translation is especially evident in Cases 1 and 2. Schäuble's sarcastic remark, "dass er naiv in Sachen Kommunikation wäre... das ist mir ganz neu," turns into a direct accusation; his lighthearted recommendations for energy conservation, stripped of their playful context, turn into haughty directives. In addition to indicating strategic decisions, this pattern reflects basic difficulties in translating humor across cultural boundaries (Chiaro, 2010). In political discourse, humor serves as a coping mechanism and tension-relieving tool, and its removal heightens the intensity of conflict.

Pattern 5: Contextualization and Personalization. German political discourse frequently uses impersonal pronouns ("man"/"es") and collective constructions ("wir"), framing issues as systemic problems that require collective solutions. Greek translations constantly personalize and attribute agency: structural constraints become political choices, collective "we" becomes third-person "Germany", and impersonal constructions become direct imperatives. In addition to reflecting various cultural conceptions of political agency and accountability, this pattern helps to portray German politicians as directly accountable for actions deemed detrimental to Greek interests.

Institutional and Professional Dimensions

The identified patterns must be interpreted as institutionally embedded practices rather than being attributable to individual translator incompetence. Despite having different translators, various Greek media outlets display comparable translational patterns, indicating that these practices are more a reflection of editorial policies, professional cultures, and institutional norms than of personal preferences.

Several institutional factors likely contribute to these patterns:

(1) Time Pressure: Journalistic translation is subject to strict time constraints, which reduces the possibility of rendering complex source texts in a nuanced manner. Translators may interpret German statements that are unclear or structurally complex in a way that fits preexisting narrative frames.

(2) Expectations of the Target Audience: Media organizations use pre-existing interpretive frameworks to create and cater to particular audiences. There are incentives for translational decisions that support rather than contradict prevailing narratives because translations that conform to audience expectations are more likely to be regarded as accurate and understandable.

(3) Editorial Intervention: In journalistic settings, it is frequently difficult to distinguish between editorial commentary and translation. In particular, headlines can drastically reframe translated content (as in Case Study 3) and are usually created by editors rather than translators.

(4) Professional Status: In journalism, translators usually hold lower-level positions in institutional hierarchies and may not have much power to oppose editorial pressure to translate for specific ideological or narrative goals.

(5) Lack of Accountability Mechanisms: Journalistic translation does not have strong accountability frameworks, in contrast to legal or medical translation, where mistakes have instantaneous, obvious repercussions and professional liability. Rarely do corrections or professional sanctions result from tendentious renderings or mistranslations.

In contrast to individual-level professional development, which we revisit in the recommendations section, these institutional factors indicate the necessity of structural reforms.

Theoretical Implications: Translation as Ideological Labor

The recognised patterns show that translating political discourse is an active process of reinterpreting meaning within target-culture frameworks of interpretation, or what we might call “ideological labor.” By demonstrating how particular translational strategies consistently result in particular narrative effects, this finding expands on Baker's (2006) narrative theory. In order to support a larger narrative of German political hegemony and insensitivity to peripheral European concerns, the Greek translations consistently reconstruct German technocratic-consensus discourse as arrogant-authoritarian discourse.

According to Entman (1993), the fundamental framing functions of selection (deciding which elements of the source text to highlight or preserve) and salience (making particular elements more memorable and significant) are how this ideological reconstruction works. German political discourse is constructed as being most dangerous to Greek interests by Greek translations, which methodically pick out the restrictive, critical, or challenging parts of German statements while removing any mitigating, qualifying, or solidarity-promoting ones.

The results also shed light on the function of translation in what Ahmed (2004) refers to as affective economies—the social flow of feelings that connect individuals to groups. Greek translations contribute to an affective economy in which German political actors are objects onto which past grievances, present anxieties, and unfulfilled ambitions can be projected by continuously escalating the negative affect connected to German political discourse. Since emotions are political in nature and shape how people perceive their interests, identify their allies and adversaries, and organize for action, it is impossible to separate this affective dimension from the ideological dimension.

Ethical Dimensions and Democratic Implications

Beyond the linguistic errors, the translational practices described in this study raise serious ethical and democratic issues. Intercultural understanding, democratic deliberation, and institutional trust are all harmed when political statements made by foreign leaders are routinely mistranslated to heighten negative affect, obscure subtleties, and escalate conflict.

(1) **Distortion of Public Opinion:** At the social level, systematic mistranslations of political discourse amount to epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007). People base their opinions and voting intentions on misrepresentations of the true statements made by foreign actors. According to the study, measured criticism is consistently transformed into aggressive condemnation, and conditional or hypothetical statements are consistently transformed into categorical assertions. Such distortions impede informed democratic debate and deny the public access to the real discourse influencing national and international policy. These damages build up over time. Interpretive frameworks that reinforce confirmation bias and resistance to correction are fostered by constant exposure to distorted translations. Over time, the media ecosystem generates logical alternative narratives regarding foreign actors' attitudes toward Greece rather than just isolated misunderstandings.

(2) **Diplomatic Consequences:** Inaccurate translations may also have real diplomatic ramifications. Regardless of their accuracy, they gain performative power once politicians quote them or bring them up in official discussions, influencing diplomatic reality. Meetings are dominated by miscommunications resulting from linguistic distortion, ministries are required to provide clarifications, and embassies provide re-translations. There is a persistent disconnect between public perception and diplomatic reality because corrections are rarely given equal visibility. Because governments react to perceived threats that were never made, this asymmetry skews democratic accountability and makes it more difficult to reach an agreement within European institutions.

(3) **Erosion of Trust:** Audiences frequently perceive subsequent corrections—by foreign officials or media outlets—as calculated backtracking rather than factual clarification. According to Lewandowsky et al. (2012), this continued influence effect refers to the way that false information persists in influencing opinions even after it has been rectified. Credibility gradually erodes as a result, with domestic institutions that make corrections seeming complicit and foreign actors coming across as inconsistent. This dynamic strengthens opposition to truthful reporting over time by fostering a lack of trust in European institutions and international information sources.

(4) **Intensification of Polarization:** Systematic affect-intensifying translation exacerbates polarization and nationalist mobilization by interacting with preexisting political divisions. It strengthens Euroskeptic narratives and offers linguistic evidence for accusations of disrespect or dominance when foreign discourse is continuously presented as antagonistic or contemptuous of

Greek interests. Such distortions reduce the room for practical discussion during political or economic crises by turning technical policy discussions into issues of national sovereignty and dignity. They undermine the legitimacy of multilevel decision-making in the larger European context by weakening the permissive consensus (Hooghe & Marks, 2009) required for cooperative governance.

(5) Professional Ethics: These patterns also highlight the moral conundrums that media translators encounter. Intelligibility for readers, fidelity to the source, and adherence to editorial priorities that prioritize speed and emotional engagement are the competing demands that translators must meet. When institutional incentives favor sensationalism, translators face systemic pressure to compromise accuracy, leading to ethical distress and professional burnout. Responsibility is diffused across translators, editors, and media organizations, creating a structure of shared irresponsibility where no actor feels fully accountable for cumulative distortions. This diminishes the professional autonomy of translators as well as the caliber of media translation.

Recommendations for the Improvement of Political Translation Practices in the Media

The findings of the study point to the need for reform across multiple levels of professional and institutional practice concerning the translation of political discourse in the media. The recommendations presented below are meant to improve public trust in multilingual political communication, ethical accountability, and translation accuracy.

Professional Practice Level: Specialized training modules on translating political discourse are considered crucial in the field of journalism education. In order to prepare future professionals to handle the unique difficulties that arise when translating politically sensitive texts, such training should cover both technical proficiency and the ethical aspects of translational mediation. Establishing clear editorial procedures that differentiate between editorial commentary, summarized translation, and verbatim translation would be advantageous for media organizations. Transparency can be improved and informed news consumption facilitated by the introduction of visual or paratextual indicators that identify the type of mediation involved. Peer review processes or back-translation verification before publication can be used to protect politically sensitive content from unintentional or intentional distortions, enhancing institutional credibility. To help rebuild audience trust, transparent and easily accessible correction procedures should be put in place to recognize and address serious translation errors as soon as they are found.

Institutional Level: Sustaining high-quality political discourse mediation requires media organizations to elevate the professional standing and decision-making power of their translators. Increased professional autonomy for translators may lessen their vulnerability to editorial pressures that promote sloppy rendering. To guarantee logical workflows and reduce interpretive conflict, translators, journalists, and editors must all have their roles clearly defined. A more impartial

evaluation of professional output might result from the creation of translation quality assessment metrics that are incorporated into performance evaluation systems. Beyond efficiency-based metrics like speed or cost-effectiveness, such metrics should acknowledge the multifaceted nature of translation.

Professional Association Level: Establishing ethical guidelines for the journalistic translation of political discourse is a major responsibility of professional translation associations. The creation of sector-specific guidelines that address the moral conundrums at the nexus of journalism and translation would offer practitioners organized assistance in difficult decision-making situations. Initiatives for ongoing professional development that concentrate on translating media and political discourse are equally important. To ensure continued professional competence, these programs should introduce practitioners to current theoretical developments, changing practices, and ethical discussions. Similar to press councils in journalism, the creation of public reporting mechanisms for translation quality issues would increase public accountability and offer formal avenues for resolving grievances or disagreements.

Policy Level: By including instruction on translation in media literacy programs, the general public would be better able to comprehend translation as an act of interpretation rather than a neutral conveyance of meaning. Fostering critical engagement with multilingual news content requires this awareness. Requirements for the unambiguous labeling of translated content and the explicit disclosure of the translation methodology used (such as paraphrasing, summarized rendering, or verbatim translation) may be taken into consideration at the regulatory level. By taking such steps, transparency would be improved and audiences would be able to assess how language mediation functions in political communication.

A crucial contribution to democratic communication is the support of systematic studies on the quality of translation in political journalism. Long-term observation in a variety of contexts and language pairs may offer empirical support for the development of evidence-based policy. Collaborations between media organizations and translation studies academics would further foster knowledge sharing, make it easier to apply research findings to professional settings, and guarantee that scholarly research continues to be in line with modern problems.

Academic Research Level: Further research is required to deepen understanding of translation practices in political journalism. Comprehensive corpus-based analyses covering several languages, eras, and media systems may reveal common patterns and provide suggestions for the establishment of broadly applicable theoretical frameworks. Studies that focus on the perceptions and interpretations of readers and viewers of translated political discourse are also crucial. The level of public awareness

about translational communication and its impact on political understanding could be clarified by such reception-oriented research.

A more comprehensive perspective would also be supported by longitudinal and comparative techniques. Longitudinal research could track the way translational norms have changed in response to changing political, technological, or professional conditions, while comparative studies may examine whether comparable patterns of distortion exist in other settings of asymmetrical power relations or historical tension. When combined, these methods would promote a more thorough comprehension of the mechanisms controlling how political discourse is translated in the media.

Conclusions

This study indicates that political discourse translation serves as an ideological reconstruction mechanism that has quantifiable effects on emotional valence, rhetorical impact, public opinion, and diplomatic relations. Greek media translations intensify negative affect, eliminate nuance, shift register from technocratic to populist, and convert structurally complex statements into categorical assertions, according to consistent patterns found through a systematic analysis of five cases spanning ten years of German-Greek political communication.

These patterns reflect institutionally embedded practices influenced by audience expectations, editorial policies, time constraints, and the structural placement of translators within media organizations rather than being the result of isolated translation errors. They function in the larger framework of asymmetric power dynamics within the European Union and historical tensions between Germany and Greece, especially in the wake of the Eurozone crisis.

The research results help us understand how combining several frameworks—performativity theory, narrative theory, frame analysis, and affective studies—can be useful in understanding translation as political praxis. Translation is more than just a language translation; it has a systematic impact on how people view political figures, laws, and events by reconstructing meaning within interpretive frameworks specific to the target culture. Because Greek translations contribute to affective economies that consistently heighten the negative valence associated with German political discourse, the affective dimension of this reconstruction proves especially significant in influencing Greek public sentiment toward Germany and European integration.

There are important ethical and democratic ramifications to these findings. In a European political arena that is becoming more interconnected and where cross-border cooperation and understanding are essential for effective governance, systematic translation distortion of political discourse threatens the foundations of informed democratic debate. Through representations that may

differ significantly from source statements, citizens' perceptions of foreign political actors and policies are mediated, heightening polarization, eroding trust, and fostering avoidable conflict.

In political communication, translation is never neutral; rather, it is an intrinsically political act that necessitates alertness, critical awareness, and ethical dedication. The stakes of translation practice rise in tandem with the speed at which political discourse crosses linguistic boundaries. The academic community, professional associations, media organizations, and policy-makers must approach translation with full awareness of its capacity to shape public consciousness, influence diplomatic relations, and structure the possibilities for democratic politics in multilingual contexts.

The German-Greek political translation case sheds light on more general dynamics that define political communication in asymmetrical power and historically tense environments across Europe and beyond. Translation quality across Europe's linguistic boundaries becomes more and more important for the European project itself as European integration progresses, refugee flows spark political controversy, economic crises necessitate coordinated responses, and nationalist movements challenge supranational governance.

Although this study has documented systematic patterns of emotional intensification and ideological reconstruction in Greek media translations of German political discourse, the implications are not limited to this particular case. Similar dynamics probably influence the flow of political discourse across national boundaries in Poland, Italy, Hungary, and other places, with similar implications for cooperative governance and understanding. In the global context, political discourse from Beijing, Moscow, and Washington is translated and circulated globally, undergoing similar affective and ideological reconstruction processes that have geopolitical implications.

Understanding translation as political praxis—as active meaning-making work with material consequences—is therefore essential not only for translation scholars but for anyone concerned with democratic politics in multilingual, interconnected contexts. One empirical perspective on these dynamics has been offered by this study. There is still much to be done to build the theoretical frameworks, methodological instruments, and institutional mechanisms required to guarantee that translation promotes democratic values of accuracy, transparency, and understanding between parties rather than escalating and reproducing political disputes.

The quality and ethics of translation become even more important in a time of increased political polarization, a rise in nationalism, and threats to liberal democratic institutions. Translation can escalate conflict, deepen miscommunication, and reinforce us-them dichotomies, or it can be a tool for mutual understanding and cooperation across differences. The decision between these options rests not in translation technology but rather in the professional practices, institutional arrangements,

ethical commitments, and critical literacy that influence the creation, dissemination, and consumption of translation.

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