

Nigerian Journalist's Strategies for Overcoming Language Barriers in International News Reporting: A Study of Channels Television

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Abstract:

Language is critical in producing and disseminating international news, as journalists must gather and interpret information across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This qualitative study, anchored in Gatekeeping and Framing Theory, used in-depth interviews with five Channels Television editorial staff to examine how Nigerian journalists handle language barriers in international reporting. Findings show barriers include interpreting foreign-language documents, understanding culturally embedded expressions, verifying non-English sources, and communicating with foreign-language interviewees. Journalist's counter these with machine translation tools, multilingual professional networks, international wire services, editorial review, and AI-assisted verification platforms. Though these strategies improve accuracy and efficiency, they're limited by deadlines, funding, inadequate language training, and dependence on external intermediaries. The study concludes language barriers still reduce the quality and depth of international reporting in Nigerian newsrooms, and recommends investment in language training, multilingual verification systems, and cross-cultural communication skills to boost credibility.

Keywords:

Language barriers, international journalism, news reporting, Channels Television, gatekeeping, Nigeria

I. Introduction

International news coverage involves communication across different languages and cultures. Journalists are therefore expected to interpret and present foreign information accurately to their audience. In the modern media environment, international news coverage involves communication across different languages and cultures, requiring journalists to accurately interpret and present foreign information to their audience. The dominance of English as a language of digital journalism and international communication has created structural challenges for journalists from non-Anglophone countries. Nkoala (2020) observed that institutionalized monolingual cultures in journalism education exacerbate these issues, while Federici (2020) noted the politicization of multilingualism in media discourses globally. Against this backdrop, Nigerian journalists face mounting pressure to develop strategies that overcome language barriers in order to produce credible, balanced, and globally competitive news reports (Guanah et al., 2026).

A foreign journalist might be confined to official accounts and overlook grassroots accounts, which would provide balanced coverage. Technological interpreters like translation software have surfaced but remain ineffective in contextual meaning, local lingo, and regional

accents. Therefore, the behavior of English-speaking journalists in foreign countries has led to the introduction of various coping mechanisms such as learning the simplest form of language, making local collaborations, or using translators intensively. Even with these strategies, the constraints caused by language are still seen in the way international news is framed (Ademosu et al., 2025). The issue of language obstacles is therefore not merely a matter of inconvenience in terms of logistics, rather it is a structural issue of dishonesty, superficiality, and fidelity of the news generated to reach the global market. With journalism trying to expand past national borders, there is an interest in critically analyzing the effects of language restrictions on reporting practice. This present study is thus intended to explore the Nigerian Journalists' Strategies for Overcoming Language Barriers in International News Reporting.

Problem Statement

International news coverage involves journalists operating in complicated linguistic landscapes, especially when dealing with sources, institutions, and audiences with different cultural backgrounds. In the case of Nigerian journalists working in this globalised information economy, language barriers have been a persistent challenge whose effects negatively affect the representations of facts, editorial freedom, and the global representation of African narratives. The structural and institutional aspects of these language restrictions are supported by empirical research in Africa and other parts of the world. Nkoala (2024) notes that in an environment where technology is well-developed, the practice of multilingual communication is still not properly supported. Likewise, Jain, Iyengar and Vaishya (2022) demonstrate that the dominance of English in knowledge propagation imposes systemic discriminatory impacts on non-English-speaking authors.

Gondwe (2022) also notes that training programmes provided to African journalists tend to incorporate geopolitical and linguistic biases, which define the way reporters perceive and report global events. This brings up the issue of editorial independence wherein the mastery of language is mixed with ideological interference. Also, technological and institutional constraints, which impede African-language media, are noted in Tshabangu and Salawu (2022). Understanding these strategies is therefore crucial for enhancing Nigeria's journalistic presence in international media spaces. Channels Television was selected as the case study for this research because of its involvement in local and international news coverage.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guide the study to:

- i. Examine the nature of language barriers encountered by Nigerian journalists in international news reporting at Channels Television.
- ii. Identify the strategies used by journalists at Channels Television to overcome language barriers in international news reporting.
- iii. Assess the effectiveness of the strategies adopted in ensuring accurate and balanced international news reporting.
- iv. Determine the challenges faced by journalists in the process of overcoming language barriers in international reporting.

Operational Definition of Terms

Nigerian Journalists: These refer to media professionals in Nigeria involved in gathering, writing, editing, and disseminating news and information to the public.

Strategies: These are methods, techniques, or approaches adopted by journalists to overcome challenges associated with language differences in international news reporting.

Language Barriers: These refer to communication difficulties arising from differences in language, interpretation, translation, vocabulary, and cultural expressions during international news reporting.

International News Reporting: This refers to the process of gathering, interpreting, and presenting news events occurring outside Nigeria for Nigerian audiences.

Channels Television: Channels Television refers to a Nigerian media organization selected as the case study for this research because of its involvement in local and international news coverage.

II. Research Methods

2.1 Language Barriers in International Journalism

International journalism depends heavily on effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Journalists covering events beyond their national contexts often interact with sources, institutions, and audiences whose languages differ from their own. Such situations create communication challenges that may affect the quality, accuracy, and credibility of news reports. Language barriers extend beyond the inability to understand words. They involve difficulties in interpreting meanings embedded in cultural expressions, idioms, metaphors, and social contexts. Piller (2017) argues that language differences can disrupt the transfer of information by limiting mutual understanding between communicators. For journalists, these limitations may result in inaccurate interpretations of interviews, official documents, and eyewitness accounts.

The challenge becomes more pronounced in international reporting, where journalists must often work under strict deadlines while relying on information generated in foreign languages. Mutsvairo and Ekeanyanwu (2021) observe that international correspondents frequently depend on translators, interpreters, and local contacts to access information. While these intermediaries facilitate communication, they may also introduce errors, omissions, or unintended biases into the reporting process (Aondover & Ademosu, 2025). Language barriers can also affect news verification. In an era characterised by digital information flows and cross-border communication, journalists increasingly rely on online content originating from multilingual sources. The inability to evaluate information in its original language may complicate fact-checking efforts and increase susceptibility to misinformation. Consequently, language competence has become an important component of contemporary international journalism.

2.2 Strategies for Overcoming Language Barriers

Journalists employ a variety of strategies to manage linguistic challenges. One common approach is the use of interpreters and translators. These professionals assist journalists in conducting interviews, translating documents, and navigating unfamiliar cultural contexts. However, studies suggest that excessive dependence on intermediaries may compromise journalistic autonomy and create additional layers of interpretation between reporters and sources (Aondover & Obasi, 2025). Technological innovations have also transformed language management in journalism. Machine translation platforms such as Google Translate and DeepL enable journalists to obtain rapid translations of foreign-language materials. Although these tools improve efficiency, researchers caution that automated translations often struggle with contextual meanings, cultural references, and politically sensitive content.

Another strategy involves collaboration with international news agencies. Organisations such as Reuters, Agence France-Presse (AFP), and the Associated Press provide multilingual reporting services that allow local newsrooms to access foreign information through translated content. While this approach expands access to global news, it may also encourage dependence on external editorial perspectives. Professional networking represents an additional mechanism

for overcoming language barriers (Mohammed & Aondover, 2025). Journalists frequently consult multilingual experts, academics, diplomats, and diaspora communities to verify information and interpret culturally specific issues. Such networks provide contextual knowledge that is often absent in automated translation systems.

2.3 Gatekeeping Theory

This study is anchored in Gatekeeping Theory. Originally developed by Kurt Lewin and later adapted to journalism studies, the theory explains how information passes through a series of selection and filtering processes before reaching audiences. Journalists, editors, and media organisations function as gatekeepers who determine what information is included, excluded, or emphasised in news content. Within the context of international reporting, language barriers introduce an additional layer of gatekeeping. Information originating in foreign languages often passes through translators, interpreters, wire agencies, and digital translation tools before reaching journalists (Maradun & Aondover, 2025). Each stage creates opportunities for meaning to be altered, simplified, or lost. Consequently, language functions not only as a communication medium but also as a gatekeeping mechanism that influences news construction.

2.4 Framing Theory

The study also draws on Framing Theory, which explains how media organisations construct meaning by emphasising certain aspects of reality while downplaying others. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting elements of a perceived reality and making them more salient within a communication text. Language barriers influence framing by shaping journalists' understanding of events (Aondover, 2024). When reporters rely on translated information, cultural interpretations and linguistic choices may affect how stories are presented. Misinterpretations of foreign-language statements can alter the framing of political events, conflicts, or social issues. Consequently, language competence becomes essential for ensuring balanced and contextually accurate reporting. The integration of Gatekeeping Theory and Framing Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how language barriers affect international journalism and how journalists attempt to manage these challenges in professional practice.

2.5 Empirical Review

Nkoala (2024) examined How radio influences indigenous language podcasts in South Africa: A case study of Epokothweni and iLukuluku. Even though radio continues to be the most dominant media platform for black South Africans, the rise in indigenous language podcasts marks a significant milestone in the South African media landscape for speakers of these languages who have previously been afforded limited agency in the sector. The place of podcasts in South Africa must be understood from the rich 100 years of radio in a context where oral media serves as a central platform for developing linguistic and cultural identities. his qualitative study employs purposive sampling to consider the production practices of South African indigenous language podcasts using Epokothweni and iLukuluku as two case studies. In considering these two podcasts, the study highlights the content creators of Epokothweni and iLukuluku as a model of how South African indigenous language podcasters draw on radio as an established storytelling platform for South African indigenous language speakers that allow them to use their podcast platforms in socio-culturally relevant ways. Through this adaptation, radio continues to exert an enormous influence on public responses and societal dynamics (Ogunyemi, Fadeyi & Emeke 2025). However, this paper argues that these platforms allow black South Africans to tell stories that have been neglected and silenced, allowing them to articulate the world and their experiences involving economic and scientific issues. The view is that indigenous language podcasting is set to increase as content producers greatly appreciate engagement with

black audiences, which are currently under-prioritised in a sector dominated by English-language outfits.

Jain, Iyengar and Vaishya (2022) examined the English language a barrier to the non-English-speaking authors in academic publishing. Academic publication in scientific journals is an integral part of a clinician's professional journey (Aondover et al., 2025). Writing a publishable scientific article can be a formidable task for a beginner and to even some established academics. It is a challenging but rewarding endeavour. Apart from being desirable criteria on speciality training application forms, generating an idea for an article into a well-written manuscript, struggling through multiple draft revisions, submission, receiving peer-review feedback and acceptance, strengthens our methodology, writing and communication skills. It prepares a clinician to critically interpret the published literature, an essential skill for all physicians, as evidence-based medicine is the backbone of clinical practice. It also enhances knowledge on recent advances and management options about a particular condition which can then be applied in the care of patients.

The DIAzePAM (*Difficultés des Auteurs à la Publication d'Articles Médicaux*) French survey highlights difficulties experienced by researchers preparing articles for biomedical journals. One of the main limiting factors found in the study has been limited skills in English writing and editing. Apart from other reasons for publication bias, poor use of English is also cited as a reason for the rejection of submitted articles. This does not appear surprising since 90% of international journals are published in the English language. Analysis of 70 orthopaedic journals indexed in Medline assessing the country of origin of publications showed 50% of journals were published in the US, 40% in the UK and only 10% from the East and Latin America. This over-representation of UK-English-based and US-English-based publications in the literature may be one of the reasons for language bias and subsequent rejection of a manuscript from non-English practising authors.

Gondwe (2022) examined African journalists at crossroads: Examining the impact of China, US, and the UK's short-journalism training programs offered to African journalists. This study examined the impact of short-term journalism training courses offered to African journalists by China, the US, and the UK. The purpose was to examine how such trainings shape editorial independence, culture, and institutional autonomy of African journalism. Through the lenses of 28 journalists interviewed across the Sub-Saharan continent, we demonstrated that, unlike the US and Britain who were reluctant to openly show their influence, the Chinese government was directly involved, and the training focused on exposing journalists to the Chinese culture, and how to report China. Journalists who attended the Chinese training program indicated that China controlled the process of their news writing and reporting, and those who adhered were incentivized. On the other hand, the British curriculum focused on how to criticize and challenge the African leaders and their governments. The US training program emphasized the questions of ethics (Aondover et al, 2025).

Tshabangu and Salawu (2022) examine Technology innovation and digital journalism practice by indigenous African-language newspapers: The case of uMthunywa in Zimbabwe. This paper analyses institutional, contextual and human agency factors that affect technology innovation and adoption of digital journalism practices by indigenous African-language newspapers focusing on uMthunywa, Zimbabwe. uMthunywa, a legacy newspaper, positions itself as a digital-only news outlet after it was forced to stop printing in May 2020 due to a hotchpotch of political economy challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. The conceptual framework of digital journalism is used to provide a benchmark against which to measure uMthunywa's adoption of new digital journalism practices. This study is also guided by

the Critical Theory of Technology, which challenges the universalization of technological innovation by arguing that technologies are socially and contextually biased.

In contrast, Ogunyemi and Fadeyi (2026) present a different view in their work on GenAI and Nigeria's emerging media economy, positing that technological innovations such as GenAI represent a transformative tool in the content production process. The acceptance of AI-generated content is strongly influenced by perceived reliability, transparency, and ethical governance mechanisms (Glikson & Woolley, 2020 cited in Ogunyemi & Fadeyi 2026). Similarly, studies from other contexts show this global shift. For instance, in China, the rapid growth of digital technology and increasing internet usage have driven the convergence of radio and television media, as traditional broadcasters swiftly adapt to streaming and on-demand platforms to expand their audience and remain competitive (Zhongua, Shahizan & Sannusi, 2023 cited in Ogunyemi, Fadeyi & Emmanuel, 2025). However, Based on interviews and virtual ethnography, the paper finds that technological innovation at uMthunywa is very limited and there is a selective adoption of new digital journalism practices that contribute to the newspaper's survival. It is argued that a conservative organisational culture punctuated by technophobia and poor capitalisation are some of the barriers to technological innovation while lack of requisite digital skills by staff limits the adoption of new practices. The article contributes to debates about journalism innovation and the practice of digital journalism in Africa by indigenous-language newspapers (Aondover et al., 2026).

(2022) examined Indigenous language newspapers and the digital media conundrum in Africa. The future of journalism is being shaped by the convergence of technology and societal shifts. For indigenous language press in Africa battling to stay afloat amidst stiff competition from traditional media, the pervasive and rapidly encroaching digital transformation holds both opportunities and potential threats. Using a qualitative approach, this paper examined the implication of the shift to digital media for the future of the indigenous language newspaper in Africa and identifies opportunities for its sustainability within the framework of the theories of technological determinism and alternative media. The analysis indicates poor funding, shrinking patronage, and competition from traditional and social media as the major factors facing indigenous newspapers. It emerged that for indigenous language newspapers to thrive in the rapidly changing and technology-driven world they need to not only adapt to the digital revolution but also explore a business model that combines a futuristic outlook with a practical approach.

Chibuwe and Salawu (2020) examined Mainstream English Language Press Journalists' Perceptions Towards the Indigenous-Language Press in Zimbabwe. Indigenous-language media in Zimbabwe and Africa have not elicited as much academic scrutiny as the English-language media. However, there is an emerging scholarship that focuses on indigenous-language media in Zimbabwe. This scholarship focuses more on audiences and texts. This paper takes a different dimension by interrogating the perceptions of English-language newspaper journalists towards indigenous language newspapers, indigenous language newspaper journalists and journalism. The paper, grounded in decoloniality, seeks to demonstrate that coloniality is a key determinant of the poor performance of indigenous-language newspapers in Zimbabwe. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with selected mainstream English-language newspaper journalists. The findings demonstrate that the journalists view a career in indigenous-language media as not being lucrative, less respectable, and leading nowhere; and view the indigenous-language newspapers journalists as "rejects". The content of the indigenous-language newspapers is generally viewed as trivial and therefore inconsequential, while indigenous languages are viewed as difficult. The paper concludes that these views are reflective of the pervasive nature of

coloniality and western modernity's "othering" of non-western realities and knowledge (Aondover et al., 2025).

Mutsvairo (2021) examined *Different, but the same: How the Global South is challenging the hegemonic epistemologies and ontologies of Westernized/Western-Centric journalism studies*. Nkoala (2020) examined Student perceptions of multilingualism and the culture of communication in journalism studies in higher education. This study explored how journalism students, at a university of technology in South Africa, perceive the multilingual teaching and learning strategies, and their influence on the culture of communication in this discipline. The study employed a mixed methods sequential design, beginning with an online survey, followed by focus group discussions. A semantic thematic analysis was undertaken using a 'top-down' approach based on themes identified through James Carey's theoretical framework of communication as culture. The findings are that even though students have been exposed to various multilingual teaching and learning strategies, they perceive the way language is used in this discipline as perpetuating a culture of communication that is still predominantly monolingual.

They see the multilingual interventions as being inadequate in addressing the challenges created by this particular culture of communication. They expressed mixed views on the influence of multilingualism on their academic performance. The culture of communication used in this discipline continues to make students feel out of place in lectures and higher education as a whole and perpetuates certain studentlecturer power dynamics. For journalism students in particular, this has further implications in how they perceive their professional prospects as aspiring communications practitioners (Obasi & Msughter, 2023).

Federici (2020) examined "Language barrier" in UK newspapers 2010-2020: Figurative meaning, migration, and language needs. This article investigates the use of the expression "language barrier" in online and printed newspapers in the United Kingdom between 2010 and 2020. The analysis focuses on occurrences published in news items dealing with migration and language needs in multilingual UK contexts. The usage of the expression is discussed referring to policies addressing language needs of long-term and recent culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Language policy changes in the UK over the same period indicate an adoption of progressively negative connotations of the concept of "language barrier", which reshaped language provision thus creating vulnerabilities for CALD communities.

Being able to access information in a language that is understood in crisis settings relies on language policies recognising the linguistic diversity of the local population and accepting the need for language service provision for transient resident and/or recent arrivals in a country. The study focuses on the parallel between an increased frequency of use of the term in the UK media and a gradual dismantling of language service provision for the country's CALD communities. Mapping the usage of "language barrier" leads the article to reflect on the politicization of the discourse on multilingualism, as historically the UK pursued ever stricter migration policies, leading to policy-making choices that risk increasing societal vulnerability.

III. Result and Discussion

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore how Nigerian journalists navigate language barriers in international news reporting (Mohammed et al., 2025). A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled an in-depth examination of journalists' experiences, perceptions, and professional practices within the newsroom environment. The

study was conducted at Channels Television, one of Nigeria's leading broadcast media organisations with extensive involvement in international news coverage (Aondover et al., 2025). Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in news gathering, editing, and international news production. Five editorial personnel participated in the study, comprising senior editors, reporters, and digital content producers.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview format allowed participants to discuss their experiences with language barriers, the strategies they employ to overcome such barriers, the effectiveness of these strategies, and the challenges that persist despite their use. Interviews were conducted in a manner that encouraged detailed responses while maintaining consistency with the study objectives. The collected data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. This approach facilitated the identification of recurring themes and patterns across participants' responses. The findings were subsequently organised according to the study objectives and interpreted within the framework of Gatekeeping Theory and Framing Theory. To ensure trustworthiness, the interview guide was reviewed by communication scholars and journalism researchers (Aondover et al., 2025). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

The findings from the interviews are organised under four major thematic clusters corresponding to the research objectives.

Theme 1: Nature of Language Barriers Encountered in International Reporting

The first interview questions addressed Objective One: identifying the specific types and dimensions of language barriers Channels Television editorial staff face when sourcing, processing, and reporting international news from non-English speaking countries. All five respondents confirmed language barriers are a significant, recurring operational challenge in international news work. However, the nature of these barriers varied in complexity and context based on respondents' roles and specialisations.

Respondent 1, the Senior International Editor, said the most persistent barrier is interpreting official foreign-language documents, including governmental press releases, judicial rulings, diplomatic correspondence, and policy documents from countries like France, China, Russia, and several Arabic-speaking nations.

"When we receive official documents from French-speaking West African governments Francophone countries like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, or Mali the initial drafts are in French. Even when machine translation is applied, we often lose technical precision, especially in legal or diplomatic texts. The translated version can say something subtly different from what the original document actually conveys, and in international journalism, that subtlety can be the difference between accuracy and misinformation."

This concern resonates with the established scholarship on translation fidelity in news reporting. Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) observed that translation in journalism is not merely a linguistic act but a gatekeeping and editorial decision, wherein choices made during translation inevitably reshape meaning, context, and emphasis. Respondent 1's experience illustrates precisely this risk in the Nigerian newsroom.

Respondent 2, the Foreign Desk Reporter, raised the dimension of idiomatic and culturally specific language as a major barrier. He explained that many of his international sources particularly from Latin America, East Asia, and the Middle East communicate using local idioms, proverbs, or culturally embedded expressions that do not translate meaningfully into English:

"I once interviewed a Brazilian civil society leader over a video call with an interpreter. In his response, he used a particular Portuguese idiom that, when translated, produced a phrase that made no logical sense in English. The interpreter gave a literal rendition, which I could tell was wrong. We had to follow up twice before we got a clearer meaning, and by that time, deadline pressure had set in. We published a version that was grammatically correct but culturally shallow."

This scenario demonstrates the intersection of linguistic and cultural barriers, an issue extensively theorised in cross-cultural communication literature. Hall's (1976) high-context and low-context communication theory is instructive here: in high-context cultures, meaning is deeply embedded in situational, relational, and cultural cues that cannot be captured by word-for-word translation. Respondent 2's experience underscores how this communicative complexity manifests in journalistic practice.

Theme 2: Strategies Used to Overcome Language Barriers

Theme 2 focused on the strategies Channels Television editorial staff use to manage language barriers identified in Theme 1. Findings showed a mix of technological, professional, and institutional approaches. All five respondents most frequently cited machine translation tools, particularly Google Translate and DeepL. While these tools helped generate rough understandings of foreign-language texts, respondents were consistently skeptical of their reliability for professional journalism, especially with nuanced or politically sensitive content. Respondent 1 explained the dual nature of machine translation in the newsroom:

"We use Google Translate as a first-pass tool. It gives us a general idea of what a foreign document is about, which helps us decide whether it is newsworthy enough to invest further effort in. But for any story that will go to print or be featured prominently on our website, we must do additional verification. Machine translation is a starting point, not an end point."

This aligns with industry observations documented by Bielsa and Bassnett (2009). But human editors must still contextualise, verify, and refine the content. Journalism studies flag machine translation errors as an ongoing risk. The risk is higher for complex languages like Chinese, Arabic, or Yoruba.

Respondent 2 described a more relational strategy: cultivating a personal network of multilingual contacts across different countries, including academics, diplomats, NGO workers, and diaspora professionals based in Nigeria who can serve as impromptu interpreters or cultural informants:

"Over time, I have built relationships with Nigerian professionals who have lived abroad or who have postgraduate degrees from non-English countries. When I need to verify something from a Chinese or French document, I have people I can call informally. It is not always institutionally arranged it is personal professional capital accumulated over years of reporting."

This informal network strategy reflects what Hannerz (2004) describes as the development of "cultural competence" among international correspondents an accumulated ability to interpret foreign signals through trusted human intermediaries who bridge linguistic and cultural divides.

Theme 3: Effectiveness of the Strategies in Ensuring Accurate and Balanced Reporting

Theme three covers Objective Three: evaluating how effective strategies are for accuracy and balance in international reporting. Respondents critically assessed their strategies and gave concrete examples of successes and failures in reporting quality. The consensus was that strategies are moderately effective, preventing major errors but falling short of the cultural and linguistic depth premium journalism requires. Respondent 1 gave a key example showing cross-referencing strategies worked effectively.

"Most of the primary source material from countries like China, Iran, or Russia exists primarily in their national languages on domestic platforms Weibo, TASS, Press TV, or state broadcaster websites. Even when Google Translate is applied, we sometimes get fragments that are politically loaded in ways the translation does not reflect. The platform context is lost in translation, and understanding whether a statement is propaganda, satire, or factual reporting requires cultural literacy we sometimes lack."

This example powerfully demonstrates the analytical value of multilingual cross-referencing as a strategy for accuracy assurance. The distinction between "preliminary declaration" and "announcement" carries significant editorial weight in the context of a political crisis, and the failure to capture this nuance could have materially misrepresented the unfolding situation to Punch's readership. Respondent 5 commented on the effectiveness of the newer digital verification tools:

"These AI-assisted platforms are still developing. They are better at helping us identify what a story is generally about than they are at ensuring the finer shades of meaning are preserved. I would say they are effective for triage sorting through large volumes of foreign-language content to identify what is worth pursuing but not yet reliable enough for final verification of sensitive international stories."

Newsroom strategies are adequate for routine international reporting but fail under time pressure, resource limits, and complex cultural language. Combining strategies works better than using them alone. A layered approach integrating technology, human expertise, wire agencies, and editorial review ensures the most robust quality.

Theme 4: Challenges Faced While Overcoming Language Barriers

Theme four covers Objective Four: challenges journalists face after adopting language barrier strategies. It revealed persistent, structural obstacles showing the problem is systemic at Channels Television. The most cited challenge was editorial deadline pressure in 24-hour digital news cycles, which Respondent 4 directly highlighted.

"The strategies we have cross-referencing, calling multilingual contacts, waiting for a second editorial opinion all require time. International stories, especially breaking ones, do not afford that luxury. The moment we are behind on a major story, our digital traffic suffers and our editors ask questions. That pressure creates a subconscious incentive to take translation shortcuts, and that is a genuine risk to accuracy."

This finding is consistent with the broader scholarship on newsroom time culture. Schlesinger (1987) found deadline pressure shapes journalism and can override verification. With language barriers, time pressure raises error risk by cutting the extra time translated content needs for verification.

Respondent 5 discussed the challenge of verifying multilingual sources in an era of widespread disinformation:

"Fake news operates across language barriers very effectively. A doctored document in Arabic or a fabricated social media post in Chinese is no easier to verify than one in English and it is arguably harder, because fewer people in the newsroom can read it critically. We have had instances where foreign-language content circulating on social media turned out to be satire or deliberate disinformation that we almost published as fact."

Respondent 5 highlights disinformation in multilingual spaces, or "linguistic laundering": using foreign languages to hide false content origins before English translation (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). This is especially tough for Channels Television due to limited multilingual verification capacity. Overall, the newsroom faces resource limits, time pressure, tech flaws, and geopolitical complexity. Theme 2 strategies help but don't fully close the gap between what's possible and structural constraints.

The four thematic clusters show that language barriers at Channels Television are structural and cultural, not just technical translation issues. Theme 1 reveals barriers extend beyond vocabulary to legal-diplomatic precision and culturally embedded idioms. Respondent 1's concern that French official documents lose "technical precision" in translation confirms Bielsa and Bassnett's (2009) argument that journalistic translation is a gatekeeping act that reshapes meaning, context, and emphasis. Respondent 2's struggle with Portuguese idioms illustrates Hall's (1976) high-context/low-context theory: in high-context cultures, meaning is embedded in cultural cues that literal translation cannot capture. This extends Nigerian journalism scholarship by showing African newsrooms face the same epistemic risks as Western outlets, but with fewer institutional resources to mitigate them. Themes 2 and 3 show Channels Television uses a hybrid model: machine translation for triage, personal multilingual networks for verification, and cross-referencing for accuracy. This aligns with Hannerz's (2004) concept of "cultural competence" among correspondents who use personal professional capital to bridge divides. Yet respondents' skepticism of Google Translate and AI tools supports existing journalism studies that flag acute risks of machine translation errors in politically sensitive texts and complex languages like Chinese and Arabic. Strategies are "moderately effective" but fail under pressure, confirming no single tool ensures fidelity. While a layered approach combining technology, human expertise, and editorial review is most robust, Channels TV's implementation is constrained by informality and resource gaps. Theme 4 reveals systemic obstacles remain after strategies are adopted. Deadline pressure in 24-hour cycles, highlighted by Respondent 4, validates Schlesinger's (1987) finding that time is a structural determinant that can override verification norms. This risk is magnified with translated content requiring extra verification steps. Respondent 5's account of disinformation in multilingual spaces reflects Wardle and Derakhshan's (2017) information disorder framework. While the term "linguistic laundering" captures the problem, Channels Television's limited multilingual verification capacity makes it especially vulnerable. This gap is under-addressed in African media literature, which often emphasizes source access over linguistic verification. Channels Television operates at the intersection of resource limitations, time pressure, technological imperfection, and geopolitical complexity. Its adaptive strategies reflect global best practices identified by Bielsa and Bassnett (2009) and Hannerz (2004), but their effectiveness is bounded by local institutional realities. The gap between "strategically possible"

and “structurally constrained” defines international reporting practice here. This study extends theory by showing that language barriers in Global South newsrooms are not just linguistic deficits but symptoms of broader asymmetries in global information infrastructure, verification capacity, and newsroom economics.

IV. Conclusion

The study finds language barriers are a major, persistent problem in Channels Television’s international reporting, affecting quality, accuracy, and credibility. Journalists use pragmatic but adaptive responses, limited by weak institutional support, training, and funding. There is no coherent organizational policy. The findings stress that language is central to news production and that gatekeeping, cross-cultural communication, and global news flow theories explain its impact. Stronger institutional commitment to multilingual and intercultural capacity is needed for accurate reporting in Nigeria’s global engagement.

Recommendations

1. Channels TV should run regular language and intercultural training, focusing on French and Arabic.
2. Hire multilingual correspondents or translation experts for professional language support.
3. Invest in professional translation tech with clear editorial guidelines.
4. Create formal verification protocols for translated/foreign-language content.
5. Support international exchanges to build journalists’ language and cultural competence.
6. Journalism schools should integrate foreign language and intercultural communication into curricula.
7. Professional bodies like the Nigerian Press Council and NUJ should set rules on machine translation and foreign-language source use.

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