

# The Challenge of News Translation from English into Mandinka In Gambia: Colonial Legacies of Translation Processes and Practices

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## Abstract

Understanding the process and the dynamics involved in news translation, as well as the challenges news translators face in my country of origin - The Gambia- has been a long-held goal, considering my background and experience as a former bilingual editor for Kuwait Oil Company and a senior news translator for Al-Watan Daily in Kuwait. The quest to unravel the enigmas surrounding news translation practices has always been a subject of great interest to me. With the intent of proffering pragmatic solutions to the attendant challenges of news translation in the Gambia, my focus is on providing well-researched recommendations. The study specifically seeks to answer questions regarding news translation processes and practices and how they have evolved over time in the Gambia. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the manifold professional and technical obstacles that confront news translators in the Gambia as they endeavour to render news content originally produced in English into Mandinka, which is one of the prominent Indigenous languages. It also delves into the broader linguistic landscape in the Gambia and other colonized territories from an indigenous perspective. Colonialism looms large over my study, considering the fact that news is translated from English, a minority colonial language imposed on the majority speakers of indigenous languages. The legacy of colonialism still lingers, with the news still being read in English first before it gets rendered in indigenous languages.

Using qualitative methodology, my research explores the evolution and importance of news translation in the Gambia and the underlying factors behind the professional and technical challenges that Gambia's news translators continue to wrestle with. Dowling, Lloyd, and Suchet-Pearson (2016) posit that this methodology is employed to comprehend the spatialities, interpretations, and experiences of social life. The undertaken field study has availed me of the

opportunity to have a deeper understanding of some of those challenges and come up with recommendations that might hopefully address them, including language planning, the development of a monolingual Mandinka dictionary, translator training, the development of unique Mandinka writing systems, among others.

My research participants were enthused to participate in the study, affirming that it was the first time ever a researcher approached them to have an idea about the dynamics of their work and include their findings in a thesis—an assertion that sustained the momentum throughout the journey.

## Résumé

Comprendre les processus et les dynamiques impliqués dans la traduction des nouvelles ainsi que les défis auxquels sont confrontés les traducteurs de nouvelles dans mon pays d'origine - la Gambie - a été un objectif de longue date, compte tenu de mes antécédents et de mon expérience en tant qu'ancien rédacteur bilingue pour Kuwait Oil Company et un traducteur principal de nouvelles pour Al-Watan Daily au Koweït. J'ai tenu à me lancer dans ce voyage pour trouver des réponses aux questions persistantes, démystifier les pratiques de la traduction des nouvelles et offrir des recommandations tangibles et pratiques concernant les défis de la traduction de nouvelles en Gambie. L'étude vise spécifiquement à répondre aux questions concernant les processus et les pratiques de la traduction des informations et leur évolution au fil du temps en Gambie. En outre, elle met en lumière les défis professionnels et techniques auxquels sont confrontés les traducteurs d'actualités gambiennes dans le processus de traduction des informations produites en anglais vers le mandingue, l'une des principales langues autochtones, ainsi que la situation linguistique globale en Gambie et dans d'autres pays colonisés dans un contexte autochtone. Le colonialisme occupe une place importante dans mon étude, compte tenu du fait que les nouvelles sont traduites de l'anglais, une langue coloniale minoritaire imposée aux locuteurs majoritaires de langues autochtones. L'héritage du colonialisme persiste, les nouvelles étant toujours lues en anglais avant d'être rendues dans les langues autochtones.

En utilisant une méthodologie qualitative, ma recherche explore l'évolution et l'importance de la traduction de nouvelles en Gambie et les facteurs sous-jacents derrière les défis professionnels et techniques contre lesquels les traducteurs de nouvelles de Gambie continuent de se débattre. Les entretiens, expliquent Dowling, Lloyd, & Suchet-Pearson (2016), sont utilisés pour comprendre les interprétations, les expériences et les spatialités de la vie sociale. L'étude de terrain entreprise

m'a donné l'opportunité d'avoir une meilleure compréhension de certains de ces défis et de proposer des recommandations qui pourraient, je l'espère, les résoudre, y compris la planification linguistique, le développement d'un dictionnaire monolingue mandingue, la formation des traducteurs, le développement de systèmes d'écriture mandingue, entre autres.

Les participants à ma recherche étaient enthousiastes à l'idée de participer à l'étude, affirmant que c'était la première fois qu'un chercheur les approchait pour avoir une idée de la dynamique de leur travail et inclure leurs conclusions dans une thèse - une affirmation qui a soutenu mon élan tout au long du voyage.

## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .....	II
RESUME .....	IV
CHAPTER 1 .....	1
PREFACE TO THE CHALLENGES OF NEWS TRANSLATION .....	1
CHAPTER 2 .....	7
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 Colonization and Africa’s Indigenous Languages .....	7
2.2 Gambia’s Indigenous Languages .....	8
2.3 Mandinka Ethnic Group .....	9
2.3.1 Mandinka Language .....	11
2.4 A Brief History of Press Media in the Gambia.....	24
2.5 History of Translation and Interpretation in the Gambia.....	25
2.5.1 The Controversial Role of Gambia’s Translators/Interpreters .....	28
2.5.2 History and Importance of Mandinka News Translation .....	32
2.5.3 Pioneers of Mandinka News Translation .....	35
2.6 The History of Broadcasting in the Gambia .....	36
2.7 Evolution and Importance of News Translation Research .....	42
2.8 Translation Studies (TS) and Media Studies (MS) .....	49
2.9 Conceptual Issues of News Translation .....	51
2.9.1 Terminological Conundrum!.....	52
2.9.2 Transediting .....	54
2.9.3 News Translator’s Identity and (In)visibility .....	58

2.9.4 The relationship between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) .....	60
2.9.5 Process, Features and Challenges of News Translation .....	62
2.10 Studies on Radio News Translation .....	64
CHAPTER 3 .....	68
Theoretical Framework.....	68
3.1 Skopos Theory .....	68
3.2 Adaptation .....	73
3.3 Sight translation.....	79
CHAPTER 4 .....	84
METHODOLOGY .....	84
4.1 Sample Size .....	87
4.2 Ethics and Confidentiality .....	87
4.3 Sampling Technique and Participants .....	88
4.4 Data Collection Instrument .....	90
4.5. Interview Guide .....	91
4.6 Recruitment scripts.....	91
4.7 Informed Consent Forms.....	91
4.8 Interview Questions for News Translators .....	92
4.9 Interview Questions for The Historian .....	94
4.10 Interview Questions for Former Minister of Information Bemba Tamedou .....	96
4.11 Data Collection.....	98
4.12 Data Analysis .....	98
4.13 Limitations .....	100
CHAPTER 5 .....	102

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	102
5.1 Recruitment of News Translators .....	102
5.2 Language proficiency .....	103
5.3 Training and academic qualifications .....	105
5.4 Motivation .....	108
5.5 The Process of News Translation.....	108
5.5.1 Gambia Radio & Television Services.....	109
5.5.2 King FM .....	110
5.5.3 Paradise TV .....	110
5.5.4 DHK FM .....	111
5.6 Types of News Stories Translated into Mandinka.....	111
5.7 Professional and Technical Challenges of News Translation.....	112
5.7.1 Difficult Terms.....	113
5.7.2 Translation Strategies .....	114
5.7.2.1 Use of dictionaries: .....	115
5.7.2.2 Asking others .....	115
5.7.2.3 Translation by borrowing .....	115
5.7.2.4 Modulation .....	116
5.7.2.5 Paraphrasing .....	117
5.7.2.6 Literal Translation .....	118
5.8 Mistranslation.....	119
5.9 Low Wages.....	120
5.10 Untimely Delivery of News.....	121
5.11 Lack of Respect by Media Fraternity .....	124
5.12 Abuse and Self-censorship .....	125
5.13 Quality Control.....	126

CHAPTER 6 .....	129
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	129
6.1 Language planning: .....	129
6.2 The Development of a Monolingual Mandinka dictionary .....	131
6.3 Translator Training .....	131
6.4 The development of the Ajami Script .....	132
6.5 The adoption of N’ko .....	132
6.6 The establishment of a translation department at the University of the Gambia .....	134
6.7 Broadening the Usage of Indigenous Languages .....	134
6.8 The Creation of Mandinka Academy .....	135
6.9 Conclusion .....	136
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	138
APPENDICES .....	150
Appendix 1: Transcription of interviews .....	150
1.1 Alhagi Musa Manneh- Senior news translator at Gambia Radio & Television Services.....	150
1.2 Madinding Ceesay – Paradise TV news presenter and translator .....	155
1.3 Yousupha Draboe DHK - FM Manager and news translator.....	157
1.4 Momodou Colleey – Paradise TV news presenter and translator .....	164
1.5 Kebba Camara – Former Senior news translator at Paradise FM and King FM.....	166
1.6 Hassoum Ceesay- Veteran Historian and Director-General of National Centre for Arts and Culture.....	176
1.7 Lamin Sanyang – News Translator at King FM .....	183
1.8 Falilou Janko – Producer and news translator at Gambia Radio & Television Services (GRTS) .....	187
1.9 Bemba Tamedou- Veteran broadcaster and former Minister of Information .....	192
1.10 Sally Jeng- Former Paradise TV news translator and current RFI anchor in Banjul .....	206
1.11 Ebrima Jarra Senior Report and news translator at King FM .....	211

<b>1.12 Alhagi Modou Joof .....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>2.1 Interview questions for news translators.....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>2.2 Interview questions for Minister of Information .....</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>224</b>

## Chapter 1

### Preface To the Challenges of News Translation

Colonial powers have imposed their languages on colonial subjects in Africa as the language of administration, commerce, and education, reinforcing a notion that African nations are primitive; hence, knowledge of the colonial language was perceived as a symbol of modernity and enlightenment (Bamgbose, 2011; Sosu, 1992). “Whereas English was now equated with the gate to progress and modernity, African languages came to be seen as barriers to this glittering thing called progress and modernity” (wa Thiong’o, 2018, p.125).

African nations subjected to colonization continue to grapple with the far-reaching ramifications of colonial rule long after they gained independence. Among other things, the news bulletin is still mainly read and written in colonial languages, including English, French, and Portuguese, and then translated into indigenous languages. As a result, a significant portion of Africa’s population, primarily the illiterate, heavily relies on the news translated from colonial languages into their native ones.

In Gambia, translation is crucial in the country's broadcasting systems. This is because more than half of Gambia's population, which is around 2.4 million, rely on news that is translated from English, the colonial language, into various indigenous languages, including Mandinka, which is the most spoken language in the country and is used by 40% of the population. However, there has been a lack of research on the process of news translation in Gambia, which means we have very little information about this particular subject and the approach news translators take to overcome the challenges they face. Bell and Candlin (2016) note that a significant number of studies have focused on translation as a product, with relatively fewer studies delving into the intricacies of the

translation process until recently. The authors asserted that understanding the translation theory is contingent on thoroughly exploring the translation process. The present study seeks to examine the history and evolution of news translation in The Gambia, with a focus on the challenges faced by news translators while translating news from English (source language) to Mandinka (target language), which is one of the major native languages of the country. The study also considers the colonial past and post-colonial context, analyzing the role of translators and interpreters during the colonial era. Moreover, it explores the history of broadcasting and Mandinka news translation in The Gambia and the critical role that news translation plays in disseminating information to the country's largely illiterate population. Ultimately, the study aims to augment our understanding of news translation in The Gambia and provides valuable insights into the indigenous languages, particularly Mandinka.

For my research, I have chosen to focus on translating news into Mandinka because it holds a special status in the Gambia as it is widely spoken as a first language by over 40% of the country's population, including myself. It is worth noting that most news translations in Gambia are from English to the Mandinka language, which highlights its dominant status. In addition, a considerable number of my research participants have attested to the fact that they chose to become Mandinka news translators because the majority of the rural population in Gambia, who predominantly speak Mandinka, rely on such translations to stay informed about current events. Therefore, news translators play a crucial role in educating a significant portion of the population in Gambia and beyond.

It is worth noting that The Gambia is a narrow strip of land that runs alongside the Gambia River. It is about 15 to 30 miles (25 to 50 km) wide on either side of the river and extends almost 300 miles (480 km) inland. The country has a population of approximately 2.4 million people and is

one of Africa's most densely populated countries. The River Gambia runs through the country and has a short coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. Although there are a few towns located upriver, the majority of Gambians live in rural villages. (World Bank 2020; Britannica).

The Gambia, a former British Colony, is the smallest of the mainland African countries, surrounded almost entirely by Senegal except for a small Atlantic coastline. Faal (2014) argues that the borders between Gambia and Senegal are a colonial legacy. The Gambia remained under British rule until 1965, when it gained independence and became a republic in 1970. Nyang (1977) explains that, before independence, Gambia was one of four British colonies along the West African Coast, with the others being Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone.

Before Gambia's independence, the British colonial administration was preoccupied with other pressing issues to resolve elsewhere in the Commonwealth, prompting negotiations on Gambia's autonomy (Sallah, 1990). During the negotiations for Gambia's independence from Britain, the British side was led by Governor-General John Paul. On the other hand, the Gambia was represented by several prominent nationalist statesmen, including Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, who emerged as the dominant spokesperson. He was the leader of the majority People's Progressive Party (PPP) and became the Prime Minister in 1962. Eventually, he led the country to independence in 1965. Jawara became the first President of the Gambia. Gambia remained a stable democracy in a turbulent West African region until 1981, when the country experienced a foiled coup led by the late Kukoi Samba Sanyang. The following year, Sallah added, the Gambia saw a series of successive general elections which continued until 1994, when the democratically elected government of Dawda Jawara was toppled by a group of junior military officers led by Yahya Jammeh, who went on to set up the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) that ruled

the country until 1996. Hughes & Perfect (2006) report that the 1994 bloodless military takeover marked the end of a longstanding multiparty democracy and the fall of former President Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, one of Africa's longest-serving national leaders. The leader of the military junta, Yahya Jammeh, participated in the presidential election held in 1996 and emerged as the winner by defeating the main opposition party, Ousainou Darboe's United Democratic Party (UDP). Jammeh then continued to rule the country with an iron fist until 2016. However, he was finally defeated by Adama Barrow, the 2016 Opposition Coalition flagbearer who was re-elected in December 2021.

The thesis consists of six chapters that aim to examine fundamental questions concerning news translation and the inherent challenges that emerge in the process. The analysis is guided by a set of research questions that seek to shed light on the nuances of this complex process. The study seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on news translation and provide insights into the challenges faced by translators in The Gambia.

- What are news translation processes and practices, and how have they evolved over time in the Gambia?
- What are the professional and technical challenges facing Gambia's news translators in the process of translating news produced in English into Mandinka, one of the key Indigenous languages?
- What is the overall linguistic situation in the Gambia and other colonized countries within an indigenous context?

In Chapter Two, the study delves into the impact of colonization on the indigenous languages of Africa, particularly in the Gambia, as well as the history of press, media, and broadcasting. The

chapter also discusses Mandinka news translation in the Gambia, the evolution of news translation studies, and the relevant conceptual issues. Despite the growing body of research on news translation over the past thirty years, it remains a relatively new subarea of research that has emerged from translation studies as part of the exploration of subfields such as dubbing, subtitling, and amateur and audiovisual translations (Bielsa, 2015; Gambier, 2016; van Doorslaer, 2010; Comănesci, 2011). News translation has become more popular in recent years as it plays a critical role in cross-cultural communication. This has led to significant research in the field, although most of it has focused on print media and has been done in only one language. While media scholars may not fully embrace translation studies, it is clear that translation is an essential part of all aspects of news distribution.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the theoretical framework and explored two fundamental theories, namely Skopos, adaptation and Sight translation. These theories helped me gain a better understanding of the news translation process in the Gambia and formed the basis for analyzing the main pertinent issues in this study.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology utilized to investigate the news translation processes and practices in Gambia. The chapter elucidates the research process and the techniques employed in data collection and analysis, as well as ethical considerations and sampling techniques.

Chapter Five explores the key findings of the research, providing insight into the methods and standards employed when hiring news translators, the academic background of news translators, their motivation, experience, the proficiency levels required for language and the training involved. Additionally, it outlines the obstacles faced and the strategies employed by news translators to overcome them.

In Chapter Six, I suggest some ways to enhance the news translation process and practices in the Gambia. These recommendations comprise language planning, expanding the usage of Mandinka, creating a monolingual Mandinka dictionary, and providing training to translators, among other things.

The following chapter aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the literature review, which will delve into the historical evolution of news translation in the Gambia, the progressive development of Mandinka news translation, and the intricate relationship between media and translation studies, which stems from the former's reluctance to fully embrace the domain of news translation.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature directly related to my thesis or which indirectly shines the spotlight on some relevant aspects. The chapter consists of the following sections: the history of news translation, the evolution and significance of news translation research, the interdisciplinarity between translation studies (TS) and media studies (MS), conceptual issues of news translation, and the process, features and challenges of news translation.

#### 2.1 Colonization and Africa's Indigenous Languages

During colonial times, the governing powers imposed their own languages upon the territories they ruled. The main aim was to establish their own culture and suppress the indigenous cultures and traditions. Bamgbose (2011) notes that each colonial power had different objectives -some enforced their language to solidify their own culture, while others did it to create an educated class that could communicate with the masses in their own language. Bamgbose, who was the first professor of linguistics in Nigeria, observed that although the goals of colonial language policies may have varied, the end result was always the same - the promotion of the language of the colonial power to a position of dominance, while African languages were relegated to a secondary status. Similarly, wa Thiong'o (2018) states that the idea behind attacking indigenous languages by the colonial power was to deny colonial subjects "the authority of naming self and the world, to delegitimize the history and knowledge they already possessed, delegitimize their own language as a credible source of knowledge and definition of the world, so that the conqueror's language can become the source of the very definition of being" (p.124). wa Thiong'o lamented that African people succumbed to Europhonicity to define their countries, hence becoming Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone.

Colonial languages, such as French, English, and Portuguese, were introduced at the expense of indigenous languages despite being spoken by only a tiny minority of Africans. (Bamgbose, 2011; Roy-Campbell, 2019;). Furthermore, linguistic policies laid by the colonizer privileged colonial languages over native African varieties, even though European language speakers in any African country are at most 10% of the entire population, whereas the other 90% are speakers of Africa's indigenous languages (wa Thiong'o, 2018).

The prevalence of English as the sole official language in many former British colonies has led to a diminished emphasis on the utilization of indigenous languages in both educational and governmental contexts. As a result, non-indigenous languages are often given preference. Biel (2014) notes that only 1% of Gambians are native English speakers, and many are functionally illiterate in the language because they neither read nor write it. World Atlas reports that the literacy rate in the Gambia is estimated at 50.8%, meaning half the population cannot understand written English. This is because English has been imposed on the Gambia for over 150 years of colonial rule and has continued to be the country's official language 58 years after independence.

## 2.2 Gambia's Indigenous Languages

The Gambia is a multilingual country that boasts of several languages such as Mandinka, which is widely regarded as the major language, Fula, Wolof, Jola, and Sarahule. Other languages spoken in the country include Creole, Serere Manjako, Balanta, Bainunka, and Karoninka. Biel (2014) reports that there are 18 linguistic groups in The Gambia, with ten being the main living languages. He also notes that the most spoken languages in the country are Mandinka, Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, and Sarahule, with Mandinka being the most widely spoken, followed by Wolof. Juffermans and Caroline (2010) point out that Mandinka is considered prestigious and has historic royal

connections due to its large number of speakers. Faal (2014) postulates that the Gambia is a region that boasts of several prominent ethnic groups such as the Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola, and Sarahule. These groups each possess their own distinct language, customs, methods of governance, and territory. Furthermore, in addition to the indigenous population, non-Black communities, particularly the Tuareg or Arabs, have migrated to the Senegambia area from the North and have intermarried with the local inhabitants. Hassoum<sup>1</sup> Ceesay, a research participant, a renowned Gambian historian and the custodian of Gambia's national museum, noted that Gambia has a diverse language map, but its official language is English, which it inherited from the British due to its colonial history with the British Empire until it gained independence in 1965. English is the primary language used for teaching in public schools and is also the primary communication medium in government institutions. English is the primary language used for written communication in public spaces, as explained by Juffermans (2011). This means that indigenous languages are often considered less important than other languages, such as Arabic or English, in both public and private settings.

### 2.3 Mandinka Ethnic Group

The Mandinka people, as described by Sarr (2016), are a distinct agricultural group dwelling in the savanna region between the Upper Senegal and Upper Niger Rivers. Their language belongs to the Mande language family, and their roots can be traced back to this region. However, Sarr notes that although the origins of Mandinka in the Gambia are obscure, the most plausible explanation advanced about their origins is that sometime before the 19th century, a bunch of Mandinka farmers, hunters and traders who migrated west from their Upper Niger homeland

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<sup>1</sup> Ceesay is a renowned Gambian historian who took part in the research

relocated to the Senegambia region, in search of greener pastures. Faal (2014) notes that before they extended into the Gambia, the Mandinka occupied the northern slope of the Futa Jallon Plateau between the valleys of the Niger to the east and those of the Gambia and Senegal to the West. Once the Mandinka Empire, based in Mali, was well-established, they started expanding it. Faal further explains that Amari Sonko, a general under Mansa Sunjata Keita, the founder of the Mali Empire, led his warriors down the Gambia Valley, conquering villages until they reached the States of Badibou and Niimi, where they established the Sonko dynasty. They gradually conquered the Gambia except for Saloum, which the Wolof and Foni, a Jola territory, dominated. Similarly, Jukes & Grigorenko's (2010) research indicates that the Mandinka people wielded considerable power in the territories where their language was spoken prior to the colonial era in Kaabu, which persisted until 1867 when the armies of the Fula kingdom of Futa Jallon conquered Kansala, the capital of Kaabu.

Concerning the social hierarchy and the stratification of social roles in the Mandinka community, Faal (2014) notes that the traditional Mandinka society was classified into four categories: Nobles, Commoners, Caste members, and enslaved people. Faal (2014) explains that the nobles held supreme power, and their relatives engaged in seasonal raids beyond their territories and launched defensive attacks to maintain power. Commoners, mainly farmers and traders who were free to move about, constituted the second category. While the farmers paid tribute in return for their protection by the state, traders provided war booty. Islamic clerics were also considered commoners and revered as holy men literate in Arabic and Islamic studies. The third group in the society's traditional hierarchy consisted of the caste members, such as smiths, leatherworkers, and griots. Although these individuals were free, each caste member was attached to a free-born patron's family, using their skills as craftsmen to cater to the family members' needs. In the

Mandinka culture, griots have been an important part of society as oral historians. They have multiple roles such as being entertainers, historians, public relations experts, and inspiring their people through their songs, praises, and stories (Faal, 2014). The pivotal role of griots within Mandinka societies across West Africa has remains important. Ebine (2019) asserts that oral tradition is a fundamental aspect of African culture and values within West Africa and other African nations located south of the Sahara. Meanwhile, the fourth and lowest group on the Mandinka societal structure ladder, according to Faal (2014), was the slave class, of which there were two types: domestic enslaved people and trade slaves. While enslaved people served in their patrons' houses, trade slaves were captured in war or brought by commerce (Faal, 2014).

### 2.3.1 Mandinka Language

The Mandinka language (also called Mandingo or Malinke) is spoken by about 1.5 million speakers in The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau (Cristina & amp, 2018). Oyler (2005) defines the Mande as a group of people whose members use indigenous languages and the heroic and historical past of Mande speakers as the basis for their unity. Jukes & Grigorenko (2010) explain that the Mandinka ethnic group is the most populous in the Gambia, with around 453,500 members. They also note that while the Mandinka spoken in Gambia is very similar to the Maninka dialects of Eastern Senegal and Western Mali, it has some notable differences.

It is commonly believed that the colonial administration suppressed Gambia's indigenous languages, but research participant Hassoum Ceesay clarifies that the administration actually attempted to promote Mandinka as the lingua franca. The colonial officials spent a lot of money on interpreters for the various languages spoken, so it was more cost-effective to have the majority language, Mandinka, become the sole lingua franca. During the colonial era, interpreters and translators played a crucial role, with rulers and courts having their own interpreters. Colonial

officers required interpreters to communicate with the local people, especially in rural areas. As a result, every colonial officer had to have an interpreter; each colonial commissioner needed at least two, while the Governor required numerous interpreters. This was quite expensive, as noted by Ceesay. Therefore, the idea was to make Mandinka a national lingua franca in the Gambia, just like Swahili in East Africa and Wolof in Senegal. In his opinion, this would have made life easier for the colonial administration.

The Mandinka language has been the predominant indigenous language of Gambia since the colonial era, as attested to by Ceesay. Therefore, the British colonial administration made efforts during that time to elevate the status of Mandinka to that of a national lingua franca, which presents a significant irony. The colonial officials were eager to pursue this policy and made several interventions to attain their goal, which included:

- Translation of newspaper reports into Mandinka, including (*Kibar Kaito*) using the Arabic script. These news reports, published regularly in the 1940s, which contained a summary of monthly news highlights, were like a news digest and were printed on sheets of foolscap paper since no A4 paper was available in those days. The reports were then posted in public places known locally as *Bantaba*, in locations such as *Salkeni*, *Kawr Janneh Kunda*, and elsewhere.
- Bakary Sidibeh, a Gambian belonging to the Mandinka ethnic group, was a reporter for the *Kibar Kaito* in the 1940s. In 1950, he was sent to study at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, UK, where he spent some time developing the orthography of the Mandinka language. The purpose of this was to teach Mandinka in schools. After returning to Gambia, Sidibeh taught Mandinka at the Gambia College, where he trained teachers on how to teach the language.

- The launch, by the colonial administration, of a pilot school in Pakilinding to teach Mandinka. , explained historian Hassoum Ceesay.
- Publication of another more specialist periodical paper called “Senela,” which means farmer was meant to inform farmers about farming techniques and methods.

During the colonial era, the governing administration placed significant emphasis on ensuring that the local populace, particularly those proficient in the Mandinka language, were well-informed about the latest news and decisions made by the authorities. In pursuit of this objective, the administration worked tirelessly to disseminate news and translate it into the Mandinka language. The following collection of archived documents serves as evidence of the concerted efforts made by the colonial administration to keep its subjects apprised of the latest developments.

reply please quote  
and date of this letter.



Protectorate of the Gambia

No. 1 Marina,

Bathurst, The Gambia,

23rd August 1950

TELEPHONE:  
Bathurst Civil 16.

MANDINKA NEWS BULLETIN

His Excellency has approved of my office starting a monthly news bulletin in Mandinka. I enclose 50 copies of the first issue.

2. The Roman alphabet will, I am aware, be to begin with, unfamiliar but as it is already taught in District schools with the use of Mr. O'Halloran's reading book and as the Roman transcription is exceedingly simple there is no reason why the bulletin should not slowly come to be read and to make some contribution to vernacular literacy in a medium which is at once easier than the Arabic and a better introduction to literacy in English or French.

3. Translation is at present a difficulty but I shall shortly have the services of Mr. Sheriff Jaureh who is returning this month from the School of Oriental and African Studies where he has been working there on Mandinka linguistic studies.

4. The real difficulty will be to keep up a flow of lively material of a high standard of interest. I am much indebted to His Excellency who has written a message for this issue and has kindly offered to write a letter each month on some subject which has struck him as being of importance for the Protectorate. He has also suggested to me that there should be a correspondent in each Division who could write an article or letter each month containing news of the Division. I should be grateful if you would make an approach to a suitable person in your Division, let me know his name and ask him to send me a contribution through you before the 15th of each month. I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. D.P. Gamble with a request that he will let me have articles on subjects of local interest, such as ceremonies from time to time. The Mandinka in which the bulletin is written might itself make an interesting subject of controversy in correspondence.

5. I should be grateful if you would dispose of these 50 copies to the best advantage which should include a copy for each school and let me have as soon as practicable a note on their reception and comprehensibility together with any suggestions for improvement. I shall look in your monthly bulletins for items of news that may be of interest and for any humorous incidents; if they are included there it will save you writing specially.

Figure 1 A letter from the colonial authorities to Britain about the importance of Mandinka linguistic studies.

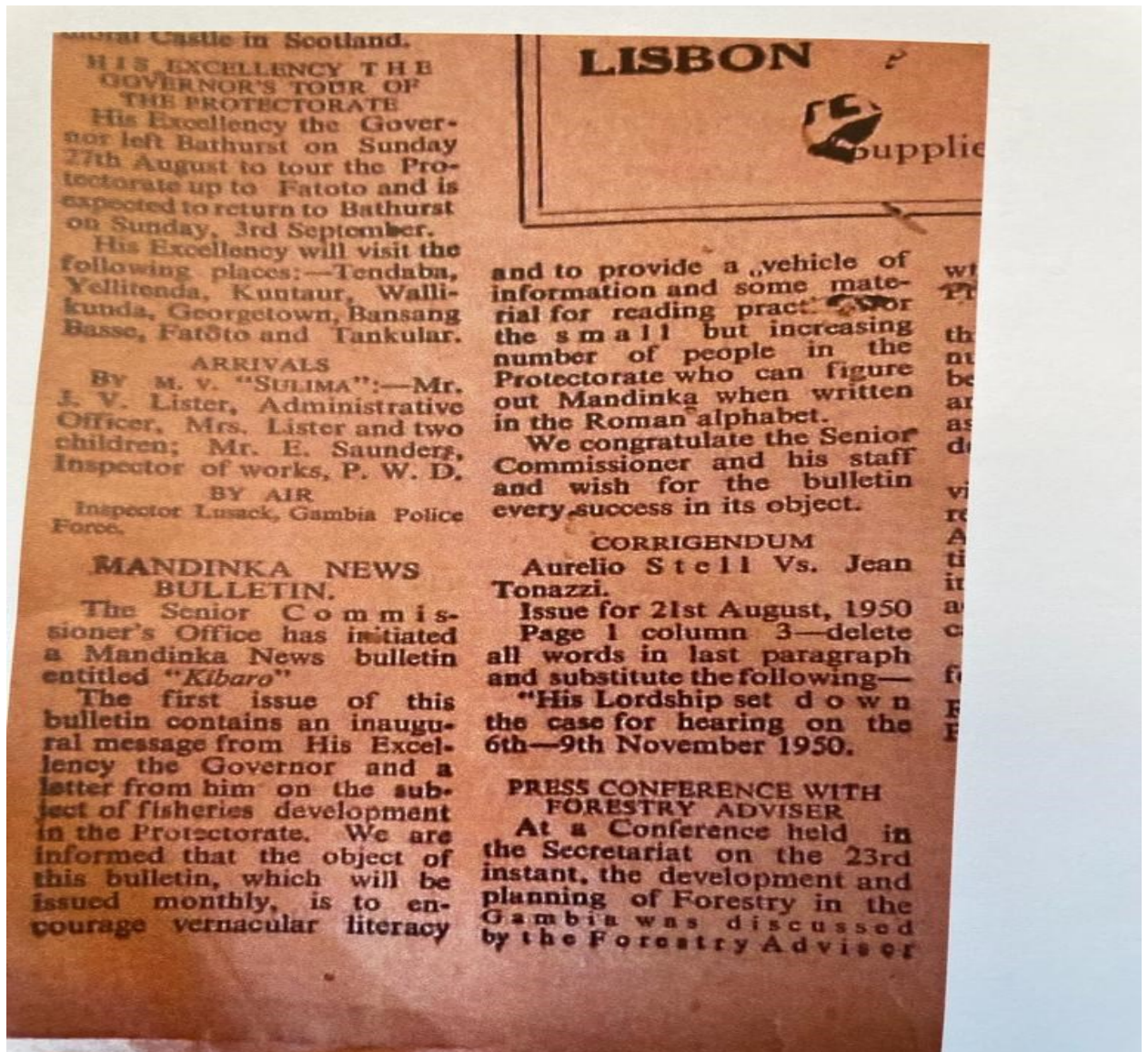


Figure 2 According to the archived document provided, the Senior Commissioner's Office is reported to have taken steps to launch a Mandinka News Bulletin. This news bulletin may potentially serve as a valuable source of information for those

interested in the evolution of news translation in the Gambia.

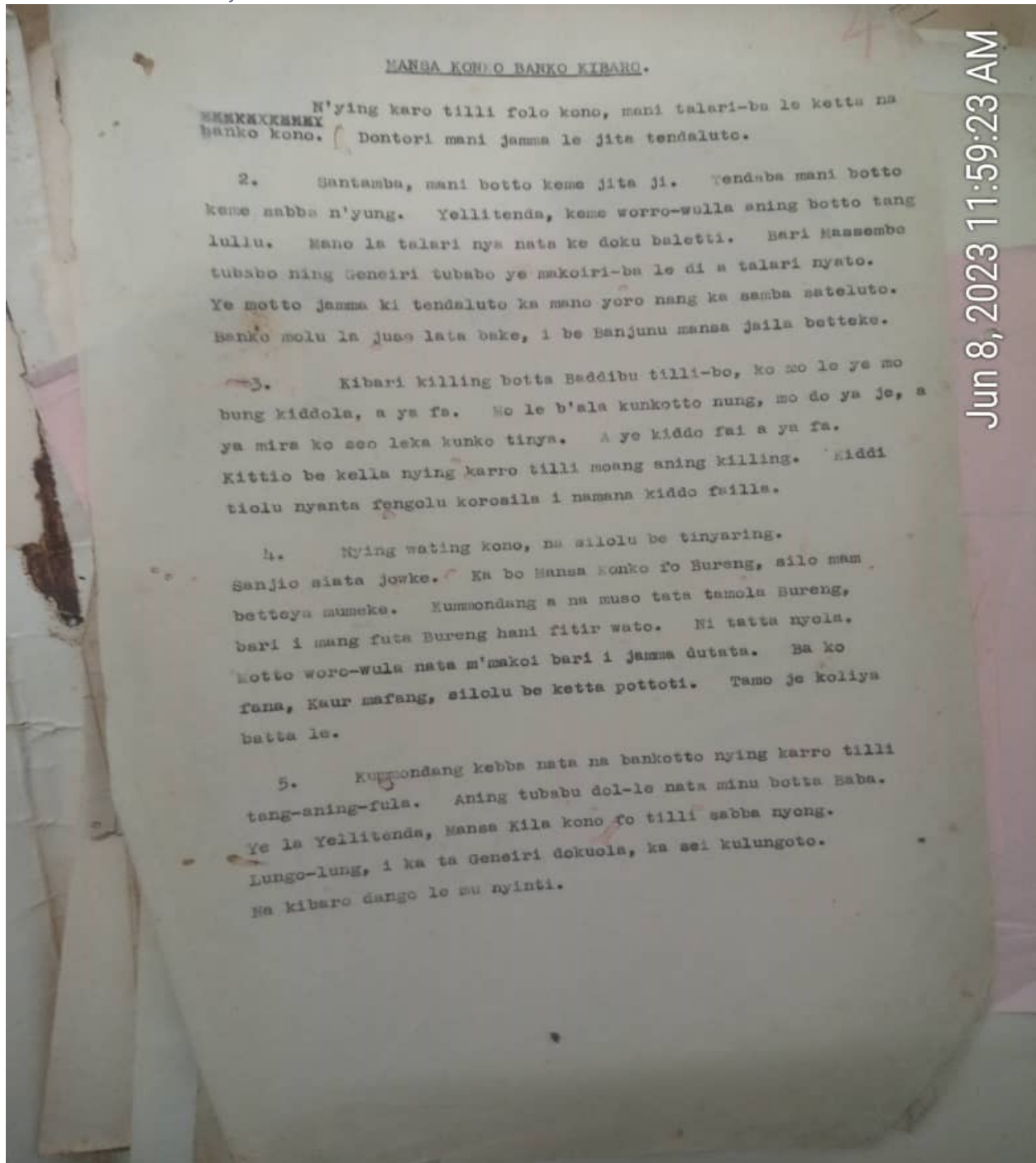


Figure 3 An old news script written in Mandinka provides detailed information on the latest news and current prices of basic commodities from various regions of The Gambia. The bulletin also reports a fatal shooting incident in West Badibou in the

Lower River Division, or Mansakonko, which is now known as the Lower River Region.

COMMISSIONER

CENTRAL DIVISION

DATE.....

P.A. 148

CREI/8

Maidinka News

Bulletin

Connected Correspondence

MINUTES

7/1/8.

JUN 8, 2023 12:01:08 PM

Figure 4 An old folder that contained a news bulletin.

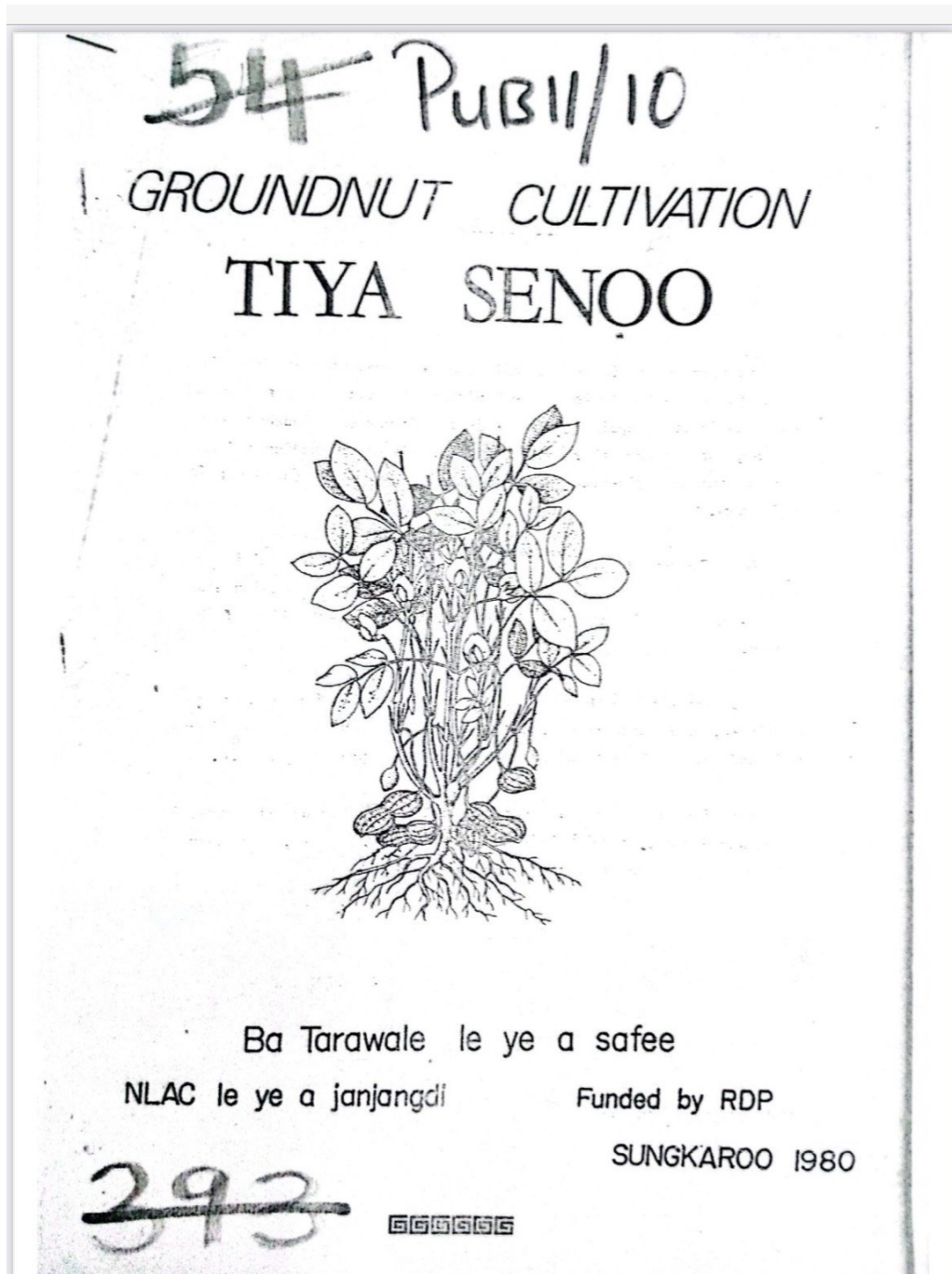


Figure 5 Cover of Senela newsletter, which was meant to provide farmers with information about the latest farming techniques and produce prices.

TIYA SENE BANUCO

Feng foloo noo jamaa ka i niira mengna ning i lafita samaa doo la wo le nu turoo ti. Ning i ye wo be nyooto, i si naa i nyaa tiling feng doolu la mengnu boko kunkoo nuta dulaa.

Barwoo ntolu par eta tiya sene le la. N na niiree ning n na k'caa nyangta te la wo karoo le la. N nga niiree nyangta a si taa turoo siifaa to meng si beteyaa. Tiyoo nu fiifeng ne ti meng te kee noo la banku siifa wo banku siifa to. Tiyoo ning a fongung bankoo le nu. Misalife tiya sene bankoo nang nyengna ke la potoo ti. Potoo bankoo nang beteyaa tiyoo ye. Barwoo tiyoo ka a dingolu ke bankoo le kono. Ning wo bankoo be jaerim koss, a be barbaring tiyoo be a suloo dung noo la nyadi le? Tiya dingolu si wara nyadi? Ning tiyoo keta potoo kono, tooroo ning ninisoo derong ne be a noo nang. Londi tiyclu bee kanbangta ke tiyoo nyangta ke la dinkira le to meng ye kenyekenyeo soto a ning banku fingo. Ning nying banku siifaa fuloolu nyamita daa wo daa, wo nu banku kende le ti. I nyangta i si dankenyaa ke tiya sene bankoo le be i bulu.

Tiya sene bankoo nang nyangta ke la dulaa ti jiye si tara looring daaneng. A nang nyengna ke la ke daloo. Ning tiyoo keta daloo to, wawangta dulaa nang jiye si loo joo. ning sanjiye na ta, i si a kata ngaa wo n na i te a barakendi noo la.

Kuu sabanjungo meng nu korosiri taa ti ning i ke i kana ninisa, wo le nu nying ti ke, i si i la baling kuloo laa nyamta seng si i la tiya dingolu ning ja bandoo tankandi jii beore na. Barwoo ning i la baling kuloo keta jiye la bori dinkoo ti, feng wo feng be jiye nyanta a ka wolu bee keera le a ye tag i fayi dulaa to i nang lafi a la daaneng.

Figure 6 A Senela newsletter clipping that provides comprehensive guidelines on the cultivation of groundnuts specifically targeted towards rural farmers. Unfortunately, the content of the clipping has been rendered illegible due to the fading of the ink, thereby preventing me from accessing the valuable information enclosed within.

The actions taken by the colonial administration support Sosu's (1992) claim that Anglo-Germanic powers seemed to promote the use of indigenous languages more than the French and Portuguese, who enforced their colonial language as the sole means of learning and communication. Sosu (1992) also notes that the British suggested using indigenous languages at the start of education in their West African colonies, which included Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. However, this policy faced obstacles due to the existence of numerous languages where no single language was dominant, and jobs were given to those who were literate in the colonial language (Sosu, 1992). Bamgbose (2011) points out that despite efforts to elevate indigenous languages, colonial languages remained official post-independence due to two main factors:

- 1- Elite Closure: This refers to the elites' monopoly on the language of power and their resistance to sharing it with other groups.
- 2- Inheritance situation: This refers to how policies and practices from the colonial period continue to shape post-colonial policies.

When the Gambia gained independence in 1965, the new government led by the People's Progressive Party abandoned all the efforts initiated by the colonial administration to elevate Mandinka to the status of a lingua franca for the country. This policy reversal was ironic, as the colonial administration had wanted to elevate Mandinka to the status of the country's lingua franca. Hassoum Ceesay observed that the Gambian political elite opted to maintain the colonial language, English, as the official language at the expense of the native languages, especially Mandinka. Ceesay underscored that the leaders and founding fathers were motivated by the belief that English would foster national unity. However, upon assuming power, Jawara, himself a Mandinka, realized that the Mandinka community had not received a Western-style education, while the Creole

minority, who had previously been exposed to it, were predominantly in control of the country alongside the urban Wolof. Ceesay further expounded that the Aku and Wolof, despite being a minority, constituted the elite class, holding high-ranking positions such as permanent secretaries, directors, and senior civil servants. Therefore, the Gambia, Ceesay further elaborated, was essentially two nations in one - the rural Gambia of the Mandinka people and the colonial Gambia represented by *Bathurst*, the capital, and *Serrekunda*. Ceesay added that all attempts to elevate Mandinka to the status of the national lingua franca were quietly abandoned in the interest of nation-building and national reconciliation.

When asked if he thought that former President Jawara's decision was the right one, Ceesay answered yes. He explained that at the time, The Gambia was profoundly divided and polarized, possibly more so than it is today. The country is known for its political disputes and being divided along ethnic and political lines. The Mandinkas, Ceesay asserted, had been generally isolated in the rural Gambia with no schools or facilities and left to the mercy of local chiefs like Mama Tamba (1880–1987) and others. During the colonial era, the cities of Bathurst and Seerekunda, also referred to as Tubab banko, were regarded as the most significant urban areas in the country. Subsequently, these cities became the focal point of attention for the colonial administration. Notably, *Sukuta*, *Bakau*, and *Banjul* were equipped with schools and hospitals, indicating the colonial authorities' efforts to provide essential services to the population. Ceesay pointed out that urbanites looked down on their rural compatriots as "bush people" (*Wa Alabi*). Ceesay explained that Jawara believed the majority had to give way and sacrifice during a period of appeasement. Jawara's decision helped maintain national unity, peace, and stability in the country, but it came at the expense of the colonial administration's innovative attempt to elevate the status of Mandinka as a lingua franca. As a young nation, The Gambia's ruling People's Progressive Party Government

developed a survival strategy that involved maintaining ethnic compromise for domestic stability (Nyang, 1997). Furthermore, Nyang (1977) argues that the Gambian government's policy had been successful because the elite class, including the Wolof and Creole in urban areas, did not feel threatened by the possibility of losing the privileges and opportunities made available during the colonial era. Nyang, however, acknowledges the urban-rural divide that characterizes the country's local politics, affirming that the ethnic composition in the Gambia's urban areas favoured the Wolof and Creole. wa Thiong'o (2018) criticizes the notion of preserving monolingualism as a means of preserving national identity. "African languages, because of their huge numbers, are seen as anti-nationhood. Monolingualism is seen as the centripetal answer to the centrifugal anarchy of languages. European languages are seen as coming to the rescue of a cohesive Africa, otherwise threatened by its own languages" (p.126).

Former President Jawara and his ruling elite's inclination towards the colonial power was a significant factor in his decision to disregard the promotion of Mandinka as a lingua franca. Although the traditional sense of colonialism has ended, the mental colonization persists because the elite's fascination with the colonial language continues to this day. In Gambia and many other African countries, the elite rarely speaks an indigenous language without incorporating English, French, or Portuguese words to demonstrate their perceived sense of modernity.

Nyang (1977) recalls a speech given by Jawara on April 21, 1974, on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's birthday. In the speech, Jawara praised the "meaningful" contribution of the British to Gambia's development efforts. Nyang also acknowledges the psychological sentiments that seemed to have drawn Gambian elites towards the former colonial power. The elevation of Mandinka as Gambia's lingua franca and the use of indigenous languages in education and official

circles have been hotly debated on social media. However, Ceesay has dismissed the possibility of the government renewing efforts to raise the status of Mandinka for the following reasons:

- 1- The issue of whether to make Mandinka an official language in The Gambia is a sensitive and delicate matter that successive governments have been reluctant to address. This is due to the fear of upsetting speakers of other native languages. As a result, there has been no political will to make a decision on the matter. In 2014, former Gambian President Yahya Jammeh expressed his desire to discontinue the use of English as the country's official language, citing it as a "colonial legacy" (Indexcensorship). During his time as an MP, Hamat Bah, the current Minister of Tourism and Culture and a former Member of Parliament, expressed his opinion on the operationalization of indigenous languages. He stated that it is easier said than done and raised some questions: "Which language will be our official language? Will it be Fulani, Mandinka, Serahule, Jola, Mandjago, Serer, or any of the local languages? Or will we choose the most widely spoken languages as the official language? This has not been clarified yet" (The Point).
- 2- Ceesay believes that the Mandinka ethnic group's status has declined compared to what it was in the 1950s and 1960s. This is because other ethnic groups have grown in size and influence. For instance, the Jola people had more influence than their numbers under former President Yahya Jammeh, who belongs to the Jola ethnic group. Ceesay suggests that if the elevation of Mandinka had been done 60-70 years ago when the idea was first proposed, it would have been easier. However, the Gambian government should still make efforts to promote the use of national languages, as Rwanda and Tanzania have done. In Mali, the new constitution passed overwhelmingly in a referendum on June 18, and French has been dropped as the official language. Although French will remain the working

language, 13 other national languages spoken in the country will receive official language status (Africa News).

#### 2.4 A Brief History of Press Media in the Gambia

News media have existed in the Gambia since the country was colonized by the British Empire in order to inform the colonized subjects of the decisions made by the colonizer on many issues. Johnson (2004), a veteran Gambian journalist and a former minister of information in the Gambia, explains that the Gambia Gazette was established in 1883 when the country was still ruled from the West African nation of Sierra Leone, where it was likely printed in its early days. He further points out that the gazette was Gambia's primary source of information since the country had no radio station at the time, and it was purposely established to enlighten the colonized about the various relevant issues. The information contained in the gazette included updates about the administration of the colony, all the new laws passed by the colonial masters in London, all regulations governing colonial and native officials, as well as coverage of civil service-related issues, such as budgetary allocations, job vacancies, appointments, promotions, transfers, retirements, dismissals, leaves of absence and obituaries. On the other hand, this author explains that Gambia's first independent newspaper was the Bathurst Observer, established in 1883, five years before Gambia was given its own administration, which was printed by DJ. John, with the author noting that the paper was renamed the Gambia Daily in 1978. The Gambia Outlook, established in 1922 by Gambian politician and journalist Edward Francis Small, was known for being anti-colonial. The Gambia News Bulletin was established in 1943 by the Government's Information Office in Banjul to promote government policies and programs. The Vanguard and the Nation were launched in 1958 and 1961, respectively, ahead of independence in 1965. Both newspapers were vocal in their support for the struggle for independence. Additionally, the

People's Progressive Party launched its own newspaper in 1959, which dealt with political and national issues.

Post-independence newspapers include the Gambia, the Gambia News & Report, Topic, the Point, the Daily Observer, the Independent, the Standard, the Voice, Foroyaa, the Gambia Daily, and the Daily News. With the advent of online media, a plethora of online outlets have emerged, including the Freedom newspaper, the Jollof News, Gainako radio, the Fatu Network, and Kerr Fatou, among others.

## 2.5 History of Translation and Interpretation in the Gambia

Translators and interpreters play a crucial role in facilitating inter-human linguistic, social, political, cultural, artistic, scientific and mass media communication, serving as an integral part of human history (Karjaddine, 2020; Kumari, 2017). Reflecting on the role of translation in ancient times, Kumari points out that translation played a crucial role in the functioning of large empires and that the importance of translation has only increased due to its role in expanding human knowledge about the existence and particularities of other cultures.

Baker and Saldanha (2009) point out that translators and interpreters have taken a wide range of roles during the colonial era, which went far beyond linguistic mediation. In this context, the interpreters have served as guides, explorers, brokers, diplomats, ambassadors and advisors. The editors make a particular reference to the African context, where the interpreters acted as spokesmen for their communities, not just as linguistic mediators. Kumari (2017) explains the inseparable relationship between translation and colonization and notes that the two worked in conjunction with one another, with translation becoming a metaphor for the colony, where European cultures enjoyed the superior status of being the original.

Empirical studies on African interpreters during the colonial era are scarce, but their importance as mediators between the colonizer and the colonized has been recognized. Translators and interpreters played a vital role in facilitating communication between the two parties. “Scholars of Senegalese colonial history have overlooked African functionaries, among them interpreters, translators and clerks who facilitated daily interactions between the French authorities, African rulers and ordinary Africans” (M'Bayo, 2016. p.4).

Cronin (2002) attributes the dearth of research into translation in Africa to the fact that the field of translation and interpreting studies has been “dominated by the typographic cultures of highly literate Western elites who speak majority languages [such that] whole areas of translation practice may be either misunderstood or simply ignored” (p.48). Garane (2015) has echoed the assertion that there is a lack of research conducted by scholars in the fields of Translation and Interpreting studies to document the crucial role played by African interpreters in the formation of the French colonies in West Africa, which includes Mauritania and Senegal. French Soudan (now The Republic of Mali), French Guinea (now the Republic of Guinea), Cote d’Ivoire, Upper Volta (Haute Volta- now Burkina Faso), Dahomey (now Benin), and Niger between 1895 and 1958, covering a total of 4,689,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Garane (2015) goes on to criticize Cronin for failing to mention the central role of native interpreters in pre-colonial and colonial French West Africa.

The study's findings indicate that the bulk of translation in Gambia began with interpreters because orality dominated the translation domain. Translation started with the colonial-era administration when British colonial officials were establishing themselves in the Gambia. In 1919, during an influenza outbreak, messages related to public health were translated from English into Mandinka and Wolof using the Arabic script. Chiefs' compounds also displayed public notices that encouraged locals to fight in the First and Second World Wars for the British Empire. These

notices were written in English and translated into indigenous languages to promote participation in the Wars. Colonial officials also enacted laws to govern the locals, with these ordinances translated into the two major indigenous languages, Mandinka and Wolof. Most Gambians at the time used the Arabic script (known as Ajami) to write in indigenous languages, which allowed them to access these laws. Mandinka-speaking communities were among the first in West Africa to come into contact with Islamic culture and the Arabic language. As a result, they adopted the Ajami script (Decker & Injiiru, 2012; Vydrin, 2014). Since Gambia's independence in 1965, successive governments have relied on translators and interpreters to communicate with the country's multilingual and largely illiterate population.

Translation is essential in The Gambia due to the country's multiethnic nature. According to the Gambian constitution, the Head of State is required to conduct a Meet the People's Tour at least once a year. This tour allows the President and his Cabinet to have a dialogue with Gambians and gain firsthand information on the impact of his government's policies and programs. To ensure effective communication, the President is accompanied by interpreters who convey his messages to communities that speak languages he does not.

Moreover, interpreters played a crucial role in the activities of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC). The TRRC was established by an Act of Parliament in 2017 to investigate the gross human rights violations that occurred during the reign of former President Yahya Jammeh. Gambians remember the significant impact of interpreters in this process. The Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) had several objectives, including investigating human rights violations and abuses that occurred during Jammeh's rule,

prosecuting those responsible, promoting social cohesion and national reconciliation, providing appropriate reparations to victims, and learning from the past to prevent similar incidents in the future (Tambadou, 2018). To ensure that the entire population could follow the commission proceedings, news translators like Alhagi Musa Manneh were seconded to the TRRC to assist with interpretation during the appearance of witnesses.

### 2.5.1 The Controversial Role of Gambia's Translators/Interpreters

The role of interpreters in Africa, including the Gambia, has been controversial, causing mixed feelings and disagreements. While some view these interpreters as traitors, others acknowledge their crucial role as intermediaries. However, their moral authority is often questioned due to their role in facilitating communication between the colonizer and the colonized. M'bayo (2016) notes that interpreters are sometimes seen as "disloyal employees who twisted translations for their French superiors in pursuit of selfish goals." Garane (2015) further elaborated on the controversial role of interpreters in West Africa, pointing out that they were the most influential men in the colonies, as they controlled the flow of information between colonial administrators, chiefs, and colonized subjects. Some ordinary citizens question why Muslim interpreters and translators provided their services to the colonial administration in Gambia and Senegal, given that these countries are predominantly Muslim. According to M'bayo (2016), the interpreters did not believe that their work went against their Islamic faith. As previously mentioned, there has been very little research conducted on West African interpreters, particularly those in the Gambia. As a result, our understanding of them is limited. However, Hassoum Ceesay, a participant in my research, confirmed that the following individuals were the most well-known Gambian interpreters who worked for the colonial administration:

- Musa Dumbuya: The son of the renowned warrior who fought the colonial power- He spoke at least seven languages.
- Buwa Jammeh in Badibou, a relation of the famous Chief of Upper Badibou, Mama Tamba Jammeh. He attended Mohamaddan school.
- Abdou Musa Rahman: His name featured prominently in historical archives.

The interpreters who acted as middlemen between the local chiefs and the colonial administration gained significant influence. They could cause trouble for chiefs by misinterpreting their messages to the colonial officials. In other words, the fate and career of a local leader depended on how an interpreter conveyed their message to the colonial master.

The process of hiring interpreters was rigorous as the colonial officials had to be satisfied with the character and attitude of the potential interpreters due to their proximity to them. The interpreters were paid generous salaries by the officials, in addition to per-diem payments for accompanying them on their travels across the country. Interestingly, the interpreters earned more money than the local chiefs. During colonial times, interpreters would accompany officials on their trips and stay in guesthouses to ensure they were always available. These interpreters also served as protocol officers. To save costs, colonial officials hired bilingual or multilingual interpreters who could speak two or more major indigenous languages, such as Mandinka and Wolof. For example, Musa Dumbuya was able to speak at least seven languages.

On the other hand, Ceesay explained that the records show that some colonial officials harboured some suspicion toward the interpreters. For instance, when a colonial official said something to a local chief, they would anticipate a particular facial expression or physical response, but when they

did not see that expected reaction, they would suspect that the interpreter had not properly interpreted the message. This also happened when an interpreter deliberately misinterpreted a statement by the local chief, and when a commissioner found out about such an incident, that interpreter would be detained or dismissed. So, the colonial officials were suspicious of the interpreter's faithfulness, wondering whether they faithfully interpreted the message. Consequently, some interpreters got fired, and others were arrested.

no 10 Kiling Marua  
Kambic

Kayafu  
Tubabu Karo tili Seyi  
Banna Karo Kono  
8/10/1950.

Alifa.

I be kontana bake - kabing nBotafe Banjunu wo  
Talata tambila Tubabu karo tili sabo lungola mbulata gekuno  
moto lela Hafudayi mari nyila hafato Ining mansa kunda Tubabu  
fula domu Senefeng Kunti lungtango, <sup>let</sup> aning Kitabu Kontibola.  
Kabiring nFutata Tendaba ibe gita woleto nSawunta Motolu Kono <sup>nSawunta</sup>  
Masembe ning Jenyir. Kitabu Kontibola tambita motola Kata Mansa  
Konko, wonoto.

2. Banko molu be Banjunu Mansa Jeyila alayamari Kumolu  
menu be safering Kibari Kaetoto nya ajele nya Karang akumululu  
nafa warata: Folofolo Kongolula kuo - Fulang jango Banjunu Mansa  
la Baba Ta Kuo, Sabang Jango - Jenyir jubelalu menu botanang  
Baba ining ite Kumandang Keba, ning Mr. Jarnet menka Yamaro di  
senefeng Kuola N'ya akumululu be moi Kuma Betelu.  
Abarika.

3.

Fifengo la Kuo.

Banko Gambandi Kuo be N'Yamento - ning ninsi te meng  
bulu, adung Tiakalo aning abufu be ibulu, isi ajanjandi Kunko  
Kono, ning asarinta, a senefengo si nyi-nya beteke; Barinko  
mobe yalang, neko, <sup>katung</sup> no abika bayi. (Katung)

Tia Kuo.

Mowomo ye tia so dati kana tia Kongsimbaro ke  
foning ajata; Katuko, Sanjio Sabala. Ning Akong simbara wato  
fana sita, mobe si atung Bentengo Kang meng te suti ya la banko  
la. Katuko aliyalang nyamen ko asina monto wole kana asafune.  
Tiasang Kompino molu telafila tiasafuno la. Tiasang Kompino fana  
si molu makoi tiadato fo asita Santo ning mola tiolu beteyata.

Simang Mara Kuo.

5. Nyinang molube si simangolu mara Kendeke ko; Katuko,  
mbota meng Kono teng, anyanta mobe-sola hakilola, hani ning meng  
o meng be asana mo dolubulu Katu wotabayela; bari ning meng  
ya asang fana, asimango kana funti wobanko Kang asanta dameng.  
Aling akang simango tinya Katuko Konko te abayi la, ala wato la.  
N'Yinang Keta hakilitu Sang leti; Konko meng Tambila wo nyanta  
mobe sola hakilola.

Figure 7 A letter written in Mandinka addressed to the colonial administration by a local chief in 1950 expressing the gratitude of the local community to the colonial administration for introducing the Kibaro newspaper which is written in Mandinka.

Ceesay explained that local interpreters under colonial rule were revered by some but equally feared by others. There was a conflict between interpreter Musa Dumbuya and Musa Moloh.

Moloh, who was born in the mid to late 1800s, was considered the final king of the Fuladu kingdom in the Senegambia region of Africa. He was known for collaborating with colonial powers to retain his power and suppress rebellions. Musa Dumbuya and Mussa Moloh were rivals because of an ancestral issue or mutual animosity. Mussa Moloh believed that Dumbuya was responsible for causing a rift between him and colonial officials. As a result, Moloh was arrested and sent into exile in Freetown. Moloh's family accused Dumbuya of being the mastermind behind his falling out of favour with the colonial administration. The family still believes that Dumbuya must have told the colonial officials something that Moloh never said to the commissioner.

Some interpreters received bribes to manipulate statements by adding content or under-translating. If an interpreter did not like someone, they would translate in any way that would confuse the colonial officials. Similarly, Ceesay noted that Sora, a war veteran, was much loved by the colonial officials, but he fell out with them, with many people suggesting that this was because of the interpreters.

Effective communication between the colonial administration and the local chiefs was crucial for the smooth running of the colony. The interpreters played a vital role in facilitating this communication. Ceesay concluded that the colonial administration would not have been able to manage the colony's affairs without the interpreters, as most of the local chiefs were uneducated despite being the pillars of the colonial administration. Therefore, the interpreters were indispensable, and the colonial officials were well aware of this reality.

#### 2.5.2 History and Importance of Mandinka News Translation

In Gambia, translating news into indigenous languages, particularly Mandinka has been crucial since the early days of Radio Gambia. This is because the country lacked FM service or TV stations

at the time, and there were very few newspapers. Even today, radio remains the primary medium for transmitting translated news, making it an invaluable source of information, education, and entertainment, especially for rural communities. Radio devices are more affordable and accessible to the majority of Gambia's largely impoverished population, particularly in the hinterland. Despite the proliferation of social media and satellite TV, among others, radio continues to play a vital role in keeping people informed.

Historian Hassoum Ceesay explained that Radio Gambia was the first and only regional radio station to broadcast programs in Mandinka at the time. Prior to Radio Gambia, there were no radio stations in the entire subregion that aired news or other programs in Mandinka. As a result, Radio Gambia gained a large following among the Mandinka-speaking population in the country and the region, particularly in Casamance and Guinea Bissau. Radio Gambia was available on mediumwave and AM via a high frequency, which meant that it had better reception outside the country due to its geography.

Radio Gambia, a popular radio station in The Gambia, had famous Gambian figures like Jali Niama Susso, Lalo Kebba Drammeh, and Banna Kanuteh presenting oral history programming of the station's life. After the country gained independence in 1965, the station's administration decided to launch a news bulletin in Mandinka and Wolof. This was a significant step as providing news coverage in native languages was crucial, especially for the rural population. Radio Gambia pioneered news translation in The Gambia, but now several private media outlets, including Terenga FM, King FM, DHK, QTV, Paradise TV, Home Digital FM, and West Coast Radio, equally carry out this task.

The importance of Mandinka news translation must be considered, given the high rate of illiteracy in the Gambia. In a country like the Gambia, at least half of the 2.4 million population depends on news translated from English into multiple indigenous languages. This reliance on translated news highlights the critical role Gambia's news translators played in keeping a significant number of the population informed about developments in the country and beyond. Moreover, poorer members of society who cannot afford to buy newspapers are heavily reliant on translated radio news bulletins to keep updated about current affairs. Research participant Kebba Camara<sup>2</sup>, who previously worked for Paradise FM and mentored some news translators, noted that even some highly educated members of the Gambian society prefer the translated news because Mandinka is more accessible, being their mother tongue. He told me about receiving phone calls from some of these listeners, telling him that they had given up watching international news channels, such as CNN, BBC and Aljazeera, preferring instead to listen to his Mandinka-translated news. Camara went on to assert that Mandinka news translators not only keep the Gambian public informed but also contribute to maintaining peace and security in the country. He recalled the role he personally played during the 2016 political impasse following a disputed presidential election by reassuring the general public that peace would prevail. The Gambia was embroiled in an election dispute following an election dispute after the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced two different results, which enraged former President Yahya Jammeh, calling for fresh elections. The impasse necessitated intervention by the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) to ensure that the incumbent President cede power since the IEC's announcement did not make a significant change in the final outcome of the election results.

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<sup>2</sup> Camara formerly served as a news anchor at both Paradise FM and King FM

Although there has been a growing interest in the news translation process, there is a dearth of information regarding news translation practices in Africa, particularly in the Gambia. Consequently, there is limited knowledge about how news translators in the country conduct news translation.

### 2.5.3 Pioneers of Mandinka News Translation

Bemba Tamedou<sup>3</sup> confirmed that Saikou Biyaye, though not a native Mandinka, spoke the Mandinka language fluently and was the first to broadcast news in Mandinka. Hassan Njie and Mansour Njie replaced the pioneering Wolof news reader and veteran broadcaster Badou Lowe, the founding father of Radio Gambia. When the radio station moved to *Mile 7*, Director Dr. Lamin Mbye arranged for Alhagie Lalo Samateh to be transferred from his post in the local government to become the first Mandinka-born news translator. Dr. Mbye, a former Commissioner in Kerewan, where the late Lalo Samateh worked as an interpreter, had spotted the latter's potential, with his recruitment resulting in a significant improvement in the delivery of news in Mandinka. being an eloquent Mandinka speaker and news translator. Lalo Samateh was eventually joined at the station by Musa Manneh, Sarjo Barrow and others.

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<sup>3</sup> Tamedou is a former Minister of Information in the Gambia and a veteran broadcaster



*Radio Gambia Veterans*

*Figure 3 Radio Gambia veteran news readers – Source: Kerr Fatu*

*(Top left to right)- Bora Mbodge- Jainaba Nyang*

*(Middle left to right) Suwaibou Conateh (Late), (unidentifiable), Mansour Njie (Late)*

*(Bottom left to right) Lalo Samateh (Late), Alhaji Musa Manneh, Sarjo Barrow (Late)*

## 2.6 The History of Broadcasting in the Gambia

Bemba Tamberdou, a veteran broadcaster who previously served as Gambia's Minister of Information and Communication in the mid-90s, explained that radio broadcasting in The Gambia began in a modest way in 1962. Historian Hassoum Ceesay also noted that the United Party (UP) came to power in 1962 after defeating Gambian veteran politician P.S. Njie in that year's general

election. A few days before the election, Radio Gambia, now known as Gambia Radio & Television Services, was established as The Gambia's first permanent broadcasting service. However, Ceesay explained that the idea of establishing a broadcasting service in the Gambia was envisioned by the colonial administration since 1942. In May 2022, the station celebrated its 60th anniversary. Before the establishment of Radio Gambia, Ceesay went on, newscasters used to go to McCarty Square, now known as Independence Square, to read the news to the public. This was called "Broadcast Talk." Mr. Badou Lowe, a respected member of *Bathurst* (now Banjul) and Gambia's first native broadcaster, would listen to the news in English, transcribe it, and read it to the public in Wolof. The Square would be packed with a large audience eager to hear the latest news since very few people could afford transistor radios at that time. Captain Peters, a colonial officer, and Badou Lowe were the pioneers of these broadcast talks. Peters read the news in English, with Badou Lowe translating it into Wolof. Later, Badou Lowe became the first Gambian manager of the nascent Radio Gambia.

Tambadou explained that the Cable and Wireless Company made the early broadcasts possible. The company's staff provided Capt. Peters and Badou Lowe with one of their shortwave frequencies every day from 5 pm to 8:30 pm on weekdays and until 9 pm on weekends. A disused Boys Quarter building on Marina Parade just behind the Cable and Wireless Company's headquarters in Bathurst (now Banjul) was later converted into a studio. The studio was connected by cable to the transmitter in the adjacent Cable and Wireless transmission room, which was only a few meters away. Tambadou recalled that the single-room Boys Quarter building was used alternately for programme production, as a recording studio during the day, and for transmission in the evening. Later, two small buildings were added - one for the office of Manager Badou Lowe and his small clerical team and the other for the Tape and Music Library.

Tambedou further explained that by this time, the radio station's staff was growing slowly as a veteran broadcaster, Joseph Gabiddon, replaced Capt. Peters in reading the news in English. Later, Wolof and Mandinka language news translators, namely Mansour Njie and Saikou Beyai, respectively, were recruited. After independence, Joy Coker, Ransford Cline-Thomas, Sidi Jammeh, Hassan Njie, Maimouna Bah, Mahtar Nyang, Sarjo Manneh and Saikou Jalloh joined the Radio Gambia team. Although the range of programmes expanded, Tambedou noted that the station continued to be used in its original station in the Boys Quarter on Marina Parade in Banjul while a new studio complex was being built at *Mile 7*. In anticipation of this, the government recruited several new staff in late 1969 in readiness for the new station. Six high school graduates, one of whom was Tambedou, were recruited in December 1969. He joined as a production assistant along with five other colleagues - Joseph Taylor-Thomas, Ebrima Cole, Baboucar Gaye, Sara Goddard and Theresa Nicole (later known as Lala Fatma Hydara). They all reported to Sidi Jammeh at the Marina Parade studio and were introduced to the broadcasting world.

Tambedou noted that Radio Gambia moved from Banjul to *Mile 7* in 1971, which saw an end to broadcasting from the converted Boys Quarter on Marina Parade and the beginning of broadcasting from modern studios fitted with the latest state-of-the-art equipment of that era. The move also ushered in a completely new era in broadcasting, with the introduction of Radio Gambia on the mediumwave band. Until that point, broadcasting in the Gambia had been available only on shortwaves, thanks to the Cable and Wireless Company. The transformation from shortwave to medium wave also saw the introduction of the country's first FM radio Channel. While the mediumwave transmitters were located in Bonto, about 40 miles away from the capital, Banjul, with the FM frequency acting as a link between *Mile 7* and Bonto, listeners with FM receivers could listen to Radio Gambia on FM as well as the mediumwave band. However, the primary

function of the FM frequency was to switch Bonto on and off from *Mile 7*. This was a real revolution in Gambian broadcasting. Another novelty of the time was the commissioning of a new relay station in Basse to make Radio Gambia programmes more accessible to listeners in that part of the country.

Dr. Lamin Mbye was later appointed as the new Director of Information and Broadcasting. He was assisted by Swaibou Conateh, the Broadcasting Officer, and Sidi Jammeh, the Head of General Programmes and Administration. Musa Manneh was the News Editor at the Information office in Banjul and later became the head of the newsroom at Radio Gambia. When Sidi Jammeh resigned to pursue further education in the US, Marcel Thomasi, a recent graduate from Fourabay College, University of Sierra Leone, was recruited to take over as the new administrator.

Radio Gambia's pioneering broadcasters include Joy Coker, Joseph Gabbidon, Ransford Cline-Thomas, Nana-Grey Johnson, Mr. Kabir Faal, and Mam Sait Ceesay. Amie Joof, Tom Bright, Malick Jeng, and Peter Gomez also subsequently joined the team later at the station, where Saikou Beyai, Mansour Njie, Musa Camara, and Hassan Njie were the pioneers of indigenous language broadcasting.

During the early days of Radio Gambia, the English News Editor was stationed at the Information Office in Banjul. It was here that the news bulletins were compiled and edited before being sent to Broadcasting House at *Mile 7*. Once the news reached *Mile 7*, the newsreader would carefully study the text before broadcasting it. The main news bulletin was broadcast daily at 6 pm, followed by translations into Mandinka and Wolof.

The Gambia used to have only one radio station, Radio Gambia, for a long time. However, according to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority's 2019 Annual Report, the country now has

at least 39 registered radio stations and five TV channels. Under the Barrow administration, the number of private radio stations has increased by almost 75%, indicating a more free press than the previous regime, which was known for suppressing independent media.

No	Name	Frequency	Location
1	Soma Community FM	88.8 MHz	Soma - LRR
2	Bwiam Community FM	91.9 MHz	Bwiam - WCR
3	Poliso FM	95.7 MHz	Banjul Police HQ
4	Kerewan Community FM	100.5 MHz	Kerewan - NRR
5	Bansang Community FM	107.2 MHz	Bansang - CRR
6	Brikamaba Community FM	96.8 MHz	Brikamaba - CRR
7	Brikama Community FM	98.0 MHz	Brikama - WCR
8	Farafeni Community FM	99.9 MHz	Farafeni - NRR
9	Kairanying Community FM	107.9 MHz	Kuloro - WCR

15	Janneh Koto FM	101.1	Kombo Gunjur
16	Libidorr	101.1	Brusubi Phase 2
17	Unique FM	101.7	Basse
18	Radio 1 FM	102.1	Fajara Golf
19	Veritas	102.9	Church HQ LTK German
20	Kora FM	103.9	Kanifing South
21	Hot FM	104.3	Bakau New Town
22	Hill Top FM	104.7	Serekunda Baritesh
24	Paradise FM	105.7	Pipeline near BSTS
25	Paradise FM	105.8	Basse
26	Paradise FM	105.5	Farafeni
27	Vibes FM	106.1	Manjai
28	AL Fallah FM	107.2	MDI Road kanifing
29	Afri Radio	107.6	Kairaba Avenue
30	Choice FM	103.6	Sukuta
31	Sahel FM	88.5	MDI Road kanifing
32	Light FM	89.6	C/O Ahmadya 7 Kombo Sillah Drive Talinding
33	Qradio	103.3	Bijilo
34	Sky FM	96.9	Old Yundum
35	Deggo FM	91.5	Kairaba Avenue
36	Nexus FM	105.2	Serekunda
37	DHK FM	99.5	Sinchu Alagie
38	Atlantic FM	106.4	Sanchaba Sulaye Jobe
39	Home Digital FM	99.1	Brikama
40	Sound City Radio	94	Essau
41	Fayda FM	90	Bundung Kakunda
42	Foroyaa FM	97.2	Kombo Sillah Drive
43	Boulundala FM	91.2	Birkama New Town
44	Banjul FM	98.9	Independence Drive, Banjul

Figure 8 Commercial and private radio stations. Source: Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)

## 2.7 Evolution and Importance of News Translation Research

News translation, which has always played a pivotal role in journalism and is considered to be one of the utmost crucial steps in news production, is a unique form of translation performed by institutions of mass communication (Xia, 2013; Kekana & Mogoboya, 2022). Translation has made the news production process a crucial factor in the (inter)national arena and inseparable from translation (Valdeón, 2017b; Troqe et al., 2015; Zanettin, 2021; Kekana et al., 2022). Translation is pervasive in the news production process—from the first step and throughout the entire process, which means from information gathering and collating to disseminating and news interpretation (Eltheb, 2022; Doorslaer, 2010). Yuan and Ma (2020) defined news as “a kind of text that records and disseminates information in newspapers, television, Internet and other media (p.2). Danesi (2009) defined news as “a report of a current happening or happenings in a newspaper, on television, on radio, or a website, while Conway, K., & Davier, L. (2019) quoted Tesseur, W. (2014), defining news translation as “phenomena of translation, interpreting, and intercultural mediation at play in the production of news whether in news organization or, less frequently, in organizations providing journalists with press releases” (p.2). Palmer (2011) defined news translation as a process that covers translational phenomena occurring “in news gathering and dissemination.” (p.186). Bielsa (2019) explain that “news translation refers to the wide variety of processes through which the news is communicated across linguistic divides.” (p.365). The two definitions underpin the pervasiveness of translation in the news production process and the fact that the two processes are inseparable.

News translation is of paramount importance since it ultimately seeks to transmit information in a fast and precise manner so that it can be effectively communicated to the end users. Furthermore, it enables texts to travel to new contexts, bridging linguistic and cultural boundaries (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009; Palmer, 2011; Troque & Marchan, 2017). Matsushita and Schäffner (2018) affirmed that a newsworthy event has the potential to generate multiple news reports in various languages using translation, while Kalantari (2022) considered translation as one of the core processes in the production of global news. A news translator is also a key mediator and negotiator in news translation discourse between various ideologies and cultures because translation-mediated events are disseminated through the media. (Putri, 2019; Kurambayev 2022). Valdeón (2012) argue that even though the identity of a news translator might be invisible, their product, which is the news they contribute to produce and disseminate, is evident and undeniable.

The history of news translation can be traced back to the evolution of modern journalism in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, with newspapers developing an interest in foreign news to enlighten local readers regarding current affairs in foreign lands (Palmer, 2011; Valdeón, 2013; Rasul, 2019). News printing started in Europe in the form of news pamphlets following the invention of the printing press around 1436, with these pamphlets being transported and translated across Europe, where Dutch news was translated into English, French news was rendered into Catalan and Spanish, and German papers were translated into Scandinavian (Valdeón, 2017b; Zanettin, 2021).

The invention of the telegram in 1833, to be exact, dramatically impacted global news production and translation landscapes, with news becoming more broadly and easily accessible wherever the events being reported took place (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009; Zanettin, 2021). Another critical factor that transformed news production and translation was the emergence of news agencies. Agence

Havas, launched in 1835 by Charles Havas, which subsequently became (Agence France Presse), was the first news agency to translate foreign newspapers for the French media, with more agencies following, including the Associated Press in 1884 and Reuters in 1851.

Zanettin (2021) discussed far more historical developments in this field, like the changing landscape of global news in the 1960s with the multiplication of information due to the advent of TV and satellite, as well as the emergence of the Internet in the 1990s, arguing that these developments rapidly transformed the global news production and translational practice. With the advent of the digital era and globalization, the news is disseminated at unprecedented speed worldwide, where the role of translation cannot be overemphasized (Putri, 2019). In the same vein, Xia (2019) argues that the distribution of world news “depends on enormous translational activity” (p.32), referring to the September 2001 attack on the United States, where Bin Laden’s video was made available for a global audience via translation. Xia explains that news events happen in different locations worldwide and are shared with people through various mediums like newspapers, radios, magazines, television, and the internet, with translation playing a critical role in the global flow of information.

The study of news translation is essential to understanding the news gathering and dissemination process, considering the effects of translation on the news discourse (Valdeón, 2015). This was confirmed by Bielsa (2019) and Bielsa (2015), who found that the study of news translation offers new insights into news organizations, agents and texts and can be an effective tool to empirically examine the news production process as a whole.

Though there has been a critical examination of news as discourse over the past 30 years, the study of news translation is a relatively new and understudied research domain in the field of translation

studies, or perhaps it is at the periphery of translation studies (Davies, 2019; Holland, 2006)—a reality that was succinctly echoed by Valdeón (2015) who wrote: “If Translation Studies is a young discipline, news translation research is in its infancy” (p. 634). Bielsa (2015) detailed why the study of news translation is still in its early stage, including the fact that translation practices are largely invisible within the news production process and the predominant focus of TS research on literary translation. In addition, she added, journalistic work had typically been within the realm of monolingual media studies (MS) and media sociology. This was confirmed by Xia (2019), who posits that despite the central role of translation in contemporary international news transmission, the study of news translation has often been regarded as a branch of media study and cultural theory.

Earlier studies have largely neglected the role of translation in news production, with the discursive structure of news translation being the sole mention of such studies (Palmer, 2011). (Bielsa, 2015) notes that research in media studies has been primarily monolingual; hence, they tend to ignore language differences and translation. Other previous news translation studies focused on structural issues such as newsroom organizations, while much of the existing research is centred on printed and online materials dealing with specific case studies of specific language pairs and selected newspapers in one particular country, as well as the work of journalists as they negotiate their way through a culture or a language that is not their own (Schäffner, 2012; van Doorslaer, 2010; Conway & Vaskivska, 2010). Doorslaer (2010) explains that the focus of research on printed and online material is because news texts from audio-visual material are oral, hence not readily available for written textual analysis, while admitting the difficulty of retrieving data from the media themselves.

On the other hand, earlier publications dedicated to translation and media studies were not keen on news translation. For instance, the first edition of the Routledge Encyclopedia of TS published in 1998 made only passing references to news translation and did not assign a specific entry to the transformations that characterize the news production process (Valdeón, 2015). Ten years later, this author explains, the 2009 second edition of the above-mentioned encyclopedia included an entry by Communications Professor Jerry Palmer about *news gathering and dissemination*, in which the latter underscored the importance of studying news translation to understand the changes that occur in the news as a result of translation. Valdeón (2015), who traced the development of news translation research in a paper published in 2015 entitled “*Fifteen years of journalistic translation research and more*,” notes that a small number of articles published in proceedings and specialized journals had paved the way, including a publication by Akio Fujii, a Japanese translation scholar, who set out in 1988 to explore the features of translated news, suggesting that the role of a news translator is more that of a gatekeeper--a term which German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin first used in his posthumous 1947 publication to describe the travelling of news through specific communication channels (Kalantari, 2022). Lewin developed the socio-psychological ‘theory of channels and gatekeepers’ to understand how social changes could be spread in a community (Perrin et al., 2017). Shoemaker & Vos (2009) defined gatekeeping as the “process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people each day” (p.1), noting that the process of gatekeeping determines the nature and content of the news. Therefore, “gatekeeping involves not only the selection or rejection of items but also the process of changing them in ways to make them more appealing to the final consumer” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.13). Xia (2019) points out that various types of manipulation occur during the information flow because of the target readers. Since the 1990s, certain translation

scholars in Europe, North Africa, and, more recently, China and South Africa have paid closer attention to the role of translation in news production (Valdeón, 2015). Researchers in these countries and regions began to publish their findings in leading journals with topics ranging from ethnographic studies to translation practices and conventions (Valdeón, 2017b). Research has primarily been restricted to a few countries, especially Belgium, Canada, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan and the United Kingdom. (Schäffner, 2018). This researcher, however, notes that there has been growing research in news translation in China and Japan, too.

News translation research has kept pushing boundaries since 2000, as previously mentioned, raising questions as to whether it is feasible to examine multilingual practices that do not necessarily have an identified source text (ST) and how we analyze and compare them (Davier, 2019; Rasul, 2019). Recent years have seen a burgeoning body of research in news translation, with the subject gaining traction as a domain within the larger umbrella of translation studies (Valdeón, 2015). News translation has contributed to the extension of TS as an object of study and was institutionalized as a field of investigation during a conference held at Warwick in the United Kingdom in 2006, where scholars and researchers converged to reflect on translational issues in the news (Davier, 2015; Gambier, 2016; Rooyen and van Doorslaer (2021). Schäffner (2012) notes that the Warwick project, sponsored by the UK's Arts & Humanities Research Council between 2004-2006, is, thus far, the most comprehensive research into news translation. Elaborating on the project's significance, this author explains that the researchers had examined the influence of translation on information flows, the operation of news agencies, and the attitude toward translators in such news organizations.

The project, however, was primarily centred on international news agencies that produce news for national or local media (Schäffner, 2018). Valdeón (2015) and Eltheb (2022) considered the year

2009 to be a significant one for news translation because, in that year, Bielsa and Bassnet published the results of a three-year project on news translation in a book entitled *Translation in Global News*, offering a detailed account of the process of news translation and analyzing new texts from major global news agencies as well as from alternative media organizations. (Valdeón (2015) recognized the book as a publication that had an enduring impact on the TS research community, attributing its success to the publication language being English, unlike Hernandez Guerrero, who edited the volume of *La Traducción Periodística* in 2005, to shed light on the complexities of news translation in Spanish newspapers, whose work was restricted to the Spanish-speaking world. Nonetheless, Valdeón (2015) described both monographs as notable developments. This was also followed by the devotion of special issues of two major journals, namely *Across Languages and Meta*, to news translation. Another special issue, *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, was devoted to historical and contemporary news translation practices (Valdeón, 2017a).

Several theories have been proposed to assess news translation and its role in the news production process. Valdeón (2020), who concluded that theoretical frameworks and specific methods are clearly interwoven in news translation research, discussed various theoretical frameworks used by translation scholars to examine the translational phenomenon, including a language-based, functional model of text analysis, domestication and foreignization, corpus-based methods, and discourse analytical approaches. Methods and themes involved in examining news translation are drawn from related disciplines such as sociology, globalization research, imagology, discursive analysis, or ethnography (Schäffner, 2018).

## 2.8 Translation Studies (TS) and Media Studies (MS)

TS is an interdisciplinary domain in which translational activity is examined in relation to other fields, incorporating theories and concepts from similar disciplines into translation practice (Hubscher-Davidson, 2011). Schäffner (2018) and Hubscher-Davidson (2011) affirmed the need for closer collaboration between TS and neighbouring domains, especially media studies, noting that insights gained from interdisciplinary research into news translation can have theoretical and practical implications for journalists and translators. “An exchange between professional journalists and professional translators about their understanding of translation and their respective professional codes should benefit both groups.” (Schäffner, 2018, p.337). Susan Bassnet has equally called for interdisciplinarity with other disciplines in order to look outward, adding that TS has been characterized by its interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary nature (Valdeón, 2017a).

Despite overtures by translation scholars to embrace and collaborate with other domains, particularly those perceived to be related to TS, there has been a sense of skepticism and reluctance on the part of those domains to wholeheartedly reciprocate. While translation scholars have often drawn on the theoretical tenets of other fields, those domains have been largely reluctant to collaborate with TS or even acknowledge its existence as an academic discipline (Valdeón, 2017a). A similar conclusion was reached by Doorslaer (2010), who contends that scholars from other disciplines, even those which are considered to be related to TS, still regard translation as exclusively linguistic transferral—a perception in tune with the popular view of translation, which implies that whatever can be said in Language A can be equally expressed in Language B.

While news translation has gained momentum in TS in recent years, MS remains oblivious to its crucial mediating role in intercultural communications and has been slow to deal with issues related to translation (Bielsa, 2015; Baumann et al., 2011). Echoing a similar sentiment, Valdeón

(2013) notes that translation has rarely been featured in journalistic studies, as media scholars have failed to lend due relevance to translation as part of news production, though translation has been part and parcel of the news gathering and dissemination process since the inception of modern journalism. To rationalize the uneasy relationship between TS and MS, Valdeón (2015) suggested that the main problem in the relationship between TS and MS is the fact that communication scholars do not view translation as the linguistic and cultural transformation necessary to adapt a text to suit the target audience and the goals of the particular news medium.

MS scholars slowly but are steadily realizing the critical role of translation in the news production process, as affirmed by Valdeón (2015) and Bielsa (2015), who observed that MS scholars have recently begun to consider the role of translation in the news production process and that there has been growing awareness of translation and its influence on the news production process. However, news translation research is now attracting considerable interest and widespread attention in media studies due to its crucial role in the news production process. In the same vein, Valdeón (2017b) stated that the importance that communication studies scholars have started to attach to the role of news translation in the news production process is exemplified by the publication of a special issue of *Journalism* in 2001, which was devoted to translation practices at the BBC.

The study of translation in relation to media is part of a broader undertaking by TS scholars to interconnect with other fields in the social sciences and the humanities, such as psychology, sociology, communication studies and neurology (Valdeón, 2017a). The importance of interdisciplinary research between TS and MS is emphasized in the literature, as there is a necessity to bridge the gap between the two disciplines. Valdeón (2014) observed that the complexity of news translation should motivate researchers to consider other disciplines and epistemological approaches, particularly communication studies, which can offer tools necessary to understand the

news *transediting* process. Valdeón (2020) notes that translation scholars borrowed terms from MS, such as gatekeeping, which consists of message transformation, controlling message quantity, supplementation and reorganization. In contrast, media pundits have borrowed terms such as *transediting* from TS, which clearly underscores the need for collaboration. Furthermore, researchers have found a correlation between translation features and media, as identified by Bielsa and Bassnet (2009) and Bielsa (2019), who stated that translation is subject to the same requirements of genre and style that characterize the news production process. They maintained that translation is a form of rewriting in the journalistic field- a theory championed by the pioneer of the manipulation theory, Lefevere (2004, p.3), who aptly stated that “Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text.” According to Zhang and Lyu (2019), this characterization is particularly applicable to news translation.

## 2.9 Conceptual Issues of News Translation

Until recently, conceptualization and empirical studies of news translation were rare, but despite challenges, concepts pertaining to news translation are increasingly being examined by translation scholars and their media counterparts (Bielsa, 2015). A considerable number of debatable issues and questions have been raised by scholars of TS and MS vis-a-vis news translation, including the very definition of translation/news translation themselves, the news translator’s identity, the (un)faithfulness of the news translator, equivalence, and news translators’ (in)visibility, etc. Schäffner (2018) notes that current issues about news translation are whether news translation is a form of translation or needs a particular term, such as *transediting* or *adaptation*, what the theoretical and methodological challenges are and whether news translation studies should be included within TS. Eltheb (2022) notes that the fact that ideas in the news source text could be altered or even manipulated remains subject to scrutiny. Some of the thorniest issues still under

debate are related to news translation as gatekeeping (Floros, 2013). Scholars have also raised questions such as who makes decisions about what news is published, how news is translated and approved before publishing, which techniques are adopted to meet media goals, and how this affects the modern translation theory and practice (Troque & Marchan, 2017). Other debate issues include the target audience of a translated news article, what gets translated, where the translator's loyalty lies, i.e., whether with the target readers or the media narrative and how the concept of equivalence applies in this type of translation (Putri, 2019). Additional persistent issues are the various and complex transformations which translated news undergoes to construct a new reality and the multiplication of source texts due to professional, institutional, and contextual influences. (Conway & Vaskivska, 2010; van Rooyen & van Doorslaer, 2021). Perhaps one of the most contentious issues debated in news translation literature is the relationship between two texts and the nature of the news translation process (Palmer, 2011). Several questions were addressed at the Warwick conference, but much more remains unaddressed (Schäffner, 2012). Furthermore, the questions suggest that translation scholars have yet to reach any conclusive findings about them as the news translation subfield grows within TS. The following are some of the thorny issues in news translation research:

### 2.9.1 Terminological Conundrum!

Terminological issues pertaining to translation stir and attract many considerations among TS and MS scholars, thereby eliciting various answers (Conway, 2010; Davier, 2019; Valdeón, 2014). In this context, there has been a great deal of confusion in the literature regarding the very definition of news translation because it has been vaguely and inadequately defined, hindering collaboration with media studies scholars. TS scholars do not only disagree over the definition of news translation but also about the term itself. While some prefer to call it *news translation*, others, such

as Valdeón, prefer to label the translation involved in news production as *journalistic translation* or *press translation* by Xin Xiong (2014). According to Valdeón's analysis (2017), the foremost problem arising from an academic collaboration between translation and journalism scholars seems to be the definition of translation itself. "Translation itself becomes contentious in communication studies, a discipline closely related to news translation research (Valdeón, 2014, p.51). Bassnet (2005) concurred that the most critical question of empirical research into news translation concerns the definition of the translated news report and whether it can qualify as a translation. While translation scholars believe that translation is a concept that involves a wide range of inter- and intralinguistic changes, their counterparts in media studies tend to view translation as the literal interlinguistic rendition of a foreign text (Valdeón, 2017).

Referring to a definition by Abdel-Hafiz (2002) that news translation is "the process of rewriting entire stories in a new language for a new audience," Conway (2010) cast doubt over this characterization, arguing that such translation is rare in the news production process, given that journalists tend to incorporate bits and pieces of translated texts. Analyzing the difficulty of defining news translation, Davier and van Doorslaer (2018) underlined that the multi-source and multi-author nature of the news production process challenges the definition of translation. The definition of news translation is problematic because of the transformation of the source text to suit the destination of the news story (Bassnet, 2005). Correspondingly, Valdeón (2014) conceded that there is no consensus on a term that adequately explains the processes involved in news translation because translational activity consists of editing and translating and consequently presents new terms, such as *tradaptation* or *transadaptation*, since news translation does not involve word-for-word rendering due to the fundamental transformations that a text goes through in the translation process, while Bani (2006) preferred the use of the term- news translation, as a

more generic one. Similarly, Valdeón (2012) cited the concept of *framing* to account for translation and editing in the news production process. The term, Valdeón argues, underpins the terminological and conceptual difficulties researchers grapple with when dealing with the linguistic and cultural transformation of media texts in general and news texts in general.”

I concur with Valdeón (2014) in concluding that there is no agreement on the terms to be applied to news translation since it involves translation and editing. From the ongoing news translation research, scholars in this field have not agreed on a term that covers both processes. Accordingly, they have argued in favour of a broader definition of news translation to include the media production perspective.

### 2.9.2 Transediting

There has been fierce debate about whether the transformations in news production, particularly editing, should be considered translation. Drid (2018) notes the transformations that news-making goes through, arguing that news is not merely a fictional account but also involves elucidation, expansion and, most importantly, the construction of a narrative following a set of conventionalized professional practices. News is basically a narration where news reporters tell stories about others. Baker (2014) points out that the notion of ‘narrative’ has been part of the theoretical vocabulary of many disciplines as our only means of making sense of the world and our place within it. Drid (2018) also agreed that news-making is a complex process that also involves the contextualization of news in accordance with social norms.

Editing and translation are closely interwoven; hence the concept of *transediting* was coined by Karen Stetting in 1989 in a paper published in the proceedings of the fourth Nordic conference for English studies in Elsinore, Denmark, to account for the blurry borderline between translating and

editing and to refer to the overlap of both activities in the translation task (Schäffner, 2012; Schrijver et al., 2017)). According to Valdeón (2012), although Stetting was an Anglicist rather than a translation scholar, her article was influential in unravelling the complex relations between news production and translation. Schäffner (2012) highlights the significance of the conference's timing and occasion. During the 1980s, translation conferences were rare, and translation research was considered a sub-discipline of applied linguistics. She elaborated that the primary attendants of the conference were university lecturers with research interests in language and literature who favoured faithful translation stemming from their belief that the translator should not move too far away from the source text and reproduce it as faithfully as possible.

Schrijver et al. (2017) believed that *transediting* had been used to examine how bits and pieces from several news sources are reshaped to fit the needs, expectations and values of the target readership and the target organization values. Xia (2019) points out that transediting is aimed at “adapting the translation to its proper context or reformulating the message according to the target culture (p.36). Schäffner traced the historical background of the term *transediting*, pointing out that the amount and nature of transformations involved in the news translation process prompted Warwick Project researchers in 2006 to reflect on the applicability of the term *translation* to the news translator.

Though Stetting’s study drew attention to the relationship between translation and editing, her concept of *transediting* has come under scathing criticism by a section of translation scholars who suggested that the term implies that translation is purely a word-for-word transfer process, which is considered a narrow sense of translation (Schäffner, 2018). Schrijver et al. (2017) critique the Stetting concept of *transediting*, arguing that it poses several questions, including whether editing

is distinguishable from translating and notes that Stetting has failed to offer a precise definition since all forms of translating involve a certain degree of alteration or editing of the ST because, according to these authors, a one-to-one relationship between the ST and TT is not always possible. This argument was documented by Bielsa (2019), who affirmed that translations are not based on a single text. Another criticism made by Schrijver et al. is that *transediting* does not contain an in-depth clarification of the forms of ST rewriting. Bielsa and Bassnet (2009) note that editing and translation imply the tasks of selection, correction, verification, completion, development, or reduction. They critiqued the labelling of news translation as *transediting*, arguing that news translation is similar to editing, through which news reports get checked, corrected, modified, polished up, and prepared for publication. Furthermore, the duo insisted that journalists must rewrite the source text to suit the new context, resulting in significantly different target text content (TT). Therefore, Bielsa and Bassnet (2009) preferred the term *news translation* to refer to the combination of translation and editing, considering the role of a news translator to be the same as that of a journalist because, according to this assessment, journalists are not different from those who translate news reports. Similarly, Gambier (2016) also opined that the term *adaptation* and *localization* are more suitable than *transediting* in describing news translation. Valdeón (2014) employed the concept of *framing*, which belongs to research on communication and journalism, to describe translation in journalistic environments. This author believed that applying the term *framing* would be more productive for the study of news translation because it takes into account the linguistic and paralinguistic elements of news texts, which is paramount to adapting a text for the target readership. In Valdeón's words, *framing* entails "the adaptation of a text for the target readership, a process that can lead to appropriation of source material" (p.51). He suggested that framing replace the notion of trans-editing. It appears that van Doorslaer (2010) is among the few

voices among translators who did not raise an issue with the term *transediting*. Despite the divergent scholastic views on *transediting*, the study of this concept is significant in order to shine a different light on text production within translation (Schrijver et al., 2017). Comăneci (2011) has considered transediting to be a solution of compromise between translation and journalism.

### 2.9.3 News Translator's Identity and (In)visibility

An ever-increasing body of literature shows that translation scholars have been bickering for some time over the proper term to describe the news translator and the translation that takes place in the news production process, considering that multiple people are involved in the news translation process. Thus, scholars of MS may be excused for questioning the applicability of the term *translator* to journalists, with translation scholars clearly embroiled in the confusion over the issue. Journalists involved in news translation typically consider themselves journalists rather than translators, though translation and news production are intrinsically intertwined. (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009). Zanettin (2021) points out that “translation is often not acknowledged in journalistic writing when even reporting speech that is obviously translated from another language, as in the case of official reports, interviews, press conferences, and political speeches” (p.74). As a matter of fact, journalists react with surprise when they are asked about their role as translators because the former generally do not have formal training in translation and are guided by their own professional standards and ethics (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2019; Schäffner, 2018). Bielsa and Bassnet (2009) further argue that journalists or news editors are engaged in news translation as part of their writing task. Halimi (2014) points out that boundaries between the translator's duties and the journalist's work become blurry when the translator takes over the role of a journalist by editing the text through selection, re-expression, addition or deletion based on the goals and interests of the newspaper they serve. In a paper where she discussed acculturation and foreignization in news translation, Bassnet (2005) contends that journalists shun the use of the term *translator* for themselves for two main reasons: they regard the latter as inferior to them and perceive translation as a literal and mechanical process involving mere linguistic transcoding. Conway (2010) observed that the question of who a news translator is is equally ambiguous

because multiple people are involved in the process of news translation. In another paper, Conway (2015) explains that among the reasons media professionals are reluctant to embrace translation studies is because it raises questions about trust and fact in an industry defined by complex values. Journalists approach words in translation to either preserve the source meaning of the source text or to ease comprehension of the published story (Conway, 2015). Journalists deny that their work amounts to translating, though it involves translation because of their conviction that they do not translate foreign news word-for-word (Gambier, 2016). Gambier went on to state that journalists perceive translation in terms of linguistic equivalence that caters to sources by preserving their quotes verbatim and without additional clarification. Gambier clearly sides with journalists in their objection to being referred to as translators, arguing that translation is not considered part of journalists' tasks; hence, journalists tend to accommodate, adapt, and localize according to audience expectations, and they assume that translation implies equivalence, linguistic correspondence, fidelity to the source text, and non-recontextualization. Gambier (2016), therefore, called for the use of clear and consistent terminology and methodology. van Doorslaer (2018), a journalist and translator, coined the term *journalator* to underscore the role of news journalists when using translation to transform and recontextualize news stories (Valdeón, 2017). In the meantime, Orengo (2005) used the term *journalist-translator* because the translator must transmit and adapt a text to a particular readership during the editing process.

Translation has remained invisible in the news production process, with readers rarely realizing that the news they read, particularly from foreign countries, is a product of translation from other languages (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009; Eltheb, 2022). In the same vein, Gambier (2016) notes that readers are rarely conscious of any translation process. Likewise, Davier and van Doorslaer (2018) explain that translation and multilingualism are pervasive even in the media while they are kept

invisible. The duo attributed the invisibility of news translation to the fact that the source text is hardly traceable in the news. In contrast, Perrin et al. (2017) argue that the invisibility of translation in the news is because the process itself and its practitioners are usually quite invisible. Bielsa & Bassnet (2009) note that some editors believe that translated news needs to be invisible, not only because translations are unsigned but also because invisibility guarantees the good quality of the translation.

#### 2.9.4 The relationship between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT)

The issue of the relationship between the source and target text is ubiquitous in translation studies and has been a subject of intense debate by scholars. Jabir (2006) notes that translators are cognizant of the fact that “the norms of the target language will not necessarily go in line with those of the source language” (p.40). Accordingly, there must be a sort of accommodation (adjustment) in the target text in order to arrive at a solution for the problem (Baker, 1998).

The conventional paradigm of source-target text relationship is largely absent in the realm of news translation. According to Schaffner's assessment (2012), the distinction between source text and target text in this domain is deemed to be inconsequential, a notion that is further reinforced by Zanettin's findings (2021), which suggest that a specific text to translate may not even exist in news translation. Halimi (2014), on the other hand, posits that what is traditionally regarded as the source text in the context of translation is actually the target text produced by the newspaper.

Translation is a situational activity that goes far beyond simply producing target texts from source texts, where the social setting of the workplace of a translator and the contextualized resources must be considered (Ehrensberger-Dow & Perrin, 2013). No single source text exists in news translation since rewriting is part of the journalistic process (Davier & van Doorslaer, 2018). In

the introduction of their book, Bielsa and Bassnet (2009) affirmed that not only is information translated, but it is reshaped, edited, and synthesized for the consumption of a new set of readers. Valdeón (2009) also argues that information, rather than the texts, is translated per se in news translation. The sources of news are “unstable” because news stories “are transformed” in many ways for a new audience (Valdeón, 2015b). Furthermore, the source text in news translation undergoes a significant transformation to suit the target news consumers, including the change of title and lead, the elimination of unnecessary information, the addition of crucial background information, the change in the order of paragraphs, and the summarizing of information (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009). These authors asserted that the aforementioned adjustments are justified by the news relevance and background knowledge of the reader in order to make the translated version more like an original, adding that news stories get rewritten and altered without acknowledging the source. This also has been documented by Eltheb (2022), who affirmed that news is frequently rewritten by media outlets to target a particular audience, while Orengo (2005) argues that journalists might abandon ideas present in the source text to meet readers’ expectations. Schöffner (2018) stated that news texts are often drawn from several sources; hence, one specific text with one specific author relationship cannot be easily identified. Contrasting the source text and target text in news translation and conventional translation, van Rooyen and van Doorslaer (2021) remarked that:

“Journalistic text production is almost always based on several source texts that inter- and/or intralingually rewritten, adopted or localized, and recontextualized, whereas the traditional translational situation, for instance, in research about literary translation, is mostly based on an equal number of sources and target texts.” (p. 413)

The authors above clearly refer to an argument by other news translation researchers who drew a line between the conventional sense of translation involving a single text source versus a single target source, unlike news texts involving multiple sources. This idea was succinctly put across by Boéri and Fattah (2020), who points out that news translation challenges the orthodox views concerning translation and “blurs the lines between news production and translation, journalists and translators, engagement and impartiality” (p.74). The relationship between two texts in news translation is influenced by several factors, including the translator’s understanding of the context and purpose of the context and purpose of the original version, which is the source text (Palmer, 2011). Similarly, Gambier (2016) notes the difficulty of reconstructing the exact text production process, considering the complexity of journalistic environments coupled with the fact that news is produced from multiple sources. Therefore, Gambier believed establishing clear source text-target text boundaries is perilous.

#### 2.9.5 Process, Features and Challenges of News Translation

News translation is a unique and complex form of translation where newsmakers appropriate various news production strategies in contextually situated ways (Kekana & Mogoboya, 2022). Zhang & Lyu (2019), therefore, argue that news translation is unique due to the fact that it runs counter to the traditional translation values. Xia (2019) explains that the process of news translation involves an extensive combination of transformation and transfer decisions that individual journalists exercise governed by situational factors imposed by their organizations and surrounding culture. It is not unusual for a translator to expand a text with details or delete those parts deemed too unfamiliar and inaccessible to a target audience (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009). They further remarked that news translation is close to interpreting; hence, methods of interpreting studies could be applied to news translation. Gambier (2016) considered news translation to be a

unique form of communication production with constraints such as tight time restrictions and in-house style preferences, which are among the factors that prompt news translators to rewrite, summarize, cut, clarify, and reformulate the news. Highlighting the features of news translation, Xia (2019) notes that news translation is selective, adding that selective news translation “refers to translating only selected elements of the source text, thus eliminating all parts of the message deemed unfit” (p. 36). Xia also mentioned timeliness as another characteristic that distinguishes news translation from other genres in the sense that a piece of news would lose its worthiness if not translated in a timely manner in order to report it ahead of its competitors. There is no uniform method in news translation, as news organizations tend to pursue different procedures and policies for translation, particularly in international news reporting. Additionally, news translation involves multiple sources, unlike conventional translation, which involves a single source text, implying that the news translation process defies the idea of equivalence, originality, and authorship (Bielsa, 2019; van Rooyen & van Doorslaer, 2021). In the process of news translation, a translated text, in Orengo’s words, is “dismembered” and then repackaged (2005, p.70).

Meanwhile, the process of news translation consists of four stages, namely transporting, that is, the capturing of information to be translated, translating, transposing/transediting, and transmitting (Baumann et al., 2011). Bielsa and Bassnet (2009) quoted Hernandez Guerrero (2005b, p. 157-158) as summarizing the features of news translation as follows:

- The main objective of news translation is to transmit information.
- News translators translate for a mass audience; consequently, clear and direct language must be used.
- News translators translate for a specific geographical and cultural context. Their jobs are conditioned by the medium in which they work.

- News translators are usually “back-translators” and proofreaders.

Sharkas (2022) identified four main strategies in news production: selection, reproduction, summarization, and local transformations. Elaborating on these, this author notes that the selection strategy allows journalists to use one or various sources in producing a news report. Regarding the other two strategies in news production, Sharkas points out that summarization in news production involves deletion, generalization, and construction, while local transformation affects the microstructure of the text. Translated news is characteristically domesticated, with translation resembling the use of new forms with the ultimate goal of responding to the information needs of new audiences (Bielsa & Bassnet, 2009).

## 2.10 Studies on Radio News Translation

Previous research has primarily focused on various aspects of news translation, including the function of news translators in the news production process, the standing of translation in newsrooms, the multiplication of source texts and the changes they undergo, and the complex issue of equivalence. Arguably the most authoritative book on news translation to date, *Translation in Global News* (2009) mainly focuses on how news is gathered and disseminated, as well as how translation is performed by and for news agencies. Despite several reviews in the literature addressing the importance of news translation, a few recently published articles have comprehensively discussed “sight translation” in relation to news, which is defined by Agrifoglio (2004) as “an oral translation of a written text” (p. 43). Much of the extant literature is focused on news translation in newsrooms rather than studios. However, a few studies have been conducted on radio news translation, interestingly in Southern Africa, namely South Africa and Zambia. For

instance, Marlie van Rooyen and van Doorslaer have jointly published a paper entitled “*News translation as collaboration in multilingual community radio stations in South Africa*,” in which they discussed the collaborative nature of news translation in South Africa, particularly concerning community radio stations. Despite its significance, the paper falls short of tackling core issues related to news translation, such as the strategies adopted by news translators in overcoming the challenges they face. In contrast, Mvula (2017) has written a masters thesis entitled “*Translation Strategies to Establish Equivalence in English - Nyanja News Translation at Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation*,” examining the translation strategies applied to establish meaning equivalence in the process of translating news in English into Nyanja at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). The study established challenges associated with translating news in English into Nyanja at ZNBC, including a lack of training or upgrading, a lack of terminologies and time constraints. Meanwhile, Mvula’s study has revealed that news translators employ several translation strategies in translating news from English into Nyanja, including borrowing, explanation, omission, addition, and translation by using general and less expressive words. It was revealed that most strategies were used when there was no direct equivalent in the target language to make it easier for that target audience to understand. Tebogo Kekana and MJ Mogoboya (2022) also published a paper entitled “*Perspectives of SABC News Bulletin Readers at Thobela Fm Radio Station: Insights into The Challenges of News*,” in which the two researchers conducted a study on the views of news bulletin readers with regards to translation challenges faced by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) at the Thobela FM radio station. The researchers found that despite the abundance of information available on translation strategies, news readers at Thobela FM lack a guiding principle on how to establish an effective news translation policy.

In his overview of 'journalistic translation research,' Valdeón (2015) points out that more attention has been devoted to the final products than to the actual process of news translation. However, Holland (2006) enumerated some of those constraints, including time pressure, resources, linguistic constraints and the pervasiveness of the English language- a challenge for non-English media, which feel obliged to translate their content into English to speak to an international audience. Further, a paper published by Maria Cristina Caimotto and Federico Gaspari in 2018, entitled "Corpus-based study of news translation: challenges and possibilities," explored some of the main difficulties inherent in analyzing translated news texts, which are often heavily mediated and edited in various ways. Additional challenges, such as training and financial constraints, among others, have yet to be adequately investigated. Schäffner (2018) expects future research to include more countries than the few mentioned earlier and to expand beyond print media and news wire services as well as into media interpreting, voice-over dubbing and re-recording (Schäffner, 2018). Although further investigations are needed, the present study contributes to a better understanding and characterization of news translation.

Upon thorough examination of the existing literature pertaining to news translation, it has become increasingly apparent that significant gaps and shortcomings continue to exist. The definition of news translation itself, as well as the identity of the news translator, remains a matter of ongoing debate among scholars. The issue of equivalence in news translation is yet another point of contention, while researchers have yet to identify a universally accepted method that adequately explains the relationship between news production and news translation. This serves to highlight the problematic nature of the relationship between translation studies and media studies scholars. Moreover, there is a notable lack of research on the challenges associated with the translation of radio news, which serves as the primary focus of my research endeavor.

The field of news translation remains is evolving, with a multitude of unresolved conceptual concerns necessitating further comprehensive investigation. The merging of the realms of media and translation is crucial to properly addressing the contentious conceptual issues outlined in the chapter.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an overview of the literature on news translation, emphasizing the need for further research in this domain. The importance of interdisciplinary studies between the translation and media domains is also highlighted. Furthermore, this chapter addressed the conceptual issues and questions raised in news translation research, including the definition of news translation, the role of the news translator, and the challenges associated with faithfulness and equivalence.

To gain a deeper understanding of how translations undergo transformations, relevant theories such as Skopos Adaptation and Sight Translation will be examined in the following chapter. These theories will serve as the theoretical foundation for our research and will provide the basis for the data analysis of the core issues that arise from this study.

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Framework

This chapter primarily discusses the foundational review of existing theories that serve as a roadmap for developing my arguments pertaining to the news translation process and practices in the Gambia. While several theories could have been relevant to my research, I decided to concentrate on three specific theories: the Skopos adaptation and sight translation. These theories are especially pertinent since they aid in defining the news translation processes and practices in the Gambia. Gambia's news translators at privately owned or state-run media outlets translate at sight, which requires specific skills to be discussed later. Additionally, news translators vary their methods and strategies depending on the type of news story and the text they are translating. They frequently employ adaptation to tackle issues arising from the source text or the situation, which do not exist in the target language culture. On the other hand, the Skopos theory is also a crucial concept in the news translation process. It is an approach that underscores the significance of the purpose of the translation in guiding the translation method. In other words, the purpose of the news translation dictates the translation approach.

In summary, the chapter presents a perceptive discourse on the theories germane to comprehending the news translation process in the Gambia and underscores the significance of the above mentioned theories in this field.

#### 3.1 Skopos Theory

In 1978, Hans Vermeer, a German linguist and a scholar of the functional school, introduced the Skopos theory. This coincided with a change in translation studies that shifted from mainly linguistic and formal translation theories to a more functionally and socio-culturally oriented concept of translation (Schäffner, 1998). Schäffner emphasized the importance of considering contextual factors in translation, such as the target audience's culture and the client commissioning

the work. Jabir (2006) equally notes that the Skopos theory represents a shift from linguistic equivalence to functional appropriateness.

Skopos is derived from a Greek word that literally means “purpose,” suggesting that any translation is action- and goal-oriented; hence, any translational activity needs to have a purpose for determining the translation process. Alternatively, as Jabir (2006) puts it, the product’s function determines the translation process. Schäffner (1998) explains that the theory drew inspiration from several theories, including communication theory, action theory, text linguistics and text theory, in addition to movements in literary studies. The theory goes beyond the dichotomy of faithful vs free translation, prioritizing the needs and expectations of the target text (Gentzler (2001). In other words, the approach seeks another way to translate without relying on the linguistics level per se (Schäffner, 1998 Trisnawati, 2014). Ning (2008) drew a link between the emergence of the Skopos theory and the Cultural Turn in the 80s, which entails that translation is not a mere linguistic transfer. Instead, it involves a cultural transfer, too. Shuping (2013) explains that the cultural turn had spotlighted issues beyond equivalence and fidelity, namely history, culture, ideology, and poetics, among others, while emphasizing that translation does not take place in a vacuum. “Translation has always served a special purpose or many purposes at the same time, and each time it has been shaped by a certain force, power and son on” (Shuping, 2013, p.56). Shuping goes on to argue that translation is not a pure, simple and transparent linguistic process. Vermeer (2021) argued that translation is produced for particular recipients with a specific purpose(s) in a given situation. Similarly, Yuan & Ma (2020) posit that purpose is the most critical factor in the translation process, making the Skopos theory particularly important. Green (2012) argues that in Skopos, a high degree of practical experience is required of the translator to understand what is intended to be achieved in the target text. Ning (2008) explains that a task needs to be specified

for Skopos to be optimally realized, arguing that Skopos allows the translator to have the freedom to act as an expert and bear responsibility for the course of action they choose to take. Jabir (2006) believed that the theory emphasizes the pivotal role of the translator as “a creator of the target text” (p.37), noting that the translator shoulders the task of justifying their choice of a particular Skopos in a given translation situation. “Accordingly, the role of the translator is essential, especially in making the purpose of translating a text clear” (Jabir, 2006, p.39). Jabir goes on to explain that the translator initially receives information or instructions about the purpose of a translation, but they are then free to carry out those instructions contained in a brief, the applicability of which is based on the target culture. In the same vein, Du (2012) examined the role of the translator within the Skopos theory, noting that the translator is a real receiver of the source text who then goes on to inform another audience located in a situation under target-culture conditions. The translator, Du went on, offers the new audience a target text composed in accordance with the translator’s assumptions about their needs, expectations, previous knowledge, etc., which differ from those of the original author. That is because source-text recipients and target-text addressees belong to different cultures and language communities (Du, 2012). The target consumer of a translation is equally considered in the Skopos theory and is described by Jabir (2006) as the “main factor determining the target text Skopos” (p.39).

Skopos theory dethrones the source text and demystifies equivalence, emphasizing the target text as an offer of information, where a translation production needs not to have a similar function to a source text. In the same vein ((Trisnawati, 2014, Ning, 2008). In Skopos theory, the source text loses its primary and sacred status and merely serves as one of the various information sources utilized by the translator but not as the foremost criterion in their decision-making.

Trisnawati (2014) explains that the Skopos theory has received critiques from the proponents of linguistic and equivalence-based theories, particularly with regard to the status of the source text in Skopos theory, arguing that the source text should be framed as the starting point regardless of the purpose of the text. Another critique levelled against Skopos theory, according to Trisnawati (2014), relates to what the critics term as an emphasis on the message instead of the richness of the meaning. Meanwhile, Jabir (2006) notes that the critics of the Skopos theory believe that the theory allows the end to justify the means in the translation process, making it inappropriate for translating texts such as literary or religious translation. Jabir also contends that not all actions have an intention; hence, action-based translation theories are questionable and that not every translation is purposeful because, according to him, the translator does not have a specific purpose in mind while translating the source text. Jabir (2006) also questioned the originality of the Skopos theory, considering the existence of functionalism. Meanwhile, Du (2012) cast doubt over the generalizability of the Skopos theory, arguing that the theory is only valid for non-literary texts and that it does not pay attention to the linguistic nature of the source text nor the reproduction of micro-level features in the target text.

On the other hand, the proponents of the Skopos theory believe that translation is a communicative act; hence, its purpose determines the entire translation process (Nord, 2001, p124). Trisnawati (2014) defended the Skopos theory, arguing that “the fact that the translator is provided with a translator brief is indeed the answer for every critique addressed toward the theory” (p.248). Enumerating the merits of the Skopos theory, Du (2012) points out that the theory has brought a nuanced concept for the status of the source text and target text, adding that a source text can have different translations based on the purpose of the target text. In addition, Du argues that no one

source text has a perfect correct translation; hence, the target text becomes the focus of the Skopos theory.

The majority of translation scholars who have conducted thorough studies into news translation hold the view that equivalence is inapplicable to news translation, considering the massive transformations a source text goes through in news translation to meet the expectations of the target culture or audience.

In the context of news translation, Comăneci (2011) established a correlation with the Skopos theory, wherein the primary objective is to rewrite, reshape, reformulate, and reorganize source texts to cater to the target readers. Comăneci says journalists are mostly rewriters whose text functions as originals in the target culture (p.81).

Through a comprehensive review of the literature, it has been observed that news translators frequently adopt a translation strategy that is congruent with the presumed expectations of the target readership or audience. In this regard, the Skopos theory has been proposed as a viable theoretical framework that facilitates a nuanced and in-depth understanding of news translation. A study by Bouziane (2016), which utilized the Skopos theory in the translation of online advertising from English into Arabic, revealed that the translator often resorts to transmutation techniques, such as addition, omission, explanation, and transliteration, in order to effectively convey the intended message of the target advertisement to its intended readership.

Upon studying the works of various scholars and interacting with my research participants, I have gained a deeper understanding of Skopos theory and its significance as a goal-oriented approach to translation. It has become apparent that the purpose of a translation is a determining factor in the strategy employed by these individuals when translating news articles. For instance, in matters

relating to court proceedings, Gambia's Mandinka news translators tend to prefer literal translation with the primary objective of informing the audience about the court proceedings while avoiding the risk of being summoned by local courts for mistranslation. Conversely, in more general topics such as politics, they utilize techniques such as paraphrasing and similar strategies.

### 3.2 Adaptation

In addition to the Skopos theory expounded in the preceding section, the adaptation theory assumes significance in comprehending the nuances of news translation from English to Mandinka. The adaptation strategy in news translation was identified as particularly important by Stetting (1989), who coined the term 'transediting' to capture processes in international news production that go beyond replacing source text with the equivalent target text.

Adaptation is a salient characteristic of translation, as posited by Vandal-Sirois and Bastin (2012), who contend that "every translator needs to adapt at some point or another" (p.26). In a similar vein, Shuttleworth and Cowie (2017) explain that adaptation is a "term traditionally employed to denote any TT in which a particularly free translation strategy has been adopted" (p.22). The authors further note that although adaptation has garnered mixed reviews, it continues to be regarded as one of the possible solutions to translation challenges. Vandal-Sirois and Bastin (2012) maintained that the practice of adapting a text for a new specific audience is rooted in the old debate of domesticating versus foreignizing approaches. They add that despite criticisms, adaptation is considered among the possible valid solutions to various translation challenges, even within translation studies.

Valdeón (2012) points out that postcolonial theorists have employed the concept of adaptation to underscore the appropriation of Western literary works in postcolonial texts. Adaptation

encompasses a range of related notions, including appropriation, domestication, imitation, and rewriting. Valdeón introduced terms such as "tradaptation" or "transadaptation," which denote transformations that go beyond mere word-for-word translation. Vandal-Sirois and Bastin (2012) explain how adaptation constitutes the crux of the localization and internalization dichotomy, particularly in the contemporary era of globalization, wherein products and ideas are marketed to the widest possible audience. Hence, they assert that translation now constitutes an integral component of business strategies and communication plans. These scholars contend that the definition of adaptation approximates that of localization, wherein the source text is modified to ensure greater efficacy of the target culture.

Vandal-Sirois and Bastin (2012) point out that adaptation is crucial in the process of “creating efficient and accurate multilingual communications” (p.21). Vinay & Darbelnet recognized adaptation as a situational equivalence to deal with cultural issues that might have a bearing on the target readers’ reception or understanding of the source text (Vandal-Sirois & Bastin, 2012, p.22), adding: “Adaptation is not necessarily a matter of treason or needless infidelity towards the original the original document or its author” (p.22). Vandal-Sirois and Bastin (2012) argue that producing a text favourable to the target reader is unrealistic without adaptation. Establishing a link between a translational activity and its purpose, Vandal-Sirois & Bastin (2012) said:

“Since adaptations are motivated by keeping the source text applicable to the target culture and ensuring the efficacy of a text for a specific group of readers, the translator should consider the purpose of the text that will be introduced in a different culture.”

The assertion clearly underlines the importance of adaptation in aligning a source text with the expectations of the target readership or audience. In this context, Kekana and Mogoboya (2022)

point out that newsmakers endeavour to produce news in an unambiguous manner and socially acceptable.

Adaptation and selection could be considered to be the translator's instinct as well as the essence of translation itself, in the sense that a translator must adapt and select in the translation process. "The translator must adapt to the translational eco-environment in order to be able to select the specific target texts" (Gengshen, 2003, p.284). Gengshen (2003) referred to the translational eco-environment as "the worlds of the source text and the source and target languages, comprising the linguistic, communicative, cultural and social aspects of translating as well as the author, client and readers" (p.284). Identifying the adaptative role of the translator in such an environment, Gengshen (2003) points out that the translator rules the said environment by making decisions and thus selecting the form of the final product- the target text. Bielsa & Bassnet (2019) and Valdeón (2014) agreed that news translation involves linguistic transformations, including an adaptation of a text for the target readership, appropriation, and the use of verbal accounts and visual information to textual transfer from one language into another. "During the process of translating news, content is very commonly adapted, added, expanded, deleted, summarized, glossed, explained, reformulated, readjusted, recontextualized, and so forth (Xia, 2019, p. 32).

For this reason, Bassnett (2005) and Schäffner (2018) contend that acculturation is the prevalent norm and most crucial feature of news translation. Valdeón (2012) explains that Stetting, who developed the concept of transediting, believes that the term involves various types of adaptation, including adaptation to a standard of efficiency in expression, which she termed as cleaning up transediting, adaptation to the intended function of the translated text in a new social context, identified as situational transediting and adaptation to the needs and conventions of the target culture, which she termed as cultural transediting. Meanwhile, Valdeón (2012) further underscored

the importance of adaptation in translation, referring to Vinay and Darbelnet, who highlighted adaptation as one of the key translation strategies that a translator needs to adapt the source text in order to produce a quality translation. Vinay & Darbelnet (1958) explain that adaptation is a strategy which should be used when the situation referred to in ST does not exist in the target culture or does not have the same relevance or connotations as it does in the source context. The pair noted that adaptation is similar to equivalence in the way that the translator seeks to render the SL into the TL while ensuring it is just as relevant and meaningful as the original was. Valdeón (2012) emphasized that the source news text is adapted to the target audience's expectations in terms of format and content, noting that translation is not a mere linguistic transformation. Valdeón referred to framing as a feature in news translation and an adaptation component involving the selection and de-selection of information. Valdeón (2012) argues that adaptation and appropriation go hand-in-hand and that adaptation is a form of free translation.

Brushing aside the criticisms directed at adaptation theory, Vandal-Sirois & Bastin (2012) concluded that adaptations must not be viewed as “non-translations, treason or transgressions of a source text” (p.37). Instead, they argue that the notion of adaptation represents the visibility that gives translators some recognition as the author of the source text. I concur that adaptation is a befitting translation strategy in news translation, given that the latter does not follow the conventional concept of translation. In news translation, a text must be adapted and transformed to meet the expectations of a new audience; hence, translative interventions are a necessity.

Based on the results of my field research and subsequent data analysis, it is my considered opinion that the dynamics of news translation in Gambia warrant close examination through the prism of Skopos and adaptation theories. The purposes of a translation determine the strategies that a news translator employs for a given translation. For example, translators of news related to court cases

in Gambia tend to use literal translation in order to avoid any negative consequences, as the country's courts are known to be highly sensitive to the reporting of proceedings. However, when it comes to translating more familiar topics such as politics, translators tend to be more liberal, making use of strategies such as paraphrasing and modulation.

Given the underdevelopment of the Mandinka language, there are a number of English terms and expressions that do not have an equivalent in the former. As such, translators often resort to adaptation in order to make the news accessible to the audience, as I have shown in my findings chapter. All of the research participants - including those who use dictionaries or seek help from others in order to find the appropriate meaning of a particular term or expression - have emphasized that because certain terms are untranslatable in Mandinka, a translator must find the closest word in meaning to convey the news. During live news broadcasts, translators may occasionally face such situations. The translation of news requires adaptation in order to convey the meaning of complex terms, as word-for-word translation is often impossible. The participants in my research have acknowledged that the main priority is to convey a firm understanding of the news content. In fact, some listeners may call the news translator to complain about a mistranslation of a particular word or expression.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the divergence of Mandinka dialects across various regions in the Gambia presents a challenge for news translators. A given expression may be deemed suitable in one Mandinka dialect while being considered inappropriate or even offensive in another. As such, it is imperative for translators to address all the dialects spoken in the region, including those spoken by the Jahnakas, Jarrankas, and Kombonkas, all of whom have their own unique variations of the Mandinka language. Translating news for diverse linguistic groups can be a challenging task, especially when it comes to sensitive topics related to sex and sexuality.

The conservative nature of Gambian society adds to the complexity of the task, as even professional journalists may feel hesitant to translate such stories for fear of offending their audience.

Furthermore, Sight translation is a fundamental concept for gaining a deep understanding of news translation in The Gambia. In this context, a news translator is required to translate on sight. However, there is a lack of research on how to apply this concept in news translation, as most sight translation studies mainly focus on consecutive and simultaneous interpretation modes. As mentioned earlier, it is crucial to understand the role of sight translation in news translation, as it is a central aspect of the overall practice.

### 3.3 Sight translation

Sight translation is widely acknowledged as an essential mode of interpretation that facilitates immediate access to information processed in a foreign language (Yamada, 2020). However, there exists significant variation in the definition and use of sight translation among translation scholars, stemming from differing perceptions of its nature. While some scholars consider sight translation to be a type of translation, others view it as a form of interpretation. Additionally, there are those who argue that sight translation is a hybrid form of translation and interpreting that is closer to interpreting than pure translation, as seen in the works of Zou and Chen (2023) and Cao (2020). In fact, Cao (2020) suggests that sight translation involves both the visual representation of the source language system and the vocal representation of the target language. Therefore, she defines sight translation as "the reading of a text from the source language into the target language, consisting of reading comprehension, information processing, and delivery" (126).

The term "sight translation" is occasionally used interchangeably with "sight interpretation" due to its mixed nature, as noted by Krapivkina (2018). Gile (2004) posits that interpretation and translation serve the same essential task of re-expressing what has been expressed in one language in another for communication purposes.

However, Agrifoglio's (2004) definition of sight translation as a hybrid of interpretation and written translation seems to be more widely accepted. This is because it involves both written and oral components, converting a message written in one language into a message delivered orally in another (Nilsen & Mansrud, 2015; Lambert, 2004).

Gile (2009) contends that there are certain skills that are shared between consecutive interpreting and sight translation, such as swift analysis of the source text and speedy conversion. Conversely, In Yamada's (2020) research, the key differences between sight translation and consecutive interpreting are highlighted. Firstly, sight translation involves reading while consecutive interpreting involves listening. Secondly, consecutive interpreting requires note-taking, which is not necessary in sight translation. Finally, the most challenging aspect of consecutive interpreting is the combination of listening and note-taking, which can be quite demanding. These factors help to distinguish the two modes of interpretation and emphasize the unique sets of skills required for each.

Lambert's (2004) analysis suggests that sight translation bears greater resemblance to simultaneous interpretation than written translation, primarily due to the exigencies of time pressure, anticipation, and reading for idea closure, which are either absent or limited in the latter. This contention is supported by the observations of Dragsted and Hansen (2009), who concur that sight translation shares many characteristics with interpretation, given the imperative for expeditious delivery in oral communication.

Sight translation is a crucial skill that finds its application in a plethora of professional contexts where prompt conveyance of information in a target language is imperative, most notably in courtrooms. Moreover, it is widely regarded as a prerequisite for embarking on the training of simultaneous interpreting (Cao, 2020).

For the successful delivery of sight translation, a sight translator must possess specific skills and competencies. According to a recent study conducted by Yamada (2020), rehearsal plays a significant role in enhancing the performance of a sight translator. The study underscores the

importance of adequate preparation of the source text within a given time frame to increase processing capacity. To produce a seamless oral translation, the sight translator needs to read ahead and identify keywords and translation units. The first step in processing the source language text is to divide it into translation units, which can be achieved by inserting slashes into the text based on phrases and semantic chunks, as recommended by Yamada (2020). This approach helps reduce the time and cognitive effort required for comprehension by focusing eye movement on shorter text segments, as pointed out by Glide (2002). Lambert (2008) also suggests that sight translators must prepare before production, as sight translation involves longer and more complex sentences than oral language. Furthermore, writing the glosses and numbering the semantic chunks in the source text in the order of translation can help reduce the production capacity requirements.

Agrifoglio's (2004) scholarly work indicates that sight translation is characterized by a set of distinctive features. These include the constant need to access information present in the text, the need to divide attention between the visual input of the written text and the oral output of the translation, and the requirement to coordinate the reading of the source text with the production of the target text simultaneously. Furthermore, the translator must monitor their output while reading to ensure accuracy and clarity, and they gain progressive access to new information as they continue translating. However, it is important to note that there is an extremely high risk of interference from the source text, which can pose a significant challenge to the translator.

The process of sight translation has been a subject of debate among scholars, with some suggesting that it is a less complex task than interpretation. However, Frash and Maksyutina (2010) have challenged this notion, contending that sight translation is equally challenging as simultaneous interpretation, necessitating comparable cognitive processes. Despite the visual nature of the input

in sight translation, the translator must comprehend the source language text and produce the target language text while continuously processing the source text.

Yamada (2020) points out that linguistic interference between the source and target languages is the primary difficulty in sight translation. This view is reinforced by Gile (2002), who posits that the risk of linguistic interference is higher in sight translation because the source text remains visible throughout the translation process. Agrofoglio (2004) further notes that sight translation can be challenging due to the need to coordinate reading, memory, and production while contending with visual distractions from the source language. The challenge, he adds, lies not in the written nature of the source text but in the ability to manage these efforts smoothly. Krapivkina (2018) has observed that during sight translation, the focus often remains on the words rather than the meaning, with limited time available. Frash and Maksyutina (2010) have similarly indicated that the visual elements of a message can impede sight translators by diverting their attention from the meaning of the words.

Zou and Chen (2023) have acknowledged that despite the challenges involved, sight translation output must be clear, natural, and easy to understand. Furthermore, the time taken to produce the output should not exceed the time it takes to read the original text when translating from Language A to Language B. In sight translation, the time difference between the translator seeing the source text language and the output in the target language is referred to as eye-voice-span or sight-speech difference.

In the specific context of radio news translation in Gambia, news translators orally translate news from English into indigenous languages, such as Mandinka, from an English text, utilizing sight translation. However, this method can prove challenging due to interference from the source

language. Upon analyzing audio recordings of news translated into Mandinka from English, it was observed that on certain occasions, the translator would first read English words or sentences before translating them into Mandinka. Furthermore, it was noted that untimely delivery of news can have an adverse impact on the delivery of news at state-owned broadcasters, as highlighted in the findings.

It is important to highlight that the available literature on sight translation in news translation is scarce because it has been predominantly explored in the realm of interpreter training.

The theories discussed above shed light on the strategies and mechanisms employed by Mandinka news translators in Gambia to overcome these challenges, as will be further explored in the Findings Chapter.

The discussion of the theories leads me to the methodology chapter, which discusses in detail the methodological approaches I used in gathering and analyzing the data obtained. To this end, I used an ethnographic methodological approach to study the news translation process in The Gambia through a combination of interviews, documentary analysis of random audios containing news translation from English into Mandinka and, subsequently, direct observation of the field. These approaches helped me identify and analyze unexpected and unknown issues in news translation. Overall, this approach was instrumental in uncovering and analyzing relevant issues of news translators.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

Translation studies scholars have been influenced by sociology for the last 30 years and have found sociological approaches to be beneficial (Valdeón, 2020). Research into media institutions typically relies on fieldwork and semi-structured interviews. Silverman (2021) affirmed that it is crucial for ethnographers to actively listen to the conversations of participants, ask relevant questions, and engage in other forms of observation. Bielsa and Basnett conducted research on news translation practices at news agencies by collecting data through ethnographic observation and interviews with journalists at Agence France Press. Lucile Davier, a scholar in news translation, conducted fieldwork research in the offices of Agence France Press and Agence Télégraphique Suisse in Switzerland. Schäffner (2018) notes that the methodology for researching news translation practices could involve a combination of textual analysis and ethnographic fieldwork. An ethnographic methodology is a qualitative approach that involves studying the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviours of small societies through participation and observation over a period of time, followed by the interpretation of the data collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Similarly, Eltheb (2022) conducted a study to explore the practices of translating news articles, using surveys in the form of interviews and questionnaires delivered to a range of journalists and editors involved in translating news. Silverman (2021) affirmed that it is essential for ethnographers to listen to the participants' conversations, ask questions, and so on. The ethnographic methodology is a qualitative approach that studies beliefs, social interactions, and behaviours of small societies, involving participation and observation over a while and the interpretation of the data collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As such, not only did I observe the newscast at the radio stations I visited, but I also paid close attention to the interviewees' reactions

to the questions posed during the interviews. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) stated that ethnographers endeavour to get inside social worlds in order to have an understanding of these social spheres through the eyes of research participants.

This chapter presents details related to the type of research approach and design used in the study, the study area and sample size, the data collection instruments and procedures, as well as the data analysis process. The chapter equally explains the research procedures and techniques adopted in the study in an attempt to find answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter of the study. The chapter also states the criteria for each research method and clearly explains the whole research process.

As a part of my research on news translation in The Gambia, I conducted a qualitative descriptive study where I obtained data through participant interviews and direct observation in order to assess the process of translating news from English into Mandinka. Researchers use such interviews to gather tangible data (Mills et al., 2014). The approach I used allowed me to uncover and examine unforeseen and previously unidentified issues in news translation. These included the relevant attitudes and emotions of news translators, such as experiencing burnout due to their low wages. Moreover, it enabled me to gather anecdotal information about the experiences of news translators, which was more valuable than textual content. The interviews were supplemented with personal observations by visiting some newsrooms and studios to obtain first-hand information about the process of news translation in the Gambia. To gain first-hand experience, I arranged site visits to various studios, including King FM, Radio Gambia, Paradise Radio and TV, and DHK Radio. During my visit, I obtained permission from their respective managements to join one of their news programs. Interviews were largely conducted in Mandinka because it is the language that my participants were most comfortable with, being their mother tongue, coupled with the fact that it

would help me extract precise answers to my research questions. Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) argue that interviews should be conducted in the language that the participants feel most comfortable with regarding the topic of discussion. As part of my research, I interviewed several news translators and other stakeholders. Although I asked slightly different questions in each interview, the majority of the questions were the same. This allowed me to compare and analyze the responses from different news translators, helping me to identify trends in news translation and better understand the differences between those who work in public and private radio stations. On the other hand, I asked a different set of questions to a historian and media official, as their focus was on the historical aspect of translation and broadcasting in the Gambia. To find participants, I used word-of-mouth recommendations and social media platforms like WhatsApp.

Below is brief information about the above-mentioned study areas:

**The National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC)** is a semi-autonomous institution established by an Act of Parliament in December 1989 to preserve, promote and develop Gambian arts and culture.

**Radio Gambia** is considered the first media broadcaster of the Gambia following its establishment in 1962. Radio Gambia remains resilient despite the existence of a multitude of private radio stations.

**King FM Radio** was founded in 2019 by Alagie Secka, a US-based Gambian, with the aim of promoting and improving the dissemination of information in the country. The radio station operates as an independent entity, providing employment opportunities while fulfilling its primary objective of delivering news to the public. Due to its unique style of news presentation, King FM has quickly become a household name. The station offers a variety of programming, including a

dedicated hour for sports, news coverage in different indigenous languages that focus on the country's political and current affairs, as well as entertainment.

**Paradise TV** is a private broadcaster that transmits live from The Gambia to its heterogeneous audiences across the globe.

#### 4.1 Sample Size

I made sure to have a diverse group of news translators for my interviews, selecting individuals from different media outlets with varying experience levels. The experience levels ranged from 3 to 46 years. In total, I interviewed 12 people, consisting of ten news translators, a historian, and a former information minister. All interviews were conducted in person, except for the one with the information minister, which was conducted remotely due to his being overseas for medical treatment at the time.

#### 4.2 Ethics and Confidentiality

Serious research always involves ethical considerations, which researchers are expected to observe. Saldanha & O'Brien (2014) emphasized that researchers should remind interview participants of the purpose of the interview, ensure confidentiality, and obtain informed consent. Furthermore, informing participants about the expected interview duration is important to avoid rushed answers.

I took measures to ensure that the data I gathered during my research remains confidential. Before conducting any interviews, I sought permission from all participants by submitting consent forms. These forms contained information about my thesis, the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality and privacy standards, data conservation, and compensation. I explained to each participant what the interview entailed and what would be done with their data. Each

participant received a consent form to read and sign. All participants agreed to have their names disclosed in the study. However, I have stored their data carefully. I also obtained confirmation from relevant authorities that no ethical clearance was necessary as per the University of Ottawa's requirements.

#### 4.3 Sampling Technique and Participants

The study was conducted using purposive sampling to select participants who were deemed accessible, knowledgeable about the subject matter, and willing to participate. Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) explain that purposive sampling provides diverse and rich information from participants. It is noteworthy that out of the twelve participants, ten were male, which highlights the need for further research to explore the reasons behind the under-representation of female news translators in Gambia. The interviews were of varying duration, depending on the participants' responses, with some providing detailed answers while others offering brief responses. In order to respect the cultural sensitivity surrounding the subject of age in Gambia, direct questions about age were avoided. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the participants' ages ranged from 25 to 65 years. The list of participants includes news translators and officials, the media outlets they represent, the duration of the interview, and the languages they speak, as shown in the table below:

<b>NAME OF PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>WORKPLACE</b>	<b>interview Duration</b>	<b>Interview language</b>
<b>Bemba Tamedou</b>	Male	Veteran broadcaster and Former Minister of Information of the Republic of the Gambia	Retired	01:23	Mandinka
<b>Hassoum Ceesay</b>	Male	Director-General	National Centre for Arts and Culture in the Gambia	37:16	English
<b>Musa Manneh</b>	Male	Mandinka news reader and program producer	Gambia Radio & Television Services	51:18	Mandinka
<b>Modou Joof</b>	Male	Former Mandinka news translator and current Deputy Director-General	Gambia Radio & Television Services	26:18	Mandinka
<b>Falilou Janko</b>	Male	Newsreader and program producer	Gambia Radio & Television Services	17:13	Mandinka
<b>Kebba Camara</b>	Male	Former newsreader and program producer	King FM	01:01:29	Mandinka
<b>Ebrima Jarra</b>	Male	Senior Reporter and Mandinka news translator	King FM	45:59	Mandinka
<b>Lamin Sanyang</b>	Male	Mandinka news translator and program producer	King FM	32:17	Mandinka
<b>Sally Jeng</b>	Female	Former Mandinka news translator and current RFI correspondent in the Gambia	Paradise TV	40:00	Mandinka
<b>Momodou Colley</b>	Male	Mandinka news translator and program producer	Paradise TV	23:30	Mandinka
<b>Madinding Ceesay</b>	Female	Mandinka news translator and program producer	Paradise TV	17:13	Mandinka
<b>Youssupha Darboe</b>	Male	Manager and news translator	DHK FM	46:29	Mandinka

*Table 1 Information about my research participants*

#### 4.4 Data Collection Instrument

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect quantitative data for the research study. These interviews combine features of structured and unstructured questions, allowing researchers to explore specific issues in depth and identify any inconsistencies while giving more power to the participant. It is crucial to record interviews, and the recording equipment should be double-checked in advance to prevent data loss (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014).

These interviews were conducted face-to-face, except for one, which was done remotely with Mr. Tamedou, a veteran Gambian broadcaster and former Minister of Information. The goal of the interviews was to gather information on the news translators' proficiency and fluency in both the source and target languages, as well as to understand the challenges involved in the process of news translation.

The interview consisted of 18 questions tailored to my research objectives. The first part of the questions aimed to obtain background information on the respondents, including their education, profession, and language proficiency. The second part dealt with the process of news translation, including how news in English is translated into Mandinka, the translators' perception of translation in the context of news, the challenges faced, and the techniques used to overcome them. The last part focused on ethical issues related to news translation and quality control. Meanwhile, the questions designed for historian Hassoum Ceesay and former Minister of Information Bemba Tamedou were aimed at eliciting answers about the history of translation, interpretation, and broadcasting in The Gambia.

#### 4.5. Interview Guide

I had prepared an interview guide with a list of high-level topics and questions I wanted to cover during the interview. This helped me to stay focused and organized while questioning the interviewee. I brought a copy of the guide with me during the interviews, which made it easier to keep track of the questions or topics that had already been covered.

The interview guide (See Appendix section) was designed for news translators, a former Minister of Information, the Director General of the National Centre for Arts & Culture and the HR Director of GRTS. The interview was standardized or semi-structured in order to increase the compatibility of responses and reduce interviewer bias.

#### 4.6 Recruitment scripts

The participants were contacted through the utilization of a pre-written recruitment script. The script, carefully crafted to ensure clarity and comprehensibility, contained pertinent information about the study, including its subject matter, research purpose, the underlying rationale for the collection of data, as well as the anticipated duration of the interview. This recruitment strategy was deemed essential to guarantee the establishment of a systematic and standardized approach to participant recruitment, thereby promoting the delivery of reliable and valid research outcomes.

#### 4.7 Informed Consent Forms

Participants were required to sign an informed confidentiality form before conducting the interviews. This form stated that they could only take part in the study if they completed and signed it. The full consent page can be found in the appendix. After reading the consent form, participants had to indicate their agreement by checking a box that said, "I agree." Once they agreed to the terms, each participant was interviewed separately. All participants checked the "I agree" box.

#### 4.8 Interview Questions for News Translators

**Let us start by talking about your motivations to get into news translation.**

**What continues to hold your interest in this field? (Probe)**

The previous questions were meant to obtain information about the factors that motivated my participants to get into news translation. In other words, I wanted to know whether their news translation career was random or something they planned.

**Overall, into which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

**What informed your language preference (probe)**

The questions above were meant to determine the number of indigenous languages the news translators speak and their language of preference for news translators.

**Now, please tell me how you go about gathering news.**

**Who selects the news to be translated?**

**What are your criteria for news collection? (Probe)**

The questions above seek to understand the process of news translation and how it differs from one news outlet to another.

**Great, what do you think of the translation process?**

The question above seeks to assess patterns of news translation processes in news outlets.

**What happens if you are unable to translate a particular word or expression?**

**Give me (an) example(s) of a word or expression you could not translate into Mandinka.**

Translating news from English into Mandinka is fraught with challenges; hence, these questions seek to understand the types of translation challenges news translators face and how they cope with them.

**Now, let us move to the types of training courses you regularly take.**

**What do you mainly take away from the training courses? (probe)**

The questions above are intended to establish whether news translators undergo training and the types of training courses they regularly take for capacity building.

**Is knowledge of English a prerequisite for hiring news translators?**

The question aims at determining whether knowledge of English is considered a determinant factor in hiring a news translator being the source language from which news is translated into indigenous languages, including Mandinka.

**Well, suppose you were in charge and could make one change to improve news translation. What would you do?**

This question is meant to get ideas from the participants about improving Mandinka news translation, given that they are well aware of the challenges associated with news translation.

**What are some of the professional challenges that you face as a news translator?**

The question aims to assess the types of challenges news translators face and whether they have any impact on their keenness and enthusiasm for news translation.

**How has the regime change impacted your work?**

The Gambia was under a dictatorship from 1994 to 2016, where independent journalists were persecuted; hence, the question is meant to determine whether the regime change impacted their work.

**Highlight the importance of your work to the public.**

The question above seeks to evaluate the importance of news translation in a largely illiterate population.

**What are your audience's expectations? (probe)**

**How do you engage your listeners to get their feedback?**

The questions above seek answers as to how news translators engage with their audience to get feedback about their work and whether they express critical reviews of it.

**All right, is there anything else you think I should know?**

This question was meant to allow participants to shed light on points I missed and offer my participants the opportunity to ask questions. Saldanha & O'Brien (2014) explain that asking the participants whether they would like to add any comments is usually regarded as a good manner and research practice.

#### 4.9 Interview Questions for The Historian

**Who is Hassoum Ceesay?**

This question was meant to gather information about the participant's background as a renowned Gambian historian.

**How would you assess the status of Mandinka as a major native language?**

The question was intended to establish the status of Mandinka as Gambia's major indigenous language.

**Ironically, all these attempts were abandoned. Why?**

Efforts made by the colonial administration to elevate the status of Mandinka were abandoned by Gambia's ruling elite; hence, the question was meant to establish facts and factors around such a decision by the very people who identified themselves as "nationalists."

**Was it a good idea to abandon those plans?**

In his capacity and experience as a historian, I decided to ask this question to determine his position on the elite's decision to ignore plans to elevate Mandinka as Gambia's lingua franca.

**The general perception is that the colonial power has marginalized and suppressed the local languages.**

In this question, I needed further clarification regarding the general perception that the colonial administration spared no effort in promoting the English language at the expense of indigenous languages.

**Are there efforts at the moment to elevate the status of our indigenous languages?**

Amid a nuanced conversation about the role of indigenous languages, I wanted to know if there is a political will to resurrect previous efforts geared toward elevating Mandinka.

**Could you tell us about the role of interpreters under the colonial administration?**

Though their role was controversial, the colonial administration would not have succeeded without them, so this question is meant to obtain information about translators and interpreters during the colonial era because very little is known about them.

**How were the interpreters viewed under the colonial administration?**

This is a follow-up question to ascertain whether the public appreciated the role of interpreters and translators during the colonial era.

**Who are some of the most prominent interpreters?**

Very little is known about Gambia's pioneering translators and interpreters, so I posed this question to gather some biographic information about them.

**How were the interpreters recruited?**

This question is meant to establish the criteria set by the colonial administration to hire translators.

**What was the interpreter's financial status during the colonial administration?**

This question is intended to establish the well-being of translators and interpreters during the colonial era in terms of salary and other benefits.

**The role of interpreters was controversial; tell us more about that.**

By asking this question, I wanted to know more about the controversial role of interpreters during the colonial era because while some appreciate their role, others consider them as traitors.

**Overall, what is the general perception of the interpreters?**

This is a follow-up question to the previous one for more clarity.

**What are some of the challenges facing our translators today?**

The question is meant to compare and contrast the challenges faced by translators now and before.

### **Now, could you shed light on the history of Broadcasting in the Gambia?**

I posed this question to obtain information about a historical account of broadcasting in the Gambia.

### **How did the Mandinka news start?**

The Mandinka news translation started long before the Gambia gained independence; hence, I am keen on the historical background of news translation in the Gambia.

### **Last word?**

This question was meant to allow participants to shed light on points I missed and offer my participants the opportunity to ask questions.

#### **4.10 Interview Questions for Former Minister of Information Bemba Tamedou**

- **When and how did you join Radio Gambia?**

This question was meant to obtain information about the recruitment process at Radio Gambia in its early days.

- **Now, tell me about the history of broadcasting in the Gambia.**

Having served Radio Gambia in its early days, the participant maintains an institutional memory; hence, I posed this question to have a historical perspective of the national broadcaster.

- **Who were the pioneers of Radio Gambia?**

**I asked a number of participants the same question to get as many pioneers as possible.**

- **News is translated into all major indigenous languages; how did it all start?**

This question was meant to obtain information about the history of news translation at Radio Gambia, being the first radio in the Gambia.

- **How did the idea of translating news into Mandinka come about?**

**By asking this question, I wanted to know if the idea of translating news came from an individual or if it was a deliberate policy decision.**

- **Who was the first Mandinka news translator?**

I have received different accounts about the first Mandinka news translator, so I asked the question to corroborate the answers.

- **What were the main criteria for hiring news translators?**

The question was meant to establish facts about recruitment amid assumptions that hiring is based on knowledge of Mandinka.

- **Were there training opportunities for news translators?**

- **Is Radio Gambia different today from the times you were there?**

- **What is the importance of news translation for Gambia's mainly illiterate population?**

- **From your point of view, what are the main challenges of news translation in the Gambia?**

**Closing:**

**Before we wrap up, what do you think is the most important of all the things we discussed, and have I missed anything?**

Thanks again for the opportunity. It is highly appreciated. I promise to share the interview transcript for any necessary corrections, so please could you share your contact details?

#### 4.11 Data Collection

The process of collecting data for this research involved qualitative methods, including audio recordings of translated news, random newspaper clippings from relevant websites, and transcripts of interviews with participants. During the interviews, newspapers were used as elicitation tools to evaluate how news translators handle technical terms. Elicitational tools are techniques used to elicit information during research. This means that participants were asked to translate specific terms and expressions from English into Mandinka, as found in newspaper copies. The news audios used in this study were retrieved mainly from my WhatsApp archive and examined from January 2nd, 2022, to November 29, 2022. The objective was to identify the process and practices of news translation in the Gambia as well as assess how much media outlets have transformed during this period following the fall of the dictator, who was notorious for muzzling independent media. During this period, many privately owned radio stations focused on soft news, turning into entertainment entities to avoid the wrath of the State. Since the advent of the new democratic dispensation in the Gambia in 2017, the country has seen an increase in independent media outlets focused on hard news, raising political awareness by translating and analyzing news, particularly pertaining to governance. The primary data also included archives obtained from the Gambia National Museum to explore news translation from a historical perspective.

#### 4.12 Data Analysis

Qualitative data are data in the form of words derived from observations, interviews and documents, while Qualitative data analysis and interpretation involve bringing flexible and insightful order into rather messy data as well as perceiving patterns from random information (Ruona, 2005; Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). Ruona (2005) explains that the purpose of data analysis is to “search for important meanings, patterns and themes in what the researcher has heard and seen” (p.236).

Mills et al. (2014) note that questioning the data whilst writing effectively advances the conceptual dearth of qualitative research. In the same vein, Mills et al. (2014) explain that data analysis is based on the researcher's decision-making regarding evidence identified in the data and consists of preparing and organizing data, coding and representing the data collected in text tables and figures. They defined coding as "the labelling of a data segment using a term that captures the researcher's interpretation of its essential meaning" (p.16).

It is crucial for researchers to remain mindful of the dangers of confirmation bias and to actively seek out evidence that both confirms and disconfirms their hypotheses. This approach ensures that the research is founded on sound principles and is not swayed by personal biases or beliefs. As a former bilingual editor, it is important for me to acknowledge that my background could potentially pose a risk for confirmation bias in research. In order to mitigate this risk, I approached the data with an open mindset, free from any preconceived notions or biases. As Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) have noted, the sharing of findings with participants is an important aspect of this process, as it allows for a more transparent and collaborative approach to research. To this end, I shared the findings of my study with all the participants and none of them has expressed an objection.

As part of my study, I analyzed random newspapers and audio clips to understand the process and practices of news translation. To gather data for my research, I selected a subset of these materials as elicitation tools and conducted interviews with participants. Elicitation tools are a set of research techniques that are employed to extract valuable information from participants. For instance, I used newspaper clippings to inquire about the translation of specific terms or expressions from news translators. I equally used recordings of translated news to ascertain how news translators go about tackling certain translational challenges. This technique is particularly useful in qualitative

research, as it allows researchers to determine how translators approach difficult or ambiguous terms in their work. This information can then be analyzed and used to draw meaningful conclusions about the research topic at hand. Overall, elicitation tools are an essential tool for any researcher seeking to obtain rich and insightful data from their study participants.

After the interviews, I transcribed the conversations and analyzed them with a focus on the news translation process and the professional and technical difficulties faced by news translators. The process of transcribing interviews conducted in Mandinka into English was time-consuming. I had to listen carefully to each interview several times to ensure that I did not miss anything.

#### 4.13 Limitations

During the course of my study, I have encountered some challenges, including:

- There is a lack of secondary data about news translation in the Gambia since nobody has ever conducted a study in this domain, meaning that I had to start my study from scratch. As a matter of fact, studies into news translation in Africa are rare, for I encountered very few studies that tackled the issue, and they were conducted only in South Africa and Zambia. I relied mainly on interviews and archival data from the Gambia National Museum since I could not access any other sources related to the history and evolution of news translation, let alone the processes and practices of news translation in the Gambia.
- During my research, I faced challenges in contacting some of the participants even though we had scheduled interviews. One of the participants was a faculty member at the University of the Gambia School of Journalism. The other was an experienced news translator named Nfally Fadera, who was mentioned by some of my research participants

as a source of inspiration and motivation for them to become news translators. However, Mr. Fadera later apologized to me for not being able to participate in the research>

- Although radio news is translated into Mandinka through sight translation, I was unable to study sight translation theory in detail in relation to news. This is because the existing studies on sight translation are related to interpretation rather than news translation. I believe that this is an important gap in knowledge that could be addressed in future research into news translation.
- The scope of my research is limited to the translation of news from English to Mandinka, even though news is also translated into other indigenous languages of Gambia, such as Wolof, Fula, Jola, and Sarahule. Hence, in my conclusion, I suggested that further research should be conducted to explore news translation from English into the aforementioned languages.

The chapter has identified the approaches adopted in data collection and analysis, the basis upon which these were selected, and ethical considerations, among others, so in the next chapter, we shall analyze the findings from the primary research methods of interviews and clips of translated news while drawing parallels with the literature. The findings discuss the academic and professional credentials of Gambia's news translators in both state and privately-owned media outlets, their motivation to join the profession, the technical and professional hurdles they face and how they go about tackling them.

## Chapter 5

### Presentation of Findings

In this chapter, I will present my study's findings on the challenge of translating news from English into Mandinka. This will include the conclusions I have drawn after analyzing the data collected through semi-structured interviews and examining news audio clippings. These interviews were conducted with news translators at various media outlets (such as Gambia Radio & Television Services, King FM, Paradise TV, and DHK), as well as with a former information minister and a historian.

The data is organized into themes and designed to address the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2012) explain that thematic analysis (TA) is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning across a data set. TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of shared meanings and experiences, making it a way of identifying what is common and making sense of those commonalities.

This research has investigated the process of news translation from English to Mandinka and found that translating news into indigenous languages is very popular in the Gambia, where a large portion of the population depends on broadcast news translations due to the country's high illiteracy rate and the inability of many to afford daily newspapers.

The study's main findings are as follows:

#### 5.1 Recruitment of News Translators

I have found that there are no formal standards for hiring news translators, whether in state-owned or privately-owned media companies. The most significant requirement for a news translator is to have a solid understanding of the source language, English, as well as being fluent in the target

language, Mandinka. Interestingly, there is no need for news translators to provide an English language proficiency certificate or to undergo a written exam as part of the recruitment process. Instead, they are given a script, or a newspaper written in English and asked to translate it into Mandinka on sight.

The research has found that the recruitment process in the past was more strict than it is nowadays. According to participant Bemba Tamedou, in the sixties and early seventies, recruitment was based on strict Civil Service criteria, which were supervised and regulated by the Public Service Commission. Candidates were required to have a good level of competency in reading, writing, and speaking English. Other criteria, such as higher academic qualifications and the ability to work in a team, were also critical for recruitment. Good O-level results, which typically represented a total of 11 years of study and marked the end of the secondary education cycle, would determine whether applicants would be considered for entry into Radio Gambia.

Tamedou explained that when they worked in radio broadcasting, the main criterion for hiring a news translator was their ability to understand the news content written in English. It was believed that the news translator could translate appropriately only if they could fully comprehend the original English text. Additionally, the news translator needed to have a good delivery pace. They should not speak too quickly or too slowly but in a way that makes the listener feel like they are being personally addressed rather than listening to someone reading in an impersonal manner. Tamedou noted that this was never easy, especially at the beginning of one's career, but it becomes easier as the news translator gains more experience.

## 5.2 Language proficiency

Based on my research, I have found that the participants speak multiple indigenous languages. However, 9 out of 10 of them translate news into Mandinka either because it is their mother tongue

or because they feel most comfortable translating in it. None of the participants, however, hold any qualifications in English, the source language. The table below shows the number of languages each participant speaks, including English.

News translator	Number of languages spoken	Languages spoken
Musa Manneh	5	English-Mandinka-Wolof-Fula-Sarahule
Ebrima Jarra	2	English- Mandinka
Lamin Sanyang	4	English- Mandinka- Wolof- Fulani
Yusupha Darboe	3	English- Mandinka- Wolof
Madinding Ceesay	3	English-Mandinka- Wolof
Kebba Camara	3	English-Mandinka- Wolof
Falilou Janko	3	English-Mandinka- Wolof
Momodou Colley	4	English-Mandinka- Wolof- Jola
Sally Jeng	3	English-Mandinka- Wolof
Modou Joof	5	English-Mandinka- Wolof- Sarahule- Arabic

*Table 2 Languages spoken by research participants*

**5.3 Training and academic qualifications**

According to my research, news translators in The Gambia do not receive formal translation training due to the absence of a translation school in the country. This means that none of the participants hold a degree in translation. Typically, senior news translators train newly recruited translators to read news in Mandinka. Only four of the participants held a diploma or advanced diploma in media studies at the time of the interview, while the others had completed their education after reaching Grade 12. The training courses offered are mainly related to the ethics of journalism, including the code of conduct. None of the news translators specialized in English, the source language from which news is translated into indigenous languages. This suggests that

fluency in Mandinka, the target language, is more important in the recruitment of news translators. However, all of them have studied English as one of the core subjects at primary and secondary levels. It is worth mentioning that three of the participants were pursuing post-secondary education at the time of the interview.

Tamedou noted that in the early days of radio news broadcasting in The Gambia, the indigenous language news translators had fewer overseas training opportunities than their English language counterparts. This was because training packages were mainly provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat and international radio stations such as the BBC, Deutsche Welle, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. These training packages did not cater to the needs of the indigenous language staff, and the courses offered were more suitable for English language staff. As a result, English language staff received more overseas training than the staff members specializing in indigenous language news translation. This led to indigenous language staff receiving less overseas training and more in-house on-the-job training.

However, during the short-lived Senegambia era, cooperation between Radio Gambia and the Senegalese Broadcasting Service offered some indigenous language staff the opportunity to go on short training attachments in the neighbouring Senegal's capital city, Dakar. They formed part of a team put together by the two national broadcasters to jointly produce a series of cultural programs with griots and artists from both nations, with many of the local language staff receiving training in this way. Participants, including Falilou Janko and Sally Jeng, noted that there is no institution for training interpreters and translators in The Gambia, unlike Senegal. Janko also mentioned that news translators in Mali and Guinea receive overseas training to broaden their knowledge.

There is a growing realization of the importance of training news translators, however, particularly by the Gambia Press Union, the umbrella body that looks after the welfare of Gambian journalists.

In this context, broadcast journalists and news translators from across the Gambia participated in a training organized by the Gambia Press Union on November 8, 2021, at the Baobab Holiday Resort in Bijilo, in The Gambia. The training session aimed to equip journalists with the knowledge and skills required for news translation and reporting. The session also aimed to enhance citizens' participation in the electoral process through accurate information, mitigate the security challenges faced by journalists during elections, and promote ethical journalism. Voice newspaper reported that the training session did not focus on translation specifically.

Below is a table showing the academic qualifications held by my research participants:

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
<b>Grade 12</b>	7
<b>Diploma</b>	1
<b>Advanced Diploma</b>	2

*Table 3 Participants' academic qualifications*

#### 5.4 Motivation

During my research, I asked my participants about their motivation for becoming news translators. I received a variety of responses. Four participants out of ten stated that they were inspired by veteran news translators such as Sarjo Barrow, Musa Manneh, and Kebba Camara. Two participants out of ten mentioned that their eagerness to educate the masses on current affairs was their primary motivation, while one participant indicated that the aging of veteran news translators had motivated them to pursue a career in news translation. Furthermore, two participants did not mention their reason for becoming news translators, as they were selected based on their eloquence and fluency in Mandinka.

#### 5.5 The Process of News Translation

The process of translating news at Gambia Radio and Television Services differs from that of privately owned radio stations. At the former, the news translator receives a script that has been written and edited in English before the news bulletin, which they study and rehearse before going on air. On the other hand, at privately-owned media outlets such as King FM, DHK and Paradise TV, news translators mostly review articles from the country's leading newspapers such as The Standard, The Point, Foroyaa, Voice, and online media platforms such as Kerr Fatou, The Fatu Network and similar outlets before entering the newsroom studio. News translators at private media outlets also translate opinion pieces and interview prominent figures that are currently in the news. It is worth noting that back translation also occurs when a new source speaks in Mandinka, which is transcribed by a newspaper for publication and then translated by news translators. Moreover, news translators who work for privately owned media outlets have the freedom to choose which news articles to translate. On the other hand, at the state broadcaster, editors are responsible for this task.

The following are some differences in the news translation process between the state-owned GRTS and private radio stations specializing in news translation.

#### 5.5.1 Gambia Radio & Television Services

After the English-language bulletin, Radio Gambia presents news in indigenous languages. The morning Mandinka news is presented at 7:10 am, the afternoon news at 1:10 pm, and the evening news at 6:10 pm. Headlines are repeated five minutes before the end of transmission at midnight. The main news program is presented at 6:00 pm and rebroadcasted at 7:00 am the following morning for the benefit of those who missed the previous evening's broadcast. Moreover, a weekly Mandinka news round-up lasts around 30 minutes and is broadcast on Saturdays. During this round-up, the translator presents all the week's important news.

The news translators working at Gambia Radio & Television Services (GRTS), a state-owned organization, follow a specific process to ensure the accuracy of the news they deliver. At first, they consult with the English news editor responsible for preparing the news to gain an idea about the latest happenings and inform them of when the news script will be ready. Following this, the news translator remains focused on the task until they receive the script and thoroughly review it before going on air. Usually, the script is provided to the news translator for review around 30 minutes before the presenter goes on air, but this may vary depending on the editor on duty, who may spend more time preparing the news script. Therefore, it is possible that a news translator may receive the script an hour beforehand. While conducting my research at GRTS, I discovered that news translators do not translate word-for-word. Instead, they focus on the contextual meaning of the news. This is because there might not be an equivalent word in the target language, such as Mandinka, and it may require paraphrasing. Additionally, understanding the event being discussed helps the news translator avoid literal translation. Alhagi Musa Manneh, a seasoned news

translator, explained that he used to write his own summaries of the news stories in English. The editor would then edit the report and prepare a script, which Manneh would translate into Mandinka and other indigenous languages.

### 5.5.2 King FM

The news translators at King FM begin their work by going through major newspapers such as the Standard, the Point, Foroyaa, and the Voice. They also review the latest news from Gambian online media outlets like the Fatu Network, Kerr Fatu, Sabally Global Network (SGN), Alkamba Times, Lamtoro, and What's On. This helps them stay up-to-date with the latest happenings before they head to the studio. To translate the news effectively, they first need to understand the current main stories in the country and the audience's expectations, especially on the political front. This preparation enables the news translators to read the news in a way that is compatible with the Mandinka language while focusing on the relevant news items.

Additionally, King FM news translators conduct interviews with relevant newsmakers regarding issues of public interest after seeking their consent to participate in the program. Public announcements are made before news translation and may be made at intervals or toward the end of the news bulletin.

### 5.5.3 Paradise TV

A news translator at Paradise TV begins their work by reviewing major newspapers, identifying the most important headlines, and practicing their translations before going live on air. Their primary focus is on the front-page news, selecting the most significant stories to be translated. With experience, news translators become more efficient and spend less time rehearsing before a broadcast.

#### 5.5.4 DHK FM

DHK FM follows a rigorous process for translating the news. Firstly, the headlines are reviewed, and the most important stories are selected and organized. Then, the news translators independently choose the stories. After the selection process, they rehearse before going on air. Before the news, jingles and public announcements are played. A jingle is a short and simple tune, often with words, used for advertising a product or program on radio or television.

#### 5.6 Types of News Stories Translated into Mandinka

Although news translators in privately owned media outlets translate a range of news stories and opinion pieces, they tend to focus mainly on politics and law enforcement. According to my analysis, about 70% of translated news is related to politics, 20% to law and order, while the remaining percentage is dedicated to human interest stories. Yousupha Darboe, a well-known young news translator in the Mandinka community, stated that newspapers primarily focus on politics when translating news into native languages due to public interest in the subject. As a result, other important topics, such as the economy or infrastructural development, may be overshadowed. However, reporters sometimes conduct interviews with the public to cover human interest stories. Reporters often reach out to individuals with physical disabilities to listen to their problems and challenges. Private news outlets, according to research participant Kebba Camara, prioritize breaking news stories and often prefer to present "bizarre" news reports over regular stories, such as the opening of a new road or a dignitary's courtesy call to the president. The reason for this preference is that such "bizarre news" reports are more likely to appeal to the masses. News translators are cautious about news items that could stoke tensions or fuel a crisis. Kebba Camara, a participant in the research, said that they often get breaking news before the newspapers do. They always call newsmakers before reviewing the newspapers, which makes the Mandinka news quite interesting. Newspapers carry the most important stories on the front page, so news translators

primarily focus on politics and court proceedings, selecting these for translation. Sally Jeng, another participant in the research, emphasized the importance of highlighting human interest stories, such as the story of a lady who gave birth to triplets, which generated a lot of interest among the public, with some offering assistance. Jeng added that in rural areas, some men and women suffer, and nobody reports their plight. Therefore, she mainly focuses on such stories now, though she occasionally touches on politics.

### 5.7 Professional and Technical Challenges of News Translation

Gambia's news translators continue to grapple with multiple challenges that have yet to be adequately addressed, including a lack of translation knowledge, a lack of training and difficulty in dealing with technical terms, especially legal and technological jargon, in addition to financial constraints. Another challenge highlighted by the news translators interviewed was that in their translation work, they often translate an individual's account of events in their own words; hence, they are bound to mistranslate sometimes, particularly in testimony in court cases. Among other challenges they mentioned is the lack of respect they endure in newsrooms as Mandinka news presenters. The table below highlights the challenges cited by the research participants:

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Citation</b>
<b>Technical terms</b>	9
<b>Low wages</b>	4
<b>Untimely delivery of news</b>	3
<b>Self-censorship</b>	5
<b>Verbal and physical abuse</b>	2
<b>Online bullying</b>	2
<b>Draconian media laws</b>	2
<b>The script's language</b>	2
<b>Low qualification of news translators</b>	2

*Table 4 Tabulation of challenges cited by participants*

Below is a breakdown of the most formidable challenges Gambia’s news translators continue to face.

**5.7.1 Difficult Terms**

Highly specialized texts involving legal and technological terms prove the most difficult challenge for the majority of news translators because of the specialist terminology involved. Specific technical terms are alien to Gambia’s indigenous languages; hence, a news translator needs to appropriate these terms. In such cases, translators ensure that they understand the message in totality rather than focusing on individual words or expressions. The judiciary is extremely sensitive about how court proceedings are reported, meaning that these news stories require particular caution from news translators. Mistranslating news stories from the courts could land a journalist in prison or subject them to other penalties. A Gambian court once summoned one

veteran news translator, the late Sarjo Barrow, because he mistranslated a story involving the former Director of the National Intelligence Agency, Yankuba Badjie.

Over the course of my field research, news translators consistently acknowledged that they routinely encounter technical terms with no equivalents in the Mandinka language. Since these concepts do not exist in Mandinka, it is, therefore, difficult to express them in Mandinka or any of the other native languages. When faced with such a situation, the translator has to be versatile enough to find a solution: for example, how does one translate ‘International Space Station’ or ‘nuclear bomb’? In such a situation, the translator is expected to use their imagination to find a way of conveying the idea. Hence, translators need a good grasp of the text at both macro and micro levels to do justice to the translated news. The research has also found that fluency in the indigenous target language remains the primary criterion for hiring news translators, who must then learn on the job.

My research participants affirmed that a news translator must have a good understanding of the source language, whether spoken or written, as well as of the target language because each language has its unique characteristics and peculiar patterns in the sense that an expression might be a normal term in one language and an insult in another. They also recognized that a news translator must also consider the audience’s expectations and the context.

### 5.7.2 Translation Strategies

Over the course of my research, I listened to several audio recordings containing news translations broadcast by King FM, DHK, Radio Gambia and West Coast Radio, Meng Bekering, QTV and Teranga FM to assess the translation challenges faced by news translators and the strategies they adopt to overcome them. The findings from my study show that news translators at the concerned

media outlets use several translation strategies to translate news in English into Mandinka. Most of these strategies were similar to the ones proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet, including borrowing, literal translation, addition, and paraphrasing. Each of these strategies has been illustrated below:

#### 5.7.2.1 Use of dictionaries:

At least three of the 10 participants revealed that they resort to a physical dictionary or dictionary app to look up challenging words, mainly technical terms. However, as mentioned in the Recommendations Chapter, it is essential to develop a bilingual dictionary that can be used by news translators instead of the monolingual ones they currently use.

#### 5.7.2.2 Asking others

By contrast, another three of the 10 participants conceded that they reach out to colleagues or relatives to ask for the meaning of certain words in Mandinka before going on air. For instance, Alhagi Musa Manneh, arguably Gambia's best news translator today, recalled that he would refer to his senior colleagues to help him translate technical terms when he was first assigned news translation. However, he later bought a dictionary to look up any problematic words. Being an avid reader, he later had a perfect mastery of the English language.

#### 5.7.2.3 Translation by borrowing

An analysis of translated news audio clips has revealed that a number of words were borrowed from English, though the pronunciation or spelling might change. Examples of such words include:

<b>Word in Mandinka</b>	<b>Translation</b>
<b>Report</b>	Reporto
<b>Science and Technology</b>	Science and Technology
<b>EU delegation</b>	EU delegation
<b>Public holiday</b>	Public holiday
<b>State House</b>	State House
<b>Minister</b>	Minister
<b>Mandate</b>	Manda
<b>Superintendent</b>	Superintendent
<b>Petition</b>	Petitisono
<b>National Executive Committee</b>	National Executive Committee
<b>Coalition</b>	Coalitsono
<b>Malaria</b>	Malaria
<b>Paramount Chief</b>	Paramount Chief
<b>Plumber</b>	Plumber
<b>University</b>	University
<b>Secular democracy</b>	Secular democracy
<b>Ambulance</b>	Ambulance
<b>Director of Public Prosecution</b>	Director of Public Prosecution

*Table 5 Borrowed words*

#### 5.7.2.4 Modulation

Modulation is another translation strategy that Gambia’s Mandinka news translators use to render an acceptable translation to the audience. Vinay and Darbelnet define modulation as “a variation through a change of viewpoint, of perspective, and very often of the category of thought” (Newmark, 1958, p. 88). Below are some of the examples:

English	Mandinka
<b>UDP has nominated its candidates for Brikama Area Council Election</b>	UDP yeh ila mbirolu londila Brikama maŋ sakundariŋ kariteh fayolaleh
<b>They promised to defeat their opponents.</b>	Yei lahido ta ko ibay doniolu beniyo katila
<b>The Gambia Police Force remains committed to protecting the rights of all citizens,</b>	Gambia la polisolu ko ibeh sobeyaiŋ ka bankundingo lula nyintolu tanka
<b>The court has exonerated the accused.</b>	Kitibungo yeh tuhumari mo seniyardileh
<b>Government's white paper</b>	Mansakunda lodula
<b>Prevention is better than cure.</b>	Fankanta kuro monay bika fara
<b>He showed political maturity.</b>	Iyeh jiyo keh akugo kono politiko la karola
<b>The High Court presided over by Justice Ebrima Jaiteh, has set a date to commence the hearing.</b>	Liro sutuyata tongolaleh kiti bunsantonko ye kitiyo damuta, Ebrima Jaiteh yeh miŋ niatonkaya
<b>We should have the audacity to stand up.</b>	Nyianta juso soto kaloka tapaleh ya kuwolu bondi kuwolu bikata ku
<b>She backtracked</b>	Aya kugo duŋ niamokono
<b>Prevention is better than cure.</b>	Fankanta kuruto monay bika fara
<b>Abdoulaye has been giving Aisha the sum of D180,000.00 every month for her maintenance.</b>	Abdoulaye yeh Aisha so dalasi wuli kemeh aniŋ taŋ sei fo asa faŋ tarandi niamiŋ
<b>Aisha failed and or refused to go ahead with the marriage.</b>	Aisah nata akugo dundi niamo kono
<b>Barrow commissions 70 buses.</b>	Barrow yeh bosi taŋ worowla kulli
<b>I will bring you the news in detail; stay tuned.</b>	Iliŋ batu ngana kolo niŋ subo bondi nioto

Table 6 Examples of modulation

### 5.7.2.5 Paraphrasing

The study has also revealed that Gambia's news translators often resort to paraphrasing in order to enable the audience to follow the news properly. Examples of paraphrasing include:

<b>English</b>	<b>Mandinka</b>	<b>Literal meaning</b>
<b>Stakeholders:</b>	Molu miŋ yeh bulusoto kuwoto	Those who have a hand in an issue
<b>Remittance</b>	Ka kodobondi dula to kata dula	Move money from one place to another
<b>Political analysts</b>	Molu miŋ ka jubay rokay politiko la	People who look into political issues
<b>Prize</b>	Bunyia fego	Something for honoring
<b>Green pasture</b>	Fo isay la baluwo nyi nyiandi	To improve one's life
<b>Social media</b>	Jamanilabaŋ bunda	Modern gateway
<b>Court of appeal</b>	Kitiyo ka seŋ kaŋ jubeh damiŋ	Where a case is reviewed
<b>Department</b>	Doku bunda	Place of work
<b>News constitution</b>	Marali kitabu kuto	New ruling book
<b>Activist</b>	Miŋ ka lo molula niaŋ tola	Someone who stands for the rights of others
<b>Political tolerance</b>	Kasabari niyoyeŋ politiko to	To maintain patience towards each other

*Table 7 Examples of paraphrasing*

### 5.7.2.6 Literal Translation

After analyzing news clippings and corresponding audio recordings, it was found that one of the most common translation strategies used by news translators in dealing with technical terms is literal translation, as demonstrated by the following examples:

English	Mandinka
Pay last respect	Kabuniya labago di
Throw one's hat in the ring.	Ka la nafo fai luwokono
High Court	Kiti buj ba
The case was thrown out of court	Kiti bugo yeh keis nyij fai bantalay
Raise a red flag.	Ka bandeiri wulej wulindi
Supreme Court	Kiti dula santon ŋko
Level the field	Ka luwo tembendi
Fail to do something.	Aboyta ka kukeh
I dare say loudly that the ACU does not know how to police in a democratic space.	Nsafono leh ko ACU malon ibeh mala niamij demokrasi la alhawakono niamij

*Table 8 Examples of literal translation*

## 5.8 Mistranslation

My research shows that translating news between languages poses challenges that can impede the flow and accuracy of information. Occasionally, news translators mistranslate certain words and expressions, as shown below:

English	Mandinka	Meaning
They should Look for a solution.	Anyinta siñ fa tala	They must take steps
The president lashed out at Talib.	Presidango ya bulo chodi Talib la	The President pointed to Talib.
Do not listen to sycophants.	Kanay lamoi mo kalañ tagulu la	Do not heed unscrupulous people.
The government must implement TRRC's recommendations.	Mañ sakunda niyanta TRCC la suteirulu tamandila	Government should implement TRCC's *recognitions*
Sulayman Ben Suwareh, an author and a <u>critic</u> of Barrow's government, has <u>challenged</u> the president to go to court.	Sulayman Ben Suwareh, saferila lemu aniñ Barrow mansakunda <u>jalairalemu ayeñ barrow kumandi ko asita kot</u>	Sulayman Ben Suwareh, an author and a <b>*blamer*</b> of Barrow's government, has <b>*called*</b> the president to go to court.
He was dressed in church <u>apparel</u> .	Ayeñ chorchi la jorañdii	He dressed in church <b>*equipment*</b>
It is utterly <u>criminal</u> .	Aniñ luwa fota niokoma	It's <b>*unlawful*</b>
This will be a perfect opportunity to <u>prove</u> my allegation	Nyiñ beh kela mantabegoti puru ka tuhumaro lañ kenemandi	This will be a perfect opportunity to <b>*clarify*</b> my allegation
It is gratifying to know.	Akumma yata kalañ	It is important to know

Table 9 Examples of mistranslation

In addition to the technical challenges mentioned above, the participants have also cited some professional challenges that have an adverse impact on their work. Below are some of those obstacles:

### 5.9 Low Wages

Gambia's privately owned media outlets heavily rely on adverts to pay salaries and cover operational costs. Low wages featured prominently as a formidable challenge which news translators continue to face, with some news translators receiving monthly salaries of as little as 1,000 Gambian dalasi, equivalent to US \$43, despite being saddled with other responsibilities. My

research has revealed that the highest monthly salary a news reporter can earn in the Gambia is 10,000 dalasi (\$430), with even this sum available to only 1% of the country's journalists. As a result, most reporters and translators can hardly make ends meet due to meagre salaries. In fact, research participant Yusupha Darboe believes that the lack of financially rewarding packages might be a likelihood why media outlets cannot attract highly educated people into the profession.

### 5.10 Untimely Delivery of News

During my interviews, at least three of the 10 participants cited the untimely delivery of news as one of their outstanding challenges. Interestingly, two of the respondents work for the state-owned Gambia Radio & Television Services, probably because the state broadcaster's news translators still read the news through a script prepared by editors. On the other hand, news translators working at privately owned media outlets usually translate newspapers they receive well before they go on air to review and rehearse them. Despite technological advances, the challenge of timely delivery persists till today, with my GRTS research participants, Falilou Janko and Musa Manneh, recalling numerous instances when English news scripts were delivered shortly before the news translator was due to go on air, allowing them very little time to review the news to be translated. Janko elaborated that the Gambia Radio & Television news translators occasionally receive a script on-air, or the script's arrival is delayed until news time, meaning it must be translated and read without rehearsal. In such circumstances, Janko added, experience helps in calmly handling the situation. Janko's senior colleague, Alhagi Musa Manneh, also noted that sometimes, editors hand over the script just moments before a news translator goes on air because some senior officials demand that their story should take priority on the same day. The reporter, he added, conveys that message to the editor, who usually complies with the official's demand, causing a delay. In addition to this,

he pointed out that sometimes, in the middle of the news bulletin, an editor will bring an entire page or more to translate on air without rehearsal. He noted, however, that a news translator would not face any major problem handling such unexpected incidents as long as they were well-grounded in both the source and target languages. Another potential unexpected hitch recalled by GRTS news translators was that after reporters have returned from covering an event and written an article concerning it, they occasionally receive calls from officials involved demanding changes to the report on the event, resulting in inconvenience for newsreaders and translators. Tamedou affirmed that news translators should always read the text beforehand, understand it and then articulate the ideas presented in a smooth and coherent manner in indigenous languages. This, he continued, can only be achieved when one fully understands the original text.

GRTS RADIO NEWS: TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2021/PAGE

The Commonwealth Observer Group to the Gambia ahead of the December 4<sup>th</sup> presidential polls has arrived in Banjul at the invitation of the Independent Electoral Commission. The nine-member delegation headed by former Nigerian president - Olusegun Obasanjo is expected to join other domestic observers in the conduct of the elections. The Commonwealth Secretary General, Right Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, noted that the group will represent the 54 Commonwealth member states to the Gambia and will be engaged in stakeholder briefings with all actors of the electoral process. As part of its mandate, the group will observe and evaluate the pre-election environment, polling day activities across the country and post-election period among other engagements. The group will issue a report on its observations and findings to determine whether The Gambia has lived by its democratic principles and international obligations. The delegation assures all political players and the electorate of their impartiality, objectivity, and independence.

Figure 9 A news script of Gambia Radio & Television Services (GRTS) Source (Falilou Janko – GRTS news presenter)

In the early days of radio broadcasting in the Gambia, research participant Bemba Tamedou explained, the timely delivery of the news bulletin to Broadcasting House in *Mile 7* was all too often fraught with unexpected difficulties. Banjul's location, being 7 miles from Radio Gambia, meant that the news had to be transported physically by road and delivered by hand to the station with no electronic or digital transmission or reception equipment then available to send it from the Information office in Banjul to the *Mile 7* studios. Tamedou explained that, as a result, delays were common. Sometimes, he recalled, these delays were caused by government departments failing to contact the editor on time when they wanted important messages included in the news bulletin. Such delays adversely impacted the timely delivery of the news to *Mile 7*. This was always bad for news translators who needed adequate time to study and understand the texts before transmission. In such situations, the challenge could also be compounded by breaking news arriving while the red light was on in the studio, meaning the news translator was already on air. Those were some of the challenges translators had to contend with occasionally, as recalled Tamedou.

### 5.11 Lack of Respect by Media Fraternity

My research has found that despite the critical role of indigenous news translators, their colleagues who present news in English discriminate against them in the workplace, with English-language news presenters and reporters, ironically, being more highly valued than news translators. Interestingly, three of my ten participants have made this allegation, with two of them being female. Madinding<sup>4</sup> Ceesay, a female news translator for Paradise TV, noted that despite the fact that at least 90% of the Gambian population relies on translated news, news translators are still discriminated against. Similarly, another female research participant, Sally Jeng, noted the need

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<sup>4</sup> Madinding Ceesay is a news translator and producer at Paradise TV

for more respect for news translators in newsrooms. Ironically, according to Jeng, news translators are treated like celebrities by the audience who religiously follow them.

### 5.12 Abuse and Self-censorship

At least three of the ten news translators cited instances where they faced verbal abuse from some sections of the audience who mistakenly believed that the news translators are responsible for the content of news stories they report. Relative to their colleagues in newspapers, news translators face abuse from certain members of the public, meaning news translators occasionally have to explain that the news being reported is selected from newspapers and translated by them. The assailants are mostly supporters of the ruling government who feel that certain stories are critical of the authorities or not favourable to them. Two participants decried the continuing existence of draconian media laws enacted by the former Jammeh regime to suppress independent-minded journalists and privately owned media outlets. The overall media environment has improved significantly since the restoration of democracy in the Gambia in 2016. The Gambia ranked 50th out of 180 countries in 2022 on the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index, improving by 35 points. In 2023, it had moved up to 46th place. (The Point, 2023).

Ironically, on the very day of the release of the Annual Press Freedom Report coinciding with International Freedom Day on May 3, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), the Gambia's media regulatory body, issued an ultimatum to King FM threatening punitive action (Kerr Fatou, 2023). The regulatory body, PURA, has issued a warning to King FM regarding their license conditions, noting that failure to comply with these conditions will result in punitive action being taken against the popular media outlet for violating the license terms. While there were no specific concerns stated by the authority, King FM is known for translating news from English to Mandinka and is a popular radio station in the country. The Standard, Gambia's best-selling

newspaper, reported that PURA's warning came just a week after President Adama Barrow and his National People's Party criticized the work of certain radio stations, although no specific stations were named. (Standard, 2023). Reacting to the ultimatum, King FM radio news anchor and producer Ebrima Jarra<sup>5</sup> denied any wrongdoing, accusing the regulator of acting under political directives. The regulation of Gambia's media outlets leads us to the issue of quality control.

### 5.13 Quality Control

Quality control is essential to ensure translation acceptability; it has gained unprecedented traction for several reasons, including the growing demand for translation, the ever-increasing importance of translation, globalization and localization. (Thelen, 2008). However, there is no consensus on what constitutes a good translation or on the tools and means required to measure the quality of a translation. "Whereas there is general agreement about the need for a translation to be 'good,' 'satisfactory' or 'acceptable,' the definition of acceptability and of the means of determining it is a matter of debate" (Williams, 2009, p.3). Dragsted and Hansen (2009) argue that quality assessment in translation and interpreting depends on the perspective, as there is no overarching definition of quality. Rothe-Neves (2002) echoes similar remarks, noting that the problem resides in how to express quality or what measures should be used to evaluate the quality of a translation. Shlesinger (1997) even went as far as to state that "quality is an elusive concept if ever there was one" (P.123).

News translators are taught to uphold journalistic values such as integrity, honesty, professionalism, fairness, and neutrality. In the Gambia, news selection and translation at privately owned radio stations seem to draw primarily on ad hoc decisions rather than focusing on quality

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<sup>5</sup> Ebrima Jarra is a senior news translator and producer at King FM

assurance; in other words, there is no translation quality assessment mechanism for news translation per se; instead, private news media outlets are overseen by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), the governmental body responsible for the oversight of the country's media outlets and for ensuring quality and adherence to the rules and regulations governing their operation. PURA is empowered to revoke an outlet's license if the subject violates the code of conduct or other regulations. The Gambia Public Utilities Regulatory Authority Act, 2001 (PURA Act) established the authority as an independent agency with the responsibility of regulating certain "regulated public services" such as communication, transport, energy, and water services provided directly or indirectly to the public or any section of the public (PURA, 2022).

A set of guidelines that regulate the actions of media practitioners in Gambia is formulated by the Gambia Press Union. The Gambia Press Union (GPU) was founded on April 20, 1979, and serves as an all-encompassing body for media professionals in the country. Its principal objective is to safeguard the welfare of media professionals and advocate for freedom of the press.

Ebrima Jarra, who is a senior news translator at King FM and a research participant, explained that the responsibility of monitoring the content aired by Gambian media outlets lies with PURA. The representatives of the authority also visit media outlets to verify their documentation since they are responsible for licensing. Jarra added that the Gambia Press Union's Code of Conduct is meant for all journalists, including news translators. The code mainly focuses on integrity, honesty, professionalism, fairness, and neutrality. Nonetheless, Sally Jeng noted that the GPU increasingly engages news translators to ensure quality by organizing training courses. Jeng further asserted that Paradise TV stands out for ensuring internal quality control among the Gambia's media outlets. Paradise CEO Harona Drammeh, who is not a professional translator, would review the news translation to ensure quality by pinpointing errors. However, it is worth noting that this study has

found that the quality of news translation is adversely impacted by some news translators who sensationalize the news. to appeal to the audience because of the stiff competition due to the sheer number of online radio stations. Some, eager to sensationalize their stories in order to increase audiences, read news rapidly, leading to mistranslations in some instances. The discussion of my findings leads me to some recommendations in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6

### Recommendations

Through my thorough investigation, I have identified several inadequacies in the news translation process, both in state-owned broadcasters and private media outlets. These shortcomings encompass a range of professional and technical challenges, which are outlined in detail in the findings section of my research. I recommend implementing specific strategies to tackle these issues based on my findings.

#### 6.1 Language planning:

Governments often engage in language policy and planning to influence or modify the way people speak or write in a society. According to Baldauf (2004), this could involve selecting a specific language or dialect as the official national communication medium, which can have significant implications for other languages spoken in the same country. Gramley and Kummer (2008) note that language planning involves making important decisions, while Gadelii (1999) points out that language planning addresses issues such as the lack of a common language, the need for a writing system, and the need for more technical vocabulary.

As Africa underwent the process of decolonization, language planning became a critical issue. Nekvapil (2007) explains that this issue arose due to the decline of the colonial system and the modernization process in developing countries. Unlike in Asian countries, European languages were imposed on African nations and were given official status, even though it is important to note that only a few individuals in Africa use English as their native or first language (Gadelii, 1999).

Roy-Campbell (2019) highlighted that in order to effectively plan for the use of indigenous languages in Africa, the initial step is to recognize the dominance of colonial languages and the

marginalization of African languages. It is essential to reconstruct African languages as mediums for education and other aspects of life to address this issue. Furthermore, Roy-Campbell emphasized that all stakeholders, including African leaders and educators, should work towards elevating the status of African languages by demonstrating their capability to produce knowledge as any other language. According to a study by Sosu (1992), linguistic deficiencies can be addressed by implementing planned vocabulary expansion programs and vocabulary enrichment procedures. Sosu emphasized the richness of African languages in terms of vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, citing examples such as the translation of technical terms into Wolof by the famous Senegalese writer and historian Cheikh Anta Diop. Sosu also notes that many languages in the subregion have a rich lexicon and a high potential for adaptation and response to new situations and concepts (Suso, 1992). Language planning is a vital component in elevating Gambia's indigenous languages and adding value to them. This means that important decisions must be made regarding the education curriculum, with a focus on teaching indigenous languages. This is especially significant since Gambia's political leaders are often uncertain about which language to prioritize. To tackle this issue, Mandinka, which is the predominant language in Gambia, should be given a higher status and be made the lingua franca of the country, as desired by the colonial administration. This move will encourage the government to allocate resources for its development. Gambia can draw inspiration from South Africa, Tanzania, and Rwanda, all of which have taken bold steps towards language planning. A practical language policy cannot be formulated without addressing the prevailing inferiority complex that views African languages as synonymous with the darkness of the bush (wa Thiong'o, 2018).

## 6.2 The Development of a Monolingual Mandinka dictionary

At present, there is a dearth of both monolingual and Mandinka-English dictionaries. This poses a challenge for news translators who need to translate complex terms. They are compelled to rely on monolingual English dictionaries, which may not provide accurate translations. There are two online dictionaries available, namely the Mandinka-English Dictionary and Intermediate Gambian Mandinka-English Dictionary, which are primarily intended for non-Mandinka speakers who are learning the language. Ironically, the former was created by the Peace Corps, which is an independent agency and program of the United States government that trains and deploys volunteers to provide international development assistance (Peace Corps, 2023). The Intermediate Gambian Mandinka-English Dictionary was compiled by the late esteemed Professor David Gamble, a renowned scholar with a profound understanding of The Gambia, its people, history, and culture.

To develop a dictionary made by Gambians that would be beneficial for news translators and individuals interested in learning Mandinka, renowned Gambian linguists like Sidia Jatta could play a crucial role. As Roy-Campbell (2019) suggests, the creation of monolingual African language dictionaries is a vital step towards reclaiming these languages, freeing them from the constraints of being interpreted through European languages

## 6.3 Translator Training

Pym (2009) explains the many forms that translator training takes, including learning on the job, from superiors, colleagues, reviewers and colleagues, and/or through trial and error. Pym admitted, though, that most translation professionals have received no formal training in translation. In order to enhance news translation in the Gambia and help news translators overcome the challenges they

encounter during the process, it is crucial to provide adequate training to them. For instance, senior translators like Alhagi Musa Manneh, who possess more than forty years of experience, can impart their extensive knowledge of news translation to junior translators. Additionally, news translators must undergo rigorous training in English to establish a solid foundation in the source language. My research has revealed that some mistranslations occur because the translator fails to comprehend certain English words or expressions. One participant disclosed that TV stations are the only ones that prioritize English proficiency when hiring news presenters, whereas radio stations prioritize familiarity with indigenous languages before recruiting news translators.

#### 6.4 The development of the Ajami Script

Arabic literacy among the predominantly Atlantic population in Africa has led to the development of the Ajami script. The term "Ajami" comes from the classic Arabic word for foreign or non-Arab. This tradition originated in Quranic schools and is still primarily practiced in religious institutions. The Ajami script is used for important daily activities such as letter-writing, record-keeping, and public writing. News translators can also use it to read and write news.

#### 6.5 The adoption of N'ko

The N'ko language was created by Sulaymane Kante, a Guinean writer and inventor, back in 1949. Prior to the development of N'ko as a writing system, many languages in West Africa, such as the Manding language, used Latin or Arabic alphabets to transcribe their languages. Oyler (2005) points out that N'ko was designed to provide an indigenous writing system for all Mande languages, including Mandinka. This makes it crucial for news translators to learn N'ko, as it will help them perfect their target language. Today, the N'ko script is widely used in Gambia, Senegal, Guinea, and Mali and is promoted by many individuals.

Gambia's news translators can also learn a writing system from Muhammad Lamin Ceesay, an Arabic teacher who invented his own orthography. This is because the lack of a writing system is considered a significant factor in the underdevelopment of many indigenous African languages.

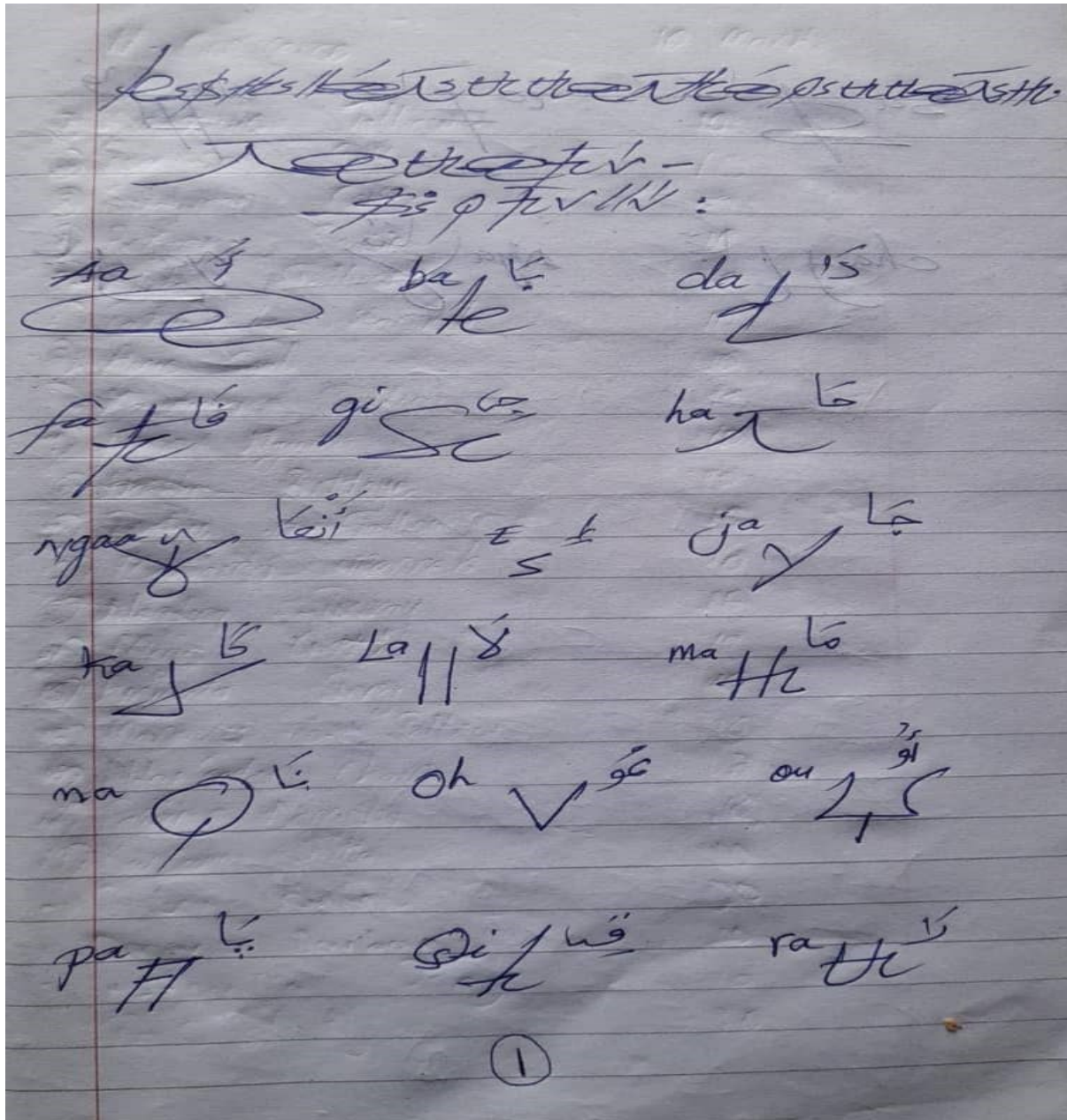


Figure 3 A sample of an innovative script developed by Mohammad Lamin Ceesay

## 6.6 The establishment of a translation department at the University of the Gambia

At present, there is no opportunity to learn translation through Gambia's education system. As a solution, I recommend the creation of a translation department at the University of the Gambia. This department could produce skilled and accomplished translators and translation experts. I aspire to be a part of the team that establishes this department in the coming years.

## 6.7 Broadening the Usage of Indigenous Languages

The colonizers who created writing systems for African languages restricted these languages to limited functions. In response, Roy-Campbell (2019) advocated for more extensive use of Africa's native languages. He argues that all languages can serve any purpose required by society and that language evolves through usage. Sosu (1992) observed that modern linguistics affirms that there is no such thing as a primitive language. Mateene (1980) is equally of the opinion that Africa's indigenous languages can be developed to perform the same functions as any other developed language. This means that all languages possess a high level of subtlety, flexibility, and complexity. Indigenous languages in Gambia, including Mandinka, are severely underdeveloped due to their limited use. This makes it difficult for Gambia's news translators to translate technical terms. Mateene (1980) argues that African languages lack scientific and technical expressions due to their limited usage in these domains. He believes that Africans are partially accountable for the underdevelopment of their indigenous languages by not utilizing them in education and translation, which are critical factors for language enrichment. Sosu (1992) reminds us that English, French, Italian, and a few other European languages were once thought to be unsophisticated dialects only suitable for peasants to use when bargaining for livestock. Despite being regarded as less superior to Latin, these languages went on to surpass Latin and become the primary languages of their respective nations.

## 6.8 The Creation of Mandinka Academy

Broadening the usage of Mandinka is only practically feasible through the creation of an academy that would be responsible for coining new terms to introduce in Mandinka. Awang and Salman (2017) explain that translating new concepts and technical terms from English to other languages has always been a challenging task in the field of science and technology. They note that the Arabic Language Academy has been making efforts to create new terms that are native to the Arabic language, with the aim of domesticating and naturalizing foreign terminology. Such an academy has the potential to indigenize terms toward *Mandinkanizing* them. This approach helps to make the translation of technical terms and concepts more accessible to Arabic-speaking audiences. Several participants have proposed the formation of a specialized department in news organizations that would be responsible for supervising the translation of Mandinka news content. The aim of this department would be to enhance the translation process and ensure the accuracy of the translated news.

Furthermore, Gambia's linguists should collaborate towards creating a model similar to the Arabic Language Academy. This can help in coining new terms that can aid news translators to perform better. News translators have often mentioned that the translation of technical terms is one of the major challenges they face in news translation.

Despite encountering numerous challenges, news translators in Gambia exhibit immense enthusiasm and determination to cater to their audiences by keeping them informed, educated and entertained, which are fundamental tenets of journalism. Given the significance of the service they render to the public, news translators require training and capacity building to enhance their news translation abilities. The Gambia Press Union should take the lead while simultaneously improving the working conditions to inspire more individuals to pursue this profession.

### 6.9 Conclusion

The research is of great significance as it is unique in nature because no prior studies have been conducted on news translation processes in Gambia. The news translators themselves have confirmed that this research will not only serve as a valuable learning experience for them but also as a point of reference for those interested in examining news translation in Gambia. The study aims to provide insightful and comprehensive analysis into the evolution of news translation practices and processes over time in Gambia, as well as the overall linguistic situation in the country within an indigenous context. Moreover, the pivotal role of translators and interpreters during the colonial era in Gambia will be recognized, as no previous research has been conducted on this aspect.

It is important to acknowledge that this study only scratches the surface of News Translation. Further research is needed to explore other aspects of this field, such as training techniques and enhancement methods. Additionally, a comparative analysis of translation strategies used when translating news from English into other Gambian languages, including Wolof, Fula, Sarahule, and Jola, would be beneficial in identifying any differences or similarities with Mandinka. Given the limited information available on the early translators of Gambia, it would be valuable to investigate their role in perpetuating colonial rule. The prevalence of male dominance in news

translation is a phenomenon that requires further research. Moreover, news translators are subjected to degrading treatment in newsrooms, unlike their colleagues who disseminate news in English. Such a colonial hangover raises questions about the official language of the Gambia being English. However, without a systematic study, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed. In the meantime, theories such as actor-network theory and system theory can be employed to study news translation. Yet, due to their complexity, a qualitative descriptive methodology seems more suitable at this stage to examine the news translation process in the Gambia. Nonetheless, a sociological study may be contemplated if I am given the opportunity to pursue a Ph.D.

In view of my research questions, I hope that my research on the translation of news from English to Mandinka will help to improve translation processes and practices in the Gambia. The study can be used as a reference to gain insight into the evolution of news translation in the Gambia, identify challenges related to news translation, and develop strategies to overcome them.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Transcription of interviews

#### 1.1 Alhagi Musa Manneh- Senior news translator at Gambia Radio & Television Services

##### **Can we get to know you?**

I was born in Jimara in the village of Suma Kunda. My father is Karamo Manneh, and my mother is Fenda Sanneh or Fatou Sanneh. I went to Bakadaji Primary School, where I attended primary one. Our forefathers were not keen on Western education, so the school was underdeveloped. As a young child, I was strong-headed, so my father sent me to his younger brother, a resident in Banjul known as Alhagi Sarjo Manneh. He is still alive, living in Kombo Lamin and is the head of our family. He raised me. I attended Malfa Primary School from primary 2 to primary 6. I sat at the common entrance and moved to Armitage Boarding School from 1969 to 1974. I did science and biology. I was good at those subjects. That is why I furthered my studies in agriculture. As a result, we were among the pioneers of cotton farming in the Gambia. We were identified as cotton demonstrators.

##### **Now, tell us about your work experience.**

I was taken to Basse (URR), where I served for two years until the beginning of 1976, when I quit. I returned to Banjul to my uncle. Ebou Ndoeye from Koseh Marr was working at the Labour Department. I have collected my certificate to meet Mr. Ndoeye at Labour in Banjul to seek employment. On my way to Mr. Ndoeye, I pumped into One of my relatives, Bemba Tamedou, who was working for Radio Gambia, the only radio existent at the time at the Information Department in Banjul. Both the Information and Labor Departments were in the same building. The Labour was upstairs, and Information was downstairs.

I greeted Bemba. At the time, my uncle Messeng Manneh used to come to the radio station for a program. He explained my situation to Bemba. Mr. Bemba took me to their office. Mr. Suwaibou Konateh was the Director of Information and Broadcasting. They spoke among themselves and decided that I should report to Radio Gambia. They interviewed me, and Mr. Konateh told me I could start work the following day. Bemba said to me that I did very well. On February 2, 1977, I began working as a trainee announcer at Radio Gambia. I scaled through the ranks until I became a senior producer. Then I was promoted to Principal Producer, then Senior Manager, and second to Radio Director. I worked until 2016 when I reached the retirement age of 60. When I retired, the radio authorities told me they still needed my service because of my long experience and people's appreciation of my work. So, I was recruited on a contract basis. My terms of reference include that I would train the new announcers, which I still do. I still present news and produce programs. I produce three programs and have three news duties.

**So, was your radio work a mere coincidence?**

It was a mere coincidence.

**Could you walk me through your news translation process?**

We have a newsroom where the news reporters are. The reporters cover events. I used to write my own stories in English. An editor would edit the report and prepare a script. The news translator would translate the English script into Mandinka and other indigenous languages. A newly recruited person does not translate news right away. They must be supervised until we are certain they can do the job.

**Who were the pioneers of Radio Gambia Mandinka news translation?**

The late Alhaji Lalo Samateh, the late Saikou Biyaye, the late Ismaila Susso and Sarjo Barrow, who came in 1980. These individuals used to translate news from English into Mandinka. I used to work under them. They were so kind to me. They assigned me to read public announcements and obituaries. I had only one month of training before reading public announcements and obituaries. Two months later, Bemba handed me a news script and asked me to translate it into Mandinka in the presence of the late Alhaji Lalo Samateh and the late Saikou Biyaye. He smiled and asked Mr. Samateh to assign me news duties the same day. This is how I got scheduled.

**Now, let us move to the types of training courses that you regularly take.**

I took my first course in Egypt from 1980 to 1981 and obtained a mass communication and journalism diploma. I went to Holland in 1987 for a radio course. My trainers were impressed with my performance, so they contacted me if I was interested in doing another course on TV. I agreed. I returned there in 1994 for a TV course. By then, the Gambia had no TV. Yahya Jammeh staged a coup in July 1994. I left the Gambia in September 1994. I also had numerous radio and TV training courses, taking me to Benin and Ghana.

Locally, at times, we attended seminars and workshops related to the code of conduct.

**Is knowledge of English a prerequisite for hiring a new translator?**

English is one of the subjects I have passed in O'levels. I never had any formal training in translation. My fluency in Mandinka helped me because it is my mother tongue, and I was raised among Mandinka folks. When I was first assigned news, I would refer to my seniors in case I came across technical words. I later bought a dictionary to look up any problematic words. When I got my script, I would refer to the dictionary to look up the word. Being an avid reader, I later had a very good mastery of the English language. I read fiction and history books. An older person in

Holland told me that the more you read, the better you master a language. Translation has become very easy for me.

**Overall, in which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

I speak at least five languages: English, Mandinka, Wolof, Fula and Sarahule.

I was born in Jimara, so my birthplace, Suma Kunda, was adjacently sandwiched by three Fula communities, namely Njobo Kunda. Sarreh Ali Samba Kotoya. I completed my primary school in Banjul, predominantly a Wolof city. My first posting as a cotton demonstrator was to Demba Kunda, Numuyel and Gambisara. However, I translate news into Mandinka.

**Suppose you were in charge; how would you improve Mandinka news translation?**

Reading news requires carefulness to avoid errors. I ensure the script is well-edited because we sometimes find mistakes. The news translators should be given enough time to review the script before going to air. That way, the news translators can look up the meaning of technical terms that have no equivalent in our languages. Sometimes, you must say it in English before translating it into our languages. We need institutions to develop our native languages because I have noticed that our youngsters hardly talk without codeswitching. Our young people should be taught our languages to understand them better. If a person is fluent in both the source and the target languages, they will be able to translate. Translation requires fluency in both languages because if you do not understand the source language, you cannot properly render the news in the target language. Saim Kinteh used to teach Mandinka, and he once invited me to talk to his students and introduced me to them because most of them said they had just heard about me, but they had never met me in person. Saim Kinteh told me it would be essential to write in our indigenous languages,

like Arabic, English, and Kiswahili. If we write in Mandinka, that will develop the language. That would help the young generation to learn and understand them.

**How have the military takeover and the subsequent regime change impacted your work?**

After the coup, we generally observed self-censorship because civilian and military regimes differ. I remember a senior military officer called the radio twice, expressing disquiet over a particular story. Consequently, we had a meeting where we agreed to scrutinize news stories to ensure the military was satisfied. Once a soldier is always a soldier, so though the military transformed into civilian administration, we continued to exercise caution.

**What are some of the professional challenges you face as a news translator?**

Sometimes, the editors hand the script just a minute before we go on air because some senior officials ask the reporter that their story should come out the same day. The reporter conveys that message to the editor, who usually complies, causing a delay. Besides, they sometimes bring you a page or more to read in the middle of the news while you are already on air. However, they would not face issues if the news translator is well-grounded in both the source and target languages. Meanwhile, after the reporter returns, they occasionally receive calls from officials urging changes here and there, which also causes delays.

We used to have health insurance for employees and family members. Probably due to certain constraints, the service was discontinued.

**Could you compare your work as a news translator and your stint as an interpreter for the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission?**

TRRC involves consecutive interpretation, while radio news involves sight translation. The former involves a counsellor and a witness. Listening skills are quite essential for TRRC translation.

**How do you deal with difficult terms?**

Skip the word to avoid misleading the listeners.

**What quality control mechanisms are in place to ensure that the translation meets the standards?**

When I was a junior news reader, our seniors would give feedback to ensure that the mistakes did not reoccur. In fact, that motivated me to improve my English.

**1.2 Madinding Ceesay – Paradise TV news presenter and translator**

**Can we get to know you, first?**

My name is Madinding, a Gambian TV and radio journalist. I present news in English, Mandinka and Wolof.

**Could you shed light on your experience?**

With three years of experience at Paradise TV, I am a news translator, presenter and reporter. I have a weekly 50-minute program called Politico, which is exclusively dedicated to politics.

**What motivated you to do news translation?**

At an early stage of my life, I wanted to be a lawyer or a journalist. At school, we had a press club where I reported on school-related events. After completing high school, I joined Paradise Radio, where I was hired as a Mandinka news presenter.

**In which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

I feel more comfortable speaking Mandinka among all the three languages I speak.

**Now, let's move to the types of training courses you regularly take.**

I got enrolled in journalism school after becoming a journalist. I am still going to school. Regarding training sessions, I have only a chance to go to one only once because I hardly have time for that.

**What are some of the criteria for hiring a news translator?**

Paradise hired me as a Mandinka news translator after they handed me a script in English, which I understood and comfortably translated into Mandinka with very few mistakes.

**Suppose you were in charge; what would you do differently to improve Mandinka news translation?**

I would ensure that the news translators receive proper and sufficient training in news translation. I would also create a conducive environment for them.

**What are some of the professional challenges you face as a news translator?**

Insufficient time to read the stories before going to air because the scripts are sometimes given to us late. Though at least 90% of the population relies on translated news in the Gambia, news translators are discriminated against.

**How do you engage your audience to get their feedback?**

On the radio, I open the lines for call-ins where the audience shares their view about the news presented. The feedback is generally positive and encouraging. I make sure that I understand the news well before presenting it to the public.

**What quality control mechanisms are in place to ensure that the translation meets the standards?**

Internally, there is no quality control.

**What are the criteria for selecting news?**

We select newsworthy stories that are of interest and benefit to society. Those are the main criteria we focus on when selecting news stories to be translated.

**What do you do when you come across difficult words or expressions?**

We avoid literal translation; we understand the whole idea and paraphrase it in Mandinka.

**What are some of the risks associated with your work?**

In case of mistranslation, a news translator might get prosecuted and convicted by a plaintiff. Besides, a news translator may face verbal or physical assault or get harassed by an aggrieved individual. For instance, I was having an interview with the Deputy Spokesperson of the ruling National People's Party (NPP), Seedy Njie (Now Deputy Speaker of Parliament), and I raised a question about the container containing drugs, which some alleged belonged to the Party. He was infuriated and asked me to avoid that question altogether. I insisted that this was an allegation being rumoured around. The interview generated mixed reviews. While some celebrated my bravery to ask tough questions, others insulted me.

1.3 Yousupha Draboe DHK - FM Manager and news translator

**Can we get to know you first?**

I was Born in Bloc but live in Sanyang with my parents, wife and kids.

I started schooling at Bloc but completed my lower and upper basic school in Sukuta. I completed my senior secondary school in Kotu. I pursued higher education at Gambia College. I quit journalism to pursue mass communication at Stratford College. I serve as the Station Manager responsible for DHK radio station.

**What motivated you into news translation?**

Veteran and famous GRTS broadcasters such as the late Sarjo Barrow and Alhagi Musa Manneh primarily inspired me. There were a few radio stations at the time. I had a feeling that I could do the job. At school, I used to read the news at the school assembly every Monday to the delight of the students. The school headmaster has encouraged me to keep it up. While attending Gambia College, I used to go to Taranga FM, where I was mentored. I moved to Hilltop Radio, Star FM, Janneh Koto, and DHK. Many listeners appreciate my job because of the clarity of the news I present.

**What are some of the criteria for hiring a news translator?**

Most radio stations coach potential broadcasters without paying them, so I used to frequent these radio stations to receive guidance and mentorship. When I was working for Taranga, many listeners appreciated my performance. When I decided to quit, the radio officials did not let me go, offering me paid employment because they realized I was competent and admired by my listeners.

At this stage, I don't like to be employed by media outlets; instead, I sign a contract with them. For instance, I work for this radio from 3-4 pm, which I dedicate daily to news presentations in Mandinka. My programs are sponsored by certain customers from whom my salary is paid.

**Now, let's move to some of the training courses you regularly take.**

For our radio station, we agreed with Stratford, where they send interns to us, and we also send some of our students there to study. The training is not, however, related to news translation into Mandinka. It is about writing news stories and presenting news.

**How do you identify yourself?**

I present myself as a journalist, and people identify us as journalists

**How do you translate news from English into Mandinka?**

We look at the headlines, which contain important stories and arrange them. In some radio stations, the editor selects the news stories to be translated, whereas the news translators themselves select the stories. The editors were highly cautious in choosing the news during the former regime, but nowadays, the situation is entirely different, so the editors are not worried.

**Please walk me through the process from the very beginning till the end.**

First, review the stories to understand the content. After the review, place the newspapers in front of you. Public announcements precede the news. Some news presenters would not like the jingle if there were too many stories.

**What are the types of stories you mainly focus on?**

The newspapers mainly focus on politics because people are more interested in that. Politics overshadows other issues, such as the economy and infrastructural development. Notwithstanding, our reporters sometimes go out and about to interview people on human interest stories. For example, water shortage or fire incidents are stories that our reporters accordingly cover interest people and them. We also reach out to physically challenged individuals to listen to their plight and challenges. Some reporters make live coverages. Translating newspaper stories is cost-

effective because many radio stations find it difficult to send their own reporters to cover stories for them due to financial constraints.

**In which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

In journalism, they teach us that we should present news in the language we are fluent in; therefore, I decided to translate news into Mandinka because it is my mother tongue, the language I am fluent in Mandinka. Besides, it's the language the listeners can follow better than other languages. Many people speak Mandinka in the Gambia even though it's not their first language.

**Now, tell me about some of the professional challenges you face as a news translator.**

Firstly, news translators get labelled by listeners on a partisan basis, depending on the news presented.

Secondly, journalism is not a financially rewarding job in The Gambia. The majority cannot make ends meet due to meagre salaries.

Many media outlets are not keen on employing highly educated people because of the meagre salaries they offer.

Journalists are ill-equipped compared to their counterparts elsewhere, where laptops and tape recorders are provided for journalists.

**Could you tell us about your relationship with the late veteran news translator, Alhagi Sarjo Barrow?**

Alhagi Sarjo Barrow was my mentor and senior. He was very sincere with me.

I have learnt a lot from the late Sarjo Barrow. He used to come three while I went to the radio twice. I was actually brought into the radio to assist him at Star FM because of his preoccupation.

I sat in for him when he was absent. He would call me to sit in for him when he was busy. By the way, he was behind my fame across the Gambia because of his huge following. I quit Star FM to become an independent journalist. There was no bad blood between us, as some might have assumed when I quit FM. The late Sarjo Barrow would even take me to his place for lunch.

### **How has regime change impacted your work?**

Under Yahya Jammeh, I worked for Taranga because it was the only private radio station presenting news in Mandinka. Mandinka news was popular and attracted many listeners to the dismay of the regime. As a result, Taranga FM was closed down several times. The very day our Manager Alhagi Ceesay was arrested, I was with him. Ahmad Sain came from Senegal, and former President Yahya Jammeh gave him a vehicle and much money and allocated a compound. Our boss wrote about this story, and I translated it into Mandinka. He lamented the President's generosity, arguing that the money should have been better spent on hospitals that lack medications. He was arrested and whisked away. Under Jammeh, there was self-censorship because there were people who recorded the news at the police headquarters. I was once summoned and told I was being closely monitored during the 2016 political impasse. After the closure of Taranga, I moved to Hilltop. Hilltop also came under siege by the paramilitary police, who ordered that the radio must not broadcast news. Under the previous regime, journalists working for private media outlets feared presenting news. Under the previous news, the editor would censor the news before the news hit the airwaves. Additionally, the news was pre-recorded and edited before it was broadcast.

Overall, there is a considerable difference between the previous and the current regimes. Unlike the former regime, now nobody is scared of presenting news. Young people who have never sat in a journalism class can translate the news with a certain degree of education. Nobody gets arrested

now for presenting news, though some junior news translators may occasionally mistranslate the news. The news does not get edited, and the news presenters are able to go on air live without any problem.

### **How do you handle difficult terms in news translation?**

As a news translator, you focus on the contextual meaning when there is no equivalent. That helps listeners to understand. We do not literally translate the entire content of a news story. We avoid word-for-word translation. I remember that my mentor, Alhagi Sarjo Barrow, would sometimes start the news translation from the middle of the story to the end, depending on the context. The late Barrow would find our Mandinka idioms for certain English expressions. For instance, people move from one party to another. He translated this as “FURUNDING SAWUNG SAWUNNA.” He was very experienced that he would read just the headline, the beginning and the end of the story before he went on air to translate the news. The eyes and the mouth are essential for this task.

### **Suppose you were in charge; how would you improve Mandinka news translation?**

As the person in charge of DHK radio, I train people because I don't want to do this job forever. Therefore, it's essential to train people to do the job. You may get sick, travel or die; hence, others must know the job equally. For instance, Bintou Hydera was my mentee. When she came, she thought she couldn't translate the news. I convinced her that she could. I ushered her into the studio, recorded and edited the news she translated, and pinpointed her mistakes. Eventually, she was so good that she would sit in for me when I was away. I have a handful of trainees I trained and can translate the news. Mandinka news is very popular in the country; hence, all radio stations are keen on having translators. At least 7-8 companies sponsor our Mandinka news. It creates revenue for the radio station.

**How do you engage your audience to get their feedback?**

The audience is essential in our work. When you cater to the listeners' needs, they also listen to you and appreciate you. You should accommodate all the listeners. I have known many people, including yourself, because of my news presentation. In fact, my fans have created a club in my honour. Some listeners call me to express appreciation. We now have many radio stations presenting news in Mandinka, so distinguishing yourself is essential.

**What are some of the quality control mechanisms in place to ensure that the translation produced meets the standards?**

We have the Gambia Press Union, but they are not effective. Internally, we have a program manager and editor. An editor would review and edit the news to determine what is fit for public consumption.

**How do you generate income?**

DHK global trading is meant to promote the company to save money on advertising their products. We generate revenue through adverts and sponsorships.

**Last word?**

I hope the findings of your research are contained in a book to be available at the library. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first research of its kind. Most of the population listens to translated news rather than English news. In the Gambia, we have very few people who read the newspaper. People need to know about the news translation process. Some news translators are ill-prepared for the job, adversely impacting their news translation. It's essential to have a generation

of news translators. We have Mandinka news translators who are not themselves Mandinkas. Fatou BS Badjie, is a jola who presents news in Mandinka. Ramatoulie Jawo is a Fula who presents the news in Mandinka.

#### 1.4 Momodou Colleey – Paradise TV news presenter and translator

##### **Let's get to know you.**

I am doing my final year in political science and international relations at Stratford College. I also take other online courses.

##### **Overall, in which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

I speak multiple native languages, including Mandinka, Wolof and Jola, which naturally helps to translate from English into those languages.

##### **Let's start by talking about your motivation to get into news translation.**

I have always had a passion and curiosity to know current affairs. I literally read anything that comes my way. My mom initially did not want me to engage in journalism because of the challenges and risks involved; however, she made up her mind when she saw me present the news and appreciated it. Secondly, I felt somebody must step in and inform the public, particularly in rural areas. I spend my holidays in Sanyang Village, and over the course of my conversations with my grandma, I realize that she is not well-informed. I take it as a duty to keep the masses informed.

##### **Now, let's talk about your experience.**

At Paradise, I initially worked for Business Development Unit, which focuses on growing the enterprise and creating revenue. However, I moved to the radio as an English news presenter. One day, Pa Kabba, who used to co-present the news with Sally, couldn't come to work, so the Paradise Manager, Harona Drammeh, approached me, asking me if I could sit in for Pa Kabba. Though I

used to watch them understand the nature of their work, I told Mr. Drammeh I had never done it before. However, Mr. Drammeh implored me to try saying that I was smart and fluent in Mandinka. “I can see the potential in you,” Drammeh said.

Sally mentored me and became a news presenter. When Pa Kabba left, Sally and I presented the news. Soon Sally quit, so I took charge. At this juncture, the Manager asked me to find someone to groom to become a co-presenter.

### **Let’s move to the training courses you take and your takeaways from them.**

There is no translation school in the Gambia, so it’s learning on the job. You simply learn from others, and any other qualification as a news translator is a plus. That’s why I am keen on taking relevant online courses. The job requires constant self-development. We do have training programs. I remember that our manager brought in one veteran BBC journalist who taught us about ethical journalism. Some of the other courses I took dealt with communication skills and the profession's dos and don’ts.

### **What are some of the professional challenges that you face as a news translator?**

I use a dictionary app on my phone to look up the meaning of difficult words. Sometimes, I call my grandma to ask for a particular word. Whoever understands English can translate the news into Mandinka.

Low wages are a major issue. The salaries that some reporters receive are unbelievable! Some receive as little as 1000 dalasi (\$40). The highest salary is 10,000 dalasi (\$400) (Ratio: 1:10)!

### **Suppose that you were in charge and could make one change to make news translation better.**

**What would you do?**

I would create an enabling environment for news translators where they all learn from each other. I would make more space for the internship to better prepare potential news translators in the event they land a job.

### **How do you identify yourself?**

I do various things. In addition to news translation and reports, I do voice-over commercials for companies to advertise their products or for international organizations to raise awareness about specific issues.

### **What are your audience's expectations, and how do you engage them?**

I follow Facebook comments when we live on TV, where the viewers express appreciation. Sometimes, some viewers might be unhappy if the story is unfavourable to their party. Overall, I have a very cordial relationship with the viewers.

### **1.5 Kebba Camara – Former Senior news translator at Paradise FM and King FM**

May we know who Kebba Camara is?

Kebba Camara was born in Jarra Jinoi. In the early 90s, my late father thought it prudent to move to the Kombos to give his children better opportunities as part of urban migration. He relocated the family to Lamin. I attended Mandinaring Primary school. Then I had two options; Saint Peters Primary school or Mandinaring Primary school. However, Saint Peters prioritizes the adherents of Christianity before considering others. In those days, very Muslim kids would gain access to St. Peters Primary School. Because I couldn't enroll in St. Peters, my father decided to enroll me in Mandinaring, which is 5 to 6 kilometres from Lamin. There were fewer vehicles than today. The fare was 3 dalasi, which wasn't affordable for my parents. So, I trekked and spent the 2 dalasis they gave me for my school lunch for six years. After completing Grade 6, I told my parents that

I would like to do my high school at Brikama Upper Basic School. (I thought its name was Alpha Khan). I spent three years there before moving to Gambian Senior Secondary School, where I spent three years. I then took some communication courses in college because there was no media faculty at the University of the Gambia. I started my journalism career at Foroya, where I was mentored by Halifa Sallah and Sam Sarr on news writing. Mr. Sallah recommended that I should be a radio journalist because he could see my potential as such. So he contacted Mr. Joh Johnson of Radio 1 that he wanted to send him someone as a radio journalist. Mr. John accordingly hired me. The news was rare, so we mostly played music. Having said that, I did most of my radio training at Radio 1. Again, Mr. Sallah wrote to Mr. Harona Drammeh to hire me. Mr. Sallah has helped so much that some would associate me with the party, PDOIS. Harona created a special program for me during the political impasse where I hosted many politicians, including Halifa Sallah, former Mayor Yankuba Colley and Seedy Njie. The discussions were centred around current affairs, though it was risky under the former regime. My real journalism career started during that political impasse.

**Let's talk about your motivation to get into news translation and what continues to hold your interest in the field.**

Nfally Fadera was my inspiration. In fact, he was the one who suggested to me that I should be a Mandinka news translator when he was a news presenter at Taranga FM. When I was hired at Taranga FM, I was attached to him. He told me that translating the news into Mandinka is the fastest way to achieve fame for a journalist in the Gambia. He told me that he became famous only six months after he started to translate the news into Mandinka. He used to send me to the courts to cover proceedings which I translated into Mandinka. He translated some court terms such as prosecutor and witness in Mandinka. Until today, I remain grateful to Nfally. He mentored so

many people. I have used the same method with my trainees, such as Ebrima Jarra and Lamin Sanyang<sup>6</sup>.

**Highlight the importance of your work to the public.**

The educated elite can buy the newspaper and read the news, but the mostly illiterate members of the society rely on the news translated into Mandinka to keep informed. We also call in some newsmakers who speak Mandinka during the news. Because I translated the news into Mandinka, even some educated members of the society would call me that they stopped watching international news channels, such as CNN, BBC and Aljazeera and instead listened to my translated news because that's their mother tongue. At the height of the 2016 political impasse, I had a 2-hour-long political show. On a Sunday evening, I invited Halifa Sallah from 5 to 6 and former Mayor Yankuba Colley from 6-to 7. As Yankuba entered the studio, he met Mr. Sallah at the door. Yankuba was very close to the former president Yahya Jammeh while Sallah was the spokesperson of the Coalition that defeated Jammeh. They shook hands and hugged each other while emphasizing the importance of maintaining the country's peace and stability. I was live on air, so I told listeners what happened between these two politicians from two different parties and asked them to remain calm. The program was so important that even at social events, people would ask the DJ to stop playing music at 5 pm so that people could listen to the program and get updates about the current affairs. In that sense, I have contributed to the country's political stability because my two-minute message has reassured the public and discouraged people from fleeing the country as political tension simmered. Meanwhile, I have been reliably informed that the president and advisers listened to my flagship radio program: Talk to the President.

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<sup>6</sup> Lamin Sanyang is a news translator at King FM

We have the power to amplify a story. Our translated news lends relevance to stories better than newspapers because most people tune in to the radio than read newspapers! Suppose a newspaper runs a story about two villages clashing, nobody will take a note. On the other hand, if we translate that story, there is a possibility that the government will be hostile to us.

**Now, let's move to some of the training courses you regularly take.**

The training courses were mostly in-house, where I was taught the importance of reporting the news accurately in a manner that would not cause trouble in the country. Generally, translating the news into Mandinka was your own show. However, some of us, like myself, were lucky to have a coach like Nfally, who mentored and trained me on news translation. When I was mentoring Jarra at Paradise, he would ask me about translating certain words, such as conflict. So news translators generally learn on the job.

**In which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

Though I am fluent in Wolof, I feel more comfortable translating news into Mandinka. For other programs other than news, I can do them in Wolof.

**What are some of the professional challenges you face as a news translator?**

The first challenge of translating news is dealing with technical terms such as court-related terminology. The court has its own jargon. Mind that the court is very sensitive in how court proceedings are reported, which requires caution from the news translator. I remember that I was at Capital FM; the court had summoned the late Sarjo Barrow because he mistranslated a story related to Yankuba Badjie's case. I felt guilty because we could not say it better than Sarjo Barrow. Mistranslating news stories from the courts could drag a journalist to prison or another form of

penalization. King FM was closed down by the authorities in 2019, and after it was reopened, the radio management discontinued my popular show Talk to the President. In that program, I told the listeners that the president is ill-advised, so we should open the telephone lines to the public to talk to the president directly. For example, the president was probably told by his advisers that a bag of rice cost 900-1000 dalasi, so we opened the lines, and the people talked about the right price of the rice. As I said, my two flagship radio programs, Talk to the President and Toch Kass, were banned by the radio management because when the manager was arrested, he was questioned on those two programs in particular and was asked to provide the recordings because they were informed that the president gets insulted in those shows. His release was conditioned on the discontinuation of those two programs. After the radio was reopened, I was invited to a meeting where the manager told us he would temporarily suspend the two programs.

Also, I don't want to be censored by the editors, so I have always wanted to have my own radio station, employ people and talk on my own terms. That's a dream I want to achieve. For this reason, I tell people I want to become like Pa Modou Bojang, where I own my own radio without anyone dictating it. As for now, radio station managers protect their business. I have a feeling that my full potential is not yet tapped. I still want to resume my program; Talk to the President, even if it means I end up in prison. When the President was seeking re-election, he spoke to us; why not us speak to him, as well? How can't the electorate talk to the president as long as they don't insult or make derogatory statements against him? I have the same concept as the Point newspaper, which dedicated a column called, Good Morning, Mr., President.

The Gambia Press Union is making efforts to improve journalists' wages because the salaries are generally low. The GPU Executive paid a visit to Echo TV and told the staff to come to the Union with their contracts for discussion and guidance because specific provisions favour the

Management but are considered disadvantageous to the employees. I was impressed that the Union is aware of the operation of a new media outlet and that they came to monitor its operations.

In this country, some journalists are paid 1,500 dalasis or 2,500 dalasis. However, some journalists take a share of the blame because they just want people to hear them over the radio, so they accept salaries as little as 2,500 or less. Radio stations take advantage of such people. The rents and commodity prices are exorbitantly high; hence the pay should reflect those realities. The average salary at radio stations is 2,500.

At Echo TV, each employee receives at least 5,000 dalasis and above. Online TVs nowadays pay their staff at least 5,000 and above. Some volunteers work for radio stations three times a week without pay.

Some Sheikhs complain about the interlude of music that precedes and during the news. They feel uncomfortable with the jingle. When we discussed it with the management, they told us that we could not satisfy everyone! It's challenging to present the news to all segments without offending them.

### **How do you Deal with complex terms?**

The news content is essential to understand first. After all, you will not translate it word-for-word because you are presenting the news to an audience that mostly doesn't understand English. Some listeners would call the news translator to complain about the mistranslation of a particular word. For instance, I once translated harvest groundnut as Tiya Auto, and a listener called and corrected that for me after the news, saying the proper translation is Tiya soo. Besides, Mandinka has varieties which need to be taken into consideration. A variety of expressions might be standard but

abnormal or an insult in another. So when you present news, you address all the Mandinka varieties speakers, including Jahnaka Mandinka, Jarra Mandinka, and Kombo Mandinka! It's challenging to present the news to all these segments without offending them. News translation involves much explication (Translation strategy) because word-for-word translation is tricky. Terms related to sex and sexuality are culturally challenging to translate in a conservative society like the Gambia. We feel shy to translate stories of that nature because our parents listen to us! And that affects our listeners' understanding of the news, but we are gradually overcoming that challenge.

We face another challenge: because we translate somebody's story, we are bound to mistranslate, particularly with court cases.

**What are your audience's expectations, and how do you engage them to get their feedback?**

The presenter-listener relationship is very cordial. My listeners ran a fundraising campaign on my behalf to get me a car. When the campaign started, I took it as a joke, only to realize that they had raised more than 90,000 dalasis. They bought a car, brought it to Lamin and made a presentation in Ebrima Jarra's and others' presence. Ethically some argue that I should be independent as a journalist and must not entertain such a gift from the listeners. If I were at Foroyaa, I wouldn't have accepted that because it runs contrary to their code of conduct because I wouldn't be able to write anything against the donors due to the favour, they gave me. However, some of my listeners have realized the struggle and hassle I went through to commute to and from work. I used to walk for 1 kilo from my compound to NTC. I then commuted from there to Latri Kunda or elsewhere. So my listeners, particularly in the diaspora, raised funds to buy me a C-class Benz. When I got a baby right after the impasse, the listeners again took the responsibility of footing the naming ceremony bill. Due to my popularity and good relationship with the listeners, I have solved many

problems. One of my fans took me to Turkey. Out of the blue, he contacted me and asked me if I had a passport; I replied in the positive. He told me they needed a guardian who would accompany some young people to an Islamic conference in Turkey and thought I was the right person. They provided me with tickets and all the logistics to be in Turkey for two weeks. With plans to have my own radio station, some fans contacted me asking for the price of an antenna and a transmitter to assist me in launching my own radio. However, I still couldn't lay my hand on an operation license from PURA and the Ministry of Information, a prerequisite for operating a radio station in the Gambia. They ask for all the details, including the general manager's identification, background and qualifications. The authorities are still adamant that there is a moratorium on issuing operation licenses.

### **Could you walk me through your news translation process?**

When I was working for Taranga, I usually covered court cases. Because the court does not allow tape recorders, I had a notebook to jot down my notes on the court proceedings. When I went back to the newsroom, I wrote the stories myself. It's original content, so I understand it better than reading someone else's story. The News Anchor, Nfally Fadera, would invite me to talk about that particular story. I also had stories of social events I covered myself. The audio gets edited before being aired. I no longer see radios do that these days. I mean bringing people's voices on the radio. I will re-introduce that segment in the news if I have my own radio station.

At Taranga, I was like an apprentice because Nfally was doing most of the job.

At King FM, we mainly reviewed newspapers.

### **Who selects the news to be translated?**

We, as radio journalists, mainly prioritize breaking and "bizarre" or "bad" news more than regular stories, such as launching a new road or visiting the president...etc., because such bizarre news is the type that interests the masses. Also, as much as we like bad news, we equally translate good stories. However, we are cautious about news items that can stock tension or fuel a crisis.

At times, we are ahead of the newspapers in the sense that we get breaking news that the papers have not covered. We always have plans to call newsmakers before we see the newspapers. That makes the Mandinka news quite interesting.

### **How has regime change impacted news translation?**

Obviously, there is a difference between the previous and the current regime. Under Yahya Jammeh, many radio stations have been pretentious that news didn't exist. In contrast, those that presented news were highly cautious with the type of news or content they brought. For instance, Sarjo Barrow, a famous news translator, presented the news very differently after the previous regime was gone. The same applies to me. During the impasse, the type of news I presented wouldn't have been allowed by Paradise Manager Harona Drammeh without the stalemate. Harona was honest with me. Though I have been urging him to bring news on the radio, he discouraged me, affirming that he would instead give complete news than an incomplete one.

Senior State officials of the former regime would call the radio station to express disquiet or displeasure over a particular news story. Newspapers that wanted to operate independently or neutrally were routinely silenced. The standard newspaper was shut down twice because of its neutral news coverage. That's why some sports journalists came on board after the regime change to present current affairs news. For instance, Pa N'derry Touray was not a current affairs journalist during the former regime. Instead, he was a sports journalist. Now he's got one of the best current

affairs programs interviewing senior government officials. Now everybody listens to his popular program. He's now a celebrity. He couldn't have achieved this fame during Yahya Jammeh's time. Radio station owners were scared of Jammeh. If you were a praise singer of Jammeh, you didn't face problems. If you acted like Deyda Hydara or Chief Manneh, you would get in trouble. It was shocking when the current administration shut down two radio stations. Nobody saw it coming. Though the current government has created a conducive environment for the media, journalists are still harassed occasionally. I never expected my political show, Talk to the President, to ever shut down. The closure of King FM has promoted the management to change content.

**Suppose you were in charge; what would you do to improve Mandinka news translation.?**

Radio journalists need training, so I would make that a priority if I assumed such a responsibility. There are news presenters who present news and interview people though they have never been to any journalism school or undergone training. It's like going from the street to the radio. That I feel is risky because the news presenter addresses thousands of people in Mandinka. If I were a manager, I wouldn't allow such people to be on the airwaves. News presenters need to be coached before going on air. The journalist must be familiar with the basics of journalism. I was personally coached by the likes of Halifa Sallah and Sam Sarr, with decades of experience. I am lucky to have gone through those people. I sometimes offer free training to some journalists. I provided a 2-hour training session to some journalists, and how they reacted shows that they felt they knew nothing about journalism, which is true.

**Last word?**

I think it's essential to have an association of Mandinka news translators to discuss pertinent issues. We can have a forum where we discuss news stories before going to air so that we all don't cover the same stories.

## 1.6 Hassoum Ceesay- Veteran Historian and Director-General of National Centre for Arts and Culture

### **May we know first Who Hassoum Ceesay is?**

Could you Shed light on Gambia's native languages?

Gambia is a multilingual country despite its colonial experience. We have several major languages, including Mandinka, Fula, Wolof, Jola, and Sarahule. Other languages include Creole, Serere Manjako, Balanta, Bainunka, and Karoninka. The language map is quite dense. However, Mandinka is considered to be the major language.

### **How would you assess the status of Mandinka as a major native language?**

Mandinka has been the main national language for as long as we can remember. The irony is that during the colonial period, several attempts were made to make the Mandinka have the status of a national lingua franca. The colonial masters were eager to do that, making several interventions to pursue that goal:

- Newspapers written in English language were translated into Mandinka language using a newsletter called *Kibar Kaito*. The translation was carried out using the Arabic script and the newsletter was published in the 1940s. It contained the main news events of the month and was like a news sheet printed on a Foolscap paper because A4 paper was not available back then. The newspaper was posted in *Bantabas*, like in *Salkeni* and *Kawr Janneh Kunda*, among others. Bakary Sidibeh was a reporter for the *Kibar Kaito* in the 1940s. There was

another newsletter called “Senela” to inform farmers about farming techniques and methods.

- There was an attempt to teach Mandinka in schools. Bakary Sidibeh was sent to Oriental and African studies In 1950, where he spent some time developing Mandinka autography to teach Mandinka in schools. When he came, he was teaching Mandinka at the Gambia College to train teachers how to teach Mandinka. There was a pilot school in Pakilinding to teach Mandinka.

### **Ironically, all these attempts were abandoned. Why?**

The political leaders and founding fathers were obsessed with maintaining the status of English as an official language. They were keen on this idea of national reconciliation. When Jawara came to power, the Mandinkas were associated with his People’s Progressive Party (PPP), but he knew that the Mandinkas were late in exposure to Western education. The minority Aku or Creole were running the country due to their exposure to Western education alongside the urban Wolof. They were the permanent secretaries, directors, senior civil servants, and so on. You literally countries in one country, the country of Mandinkas in the rural Gambia and the Gambia of colony represented by Bathurst, the Capital, and Serrekunda. I suspect why all the brief attempts to prop Mandinka to the status of national, lingual franco were abandoned quietly in the spirit of nation-building and national reconciliation.

### **Was it a good idea to abandon those plans?**

Yes, Gambia was deeply polarized, probably more divided than it is now. The Mandinkas were generally isolated in rural Gambia with no schools or facilities. They were left to the mercy of local chiefs like Mama Tamba and others. On the other hand, Bathurst and Seerekunda (*Tubab*

*banko*) got the attention of the colonial master. They had schools and hospitals (In Sukuta, Bakau, and Banjul). The Urbans used to look down on rural dwellers as bush people (Wa Alabi). I hail from Panjang in Niamina. Probably in his wisdom, Jawara thought the majority had to give way has to sacrifice. It was a period of appeasement. I think his decision helped this country keep unity, peace, and stability, of course, at the expense of this innovative attempt to elevate the status of Mandinka as a lingua franca.

**The general perception is that the colonial power has marginalized and suppressed the local languages.**

This is at variance with the evidence before us. There were many attempts to prop Mandinka, particularly to the status of lingua franca, because it was in the interest of the colonial master to do so.

**Could you tell us about the role of interpreters under the colonial administration?**

The colonial power was spending a lot of money on interpreters because they needed them to interact with the local people, particularly in rural areas. Every commissioner had to have two interpreters. The Governor had to have numerous interpreters. Every colonial officer had to have an interpreter. That was quite expensive. So the idea was to make Mandinka a national lingua franca in the country, like Swahili in East Africa and Wolof in Senegal. That would have made life easy for the colonial administration.

**Are there efforts at the moment to ELEVATE the status of our indigenous languages?**

I don't think so because:

- 1- It's a very touchy and sensitive issue.

- 2- There is no political will
- 3- The status of Mandinka has diminished; it's not as it was in the 50s and 60s.
- 4- Other ethnic groups have grown in size and influence. For instance, the Jola had more influence than their numbers under Jammeh.
- 5- It would have been easy if this had been done 60-70 years ago when the idea was floated.

The good news is that there has been a lot of discussion on social media to reinvigorate the use of indigenous languages, including Mandinka. There has been an increased use of native languages on radio stations dealing with current affairs. Before, you only heard them on Radio Gambia.

### **How were the interpreters viewed under the colonial administration?**

There was a state of ambivalence in the sense that they were indispensable. We had interpreters such as Musa Dumbuya, the son of Foday Kaba Dumbuya. He was among the first Mandinka interpreters. The interpreters were more powerful than the Chiefs. They serve as intermediaries between the local Chiefs and the colonial administration. They could put Chiefs in trouble by mistranslating or misinterpreting. The interpreters were extremely powerful. The fate or career of a local leader was dependent on what an interpreter would communicate to the colonial master. On the other hand, the records show that some colonial officials had a sort of suspicion toward the interpreters. For instance, when a colonial official says something to a local chief, they would anticipate a certain bodily reaction, but when they did not see that, they would suspect that the interpreter did not properly interpret the message. So the colonial officials were suspected of the faithfulness of the interpreters; were they faithful in interpreting the message? Some interpreters got fired, and others were arrested. That happened when the interpreter deliberately misinterpreted a statement by the local chief, so when the commissioner knew about it, they would be detained or dismissed. The colonial officials wouldn't have succeeded without the interpreters. The Chiefs

were uneducated though they were the pillars of the colonial administration. If you cannot communicate with an important instrument like a chief, you go nowhere. In that sense, the interpreters were very indispensable. The colonial officials knew this.

### **Who are some of the most prominent interpreters?**

- Musa Dumbuya. He spoke at least seven languages.
- Buwa Jammeh in Badibou, a relation to the famous Chief of Upper Badibou, Mama Tamba Jammeh. He attended Mohamaddan school. However, he did not interpret for Mama Tamba, who spoke English.
- Abdou Musa Rahman: His name featured prominently in archives

### **How were the interpreters recruited?**

The hiring of interpreters was a rigorous process. Due to their proximity to the colonial officials, the Tubabs had to be satisfied with them in terms of character and attitude.

The colonial officials hired bilinguals or multilingual able to speak two or more major indigenous languages, such as Mandinka and Wolof, because that was cost-effective for them. Musa Dumbuya spoke at least seven languages.

### **What was the interpreter's financial status during the colonial administration?**

The interpreters were well paid by the colonial officials and received per-diems because they traveled across the country. The interpreters earned more money than the local chiefs.

### **The role of interpreters was controversial; tell us more about that.**

Public perception of interpreters was mixed. Musa Dumbuya had a problem with Mussa Moloh. (Mussa Moloh (born in the mid to late 1800s) is regarded as the last king of the Fuladu kingdom in the Senegambia region of Africa. Moloh was known to work with colonial powers to keep power and thwart rebellions. Musa Dumbuya and Mussa Moloh fought due to ancestral issues or animosity. Also, Mussa Moloh thought Dumbuya drew a wedge between him and the colonial officials. Moloh was consequently arrested and sent to exile to Freetown, Sierra Leone, due to the alleged misinterpretation. The family still holds that Dumbuya must have told the colonial officials something that Moloh never told the commissioner. Some interpreters received bribes to manipulate the statement by adding or under-translate. If an interpreter did not like you, they would translate in any way that would confuse the colonial officials. The interpreters used to sleep in the guesthouse because they could not be away from the colonial officials. They served like protocol officers.

**Overall, what is the general perception of the interpreters?**

Some people feared the interpreters because they could put them in trouble due to the power they wielded. Sora, a war veteran, was very much loved by the colonial officials, but he fell out with them, with many suggesting that it was because of the interpreters.

Did the role of interpreters decline following the independence?

By 1950 the role of the interpreters started to decline, with more chiefs getting educated.

In the 60s, it was probably the President who needed interpreters, so the founding president Sir Dawda Jawra had interpreters who accompanied him on his tours around the country, including Banna Kinteh and Jali Niama Sussoho and Abdoulie Sambah.

**What are some of the challenges facing our translators today?**

Unlike Senegal, there is no institution in the Gambia for training interpreters and translators.

### **Now could you shed light on the history of Broadcasting in the Gambia?**

The history begins with the establishment of Radio Gambia in 1962. Interestingly it was the only and first Radio Gambia with programming in Mandinka. Before Radio Gambia, you wouldn't hear Mandinka on any radio station in the region. Therefore, they had a large following in the country and the region among the Mandinka-speaking people in Casamance, Guinea Bissau. Radio Gambia had a high frequency on medium waves and AM. In fact, those outside the country had better reception due to the geography of the country. People like Jali Niama Susso and Lalo Kebba Drammeh Banna Kanuteh, each of them a slot in Radio Gambia where they gave oral history in the first year of Radio Gambia. After independence in 1965, they decided to have a news bulletin in Mandinka and Wolof. The late Alhagi Lalo Samateh was the first to present news in Mandinka. Before Radio Gambia, newscasters used to go to McCarty Square to read the news. It was called broadcast talk. The late Mr. Badou Lo would listen to it, transcribe it and read it out. The Square would be jampacked with keen listeners because few people could afford transistor radios. Lalo Samateh was a pioneer in news translation and presenting numerous local programs. The third phase of Radio Gambia was to dedicate programs to farmers who were recorded. A large portion of the population spoke Mandinka and lived in rural Gambia.

### **How did the Mandinka news start?**

There was live 9-minute-long news in English, followed by local news covering the activities of prime minister Sir Faramang Signateh. Then we had public notices, which are still on, including announcements, obituaries, and recruitments. At the end of the week, international news by BBC

would be digested into Mandinka. News was prepared by Information Department, get typed, and telegraphed to Radio Gambia. Radio Gambia was in Banjul before it was moved to *Mile 7* in Bakau in 70 or 71.

**Could you describe the process of news translation, then?**

- The BBC News was translated into indigenous languages
- The Mandinka news reader translates a script written in English. It's an onerous task!
- Radio Gambia news translators have never attempted to translate the English version into Mandinka using Arabic or Latin script.

**Last word?**

Translation is taken for granted in the Gambia; hence it is underinvested; there is no investment in translation.

1.7 Lamin Sanyang – News Translator at King FM

**May we get to know you first?**

I am originally from Kantora in the Upper River Region of the Gambia. However, my father moved s\ to the Kombo region and was among the first residents of Abuko, making him one of the founders of the township. I was born, raised and educated in Abuko. I attended Lamin Daranka Primary School, then Kombo Kerewan upper basic school, then>>>>Secondary School in 2009, took a computer course and then specialized in mass communication at Stratford College of Management. After graduating in 2013, I assumed journalism. At the beginning of my journalism career, I was a freelancer for specific newspapers, such as Voice and online newspapers. I hadn't received any salary; instead, I was paid per story I provided for a newspaper. I was paid about 100 dalasi (\$2.40) if I sent a lead story or 75 (\$1.80) of 50 (\$1.20) dalasi for a familiar story. I struggled

until I joined radio journalism. I started at Paradise FM as a part-timer, where Kebba Camara was the main anchor. Mr. Camara was quite a famous news translator during the political impasse that followed the 2016 disputed presidential elections. Being junior journalists, we were attached to him to learn from his experience. At Paradise, we were not paid monthly salaries; instead, we were given allowances to keep us motivated because we were mere interns.

**What motivated you into news translation?**

A great majority of Gambians are illiterate and cannot read a newspaper; therefore, I was inspired by this fact to become a news translator to share the news with such people, particularly in rural areas of the country. Those people need to keep informed about the current affairs of the country.

**In which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

Mandinka is my native language; therefore, I have decided to be a news translator from English into Mandinka. I am more comfortable translating news into Mandinka because it's my mother tongue. Using one's mother tongue when translating from a source language is essential.

**How do you identify yourself; as a journalist or news translator?**

I am a journalist by training because I specialize in journalism. A journalist may become a radio or TV news presenter or an editor,

How many languages do you speak?

I speak at least four languages, including Mandinka, Fula Wolof and Sarahule.

**Now, tell me about the types of training courses you regularly take as a news translator.**

I have attended several training sessions organized by the Gambia Press Union (GPU) and international bodies in conjunction with GPU to raise awareness among journalists who present

news in English or translate it into native languages. The training sessions increase our knowledge in journalism, particularly news translation. Training programs also focus on the role of journalists in society, integrity and honesty.

**What are some of the professional challenges you encounter as a news translator?**

News presentation is a mammoth task; the news presenter needs to have a good grasp of the source language (English) because they may come across difficult words. Financially, wages are generally low. Besides, though we are news translators, some listeners are under the impression that news stories originate from us. Others might accuse us of bias towards a political party if a particular news story does not favour them. We occasionally receive voice messages containing insults. Some listeners haul insults at me during certain live shows. Besides translating news, I also have a popular radio show called “Meng nianta” from Monday to Thursday to discuss burning political and social issues. I am equally a co-presenter of the weekly Gambian politics on Sundays from 4-6 Gambian local time. The popular political show was born of the political impasse that engulfed the country in 2016. Mr. Kebba Camara first presented it.

**How has regime change impacted your work?**

There is a considerable difference between the previous and current regimes, with the latter being characterized by autocracy. Under the previous regime, journalists who failed to toe the government’s line were arrested. Radio stations critical of the government’s policies and programs were shut down. However, draconian media laws are still in place. Having said that, there is a considerable difference between the two regimes. News reporters are freer than they were under the previous regime.

**What are your audience’s expectations, and how do you engage them to get their feedback?**

We engage our listeners on different platforms. We have a forum on WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook to mainly engage our international audience. For our domestic audience, we engage them personally. Some come to the radio to meet us, while others pay us home visits to show admiration or highlight our shortcomings. Some of our followers send voice notes to express admiration.

### **How do you deal with difficult terms?**

The source language (source) is not my mother tongue; hence it's difficult to translate certain words or expressions from English into Mandinka. Personally, legal terms are the most difficult ones. Specific terms are untranslatable in Mandinka; hence you need to find an appropriate word closest in meaning, ensuring that the content remains intact. Occasionally, we face such situations while presenting the news live. As recent as two days, I came across the word: "Marginalize," for which I couldn't find an equivalent, so I translated it as "Jenkendi karla," roughly meaning "set aside." After the news, I realized that "set aside" wasn't the appropriate translation for the word. Instead, it's "imang hati," which means to be "careless about."

### **What are some of the risks associated with news translation?**

As young news translators, we face verbal assaults by some members of the public. On the other hand, the government occasionally accuses us of spreading incendiary stories to intimidate the public, particularly during the protests staged by the defunct "3Years Jotna," a movement that demanded that the President step down after serving for three years as

The Government singled out popular radio stations such as King FM and Home Digital Fm to control the narrative. That was a ploy by the Government because I am confident that King FM

has done nothing contravening the country's laws. Until now, the authorities could not come up with an explanation as to how King FM violated the rules.

### **Why do you run advertisements?**

Due to the popularity of our news throughout the country and abroad, Gambians are aware that whatever announcement is made here will reach listeners far and wide. The ads are paid.

### **Do you collaborate with other news outlets?**

Yes, we have collaborators who rebroadcast our news, including Kerewan Radio and Basse Taxi FM.

Bansang FM and other platforms.

There is no formal agreement with these radio stations; instead, they notify the Management about their plans to rebroadcast our news.

### **Why do you play jingles during the news broadcast?**

If an emergency arises during a live news broadcast, a news jingle is played until the issue is resolved. Because it's two of us, the other continues with the news.

1.8 Falilou Janko – Producer and news translator at Gambia Radio & Television Services (GRTS)

### **Let's get to know you?**

Falilous is a Gambian from Niani Kayai. I was born in Kombo Lamin, where my parents live. I joined the Gambia Radio and Television Services in 2009. I was hired as a Sports and

Entertainment journalist but later expressed interest in Mandinka news translation. I also give commentaries during national events at the State House, Independence Stadium, and the birthplace of the former president.

**Could you tell us about your educational background?**

I started my education at Lamin Daranka Primary School. I haven't attended kindergarten because I attended the traditional learning circle from where I proceeded to Primary. In the year 2000, I sat for my Grade 6 and then moved to the Junior senior school. In 2003, I started my Senior Secondary school and completed it in 2006. Right after my graduation, I served briefly as an unqualified teacher. Then I did some courses, including journalism.

**Who are the current Mandinka news translators at GRTS?**

Alhagi Musa Manneh Alahgi Bakary, Lamin Ceesay Ebrima Sanneh, Falilou Janko and Kala Jula. Lalo Samateh had already passed away when I joined GRTS in 2009.

**In which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

I have chosen Mandinka because I am most fluent in Mandinka. I am originally from Niani, and the fact that I was born and live in Lamin, so my Wolof is not as good as Mandinka.

**What motivated you into news translation?**

I've realized that senior GRTS news translators like the late Alhagi Sarjo Barrow, Alhagi Musa Manneh and .... were ageing amid a growing need for news translation into Mandinka. Due to the ageing of veteran news translators, the young generation needs to take an interest in this domain.

**Tell me if there are certain criteria for hiring a news translator.**

Mr. Abdoulie Gassama was the director of radio programs. I have expressed to him my interest in becoming a news translator. He attached me to Alhagi Musa Manneh, who handed me a news script to translate while he listened. After listening to it, they commented on the choice of words because you don't always do a literal translation. Eventually, I was selected as a news presenter in 2013. Unfortunately, there is no regard for the local news!

**Now let's move to some of the training courses you regularly take as a news translator.**

We rarely undergo training. I remember having a training session at Radio Gambia. It's essential for Mandinka news translators because people follow the Mandinka news translation. Many news translators have never gone through training.

**Suppose you were in charge; what would you do to improve news translation?**

Motivating news translators would be the topmost priority so that more people follow the local news. I will create incentives to attract younger people into the profession.

There are no extra incentives for local news translators.

**What are some of the professional challenges you encounter as a news translator?**

Incentives and overseas training are the most outstanding challenges we continue to face. Our counterparts in Mali and Guinea receive overseas training to broaden their knowledge. In Senegal, the script is written in Wolof. It's more challenging for us because you read while translating in your mind. Broadcasting is not an easy task, so we need incentivization. You have to be highly focused on news translation.

Another challenge is that sometimes we receive a script on-air, or the script gets delayed until news time is up without reviewing it in advance. Under such circumstances, experience helps to handle emerging situations.

### **How do you deal with difficult terms?**

Before, we used to have dictionaries in the newsroom. However, most of us rely on dictionaries installed on smartphones to look up a new word or term. It's essential to review the news script before getting into the studio to look up any problematic terms.

### **How has regime change impacted your work?**

The pressure on news presenters was immense. News translators were routinely accused of mistranslating despite their enormous efforts to translate to the best of their ability. The regime might misconceive your intentions. I remember struggling with the head of state's name, so after I came out of the studio, my boss teased me that the secret agents of the NIA would come after me. At the time, you could not afford to miss any long titles conferred on the president. Sheikh Professor Dr. Alhagi Yahya A JJ Jammeh Babili Mansa Nasirul Deen. The challenge was that his name might appear three times or more in one paragraph. The current leader must be commended for doing away with that. I remember that when he returned from Hajj, he asked that the title Alhaji, pilgrim, is not attached to him, contrary to the tradition here. The news gets edited and verified before the script is prepared. On the other hand, other media houses pick the newspaper and translate it without editing or verification. They pick the news from the street and read opinions live on air. All that is attributed to the freedom of expression everyone enjoys today.

### **Please walk me through the process.**

If you have a news duty, you first consult the news editor responsible for constructing the news to get familiar with the word choices, etc. They tell you when the news will be ready. In that interval, you free up your mind for the task ahead and stay focused. You receive a script written in English; hence the news translator should have a good understanding of the English language, both written and spoken.

Additionally, the translator must have a good command of the target language, Mandinka. The script is given to us mostly 30 minutes before going on air to review, depending on the editor on duty. Editors differ in terms of speed. As such, you may get the script 1 hour beforehand. We don't translate word-for-word; instead, we focus on the contextual meaning. One word in English might require explication in Mandinka. Above all, self-confidence is an essential element of news presentations. Understanding a particular event helps the news translator to avoid literal translation. I also translate the president's speeches.

**What are some of the quality control mechanisms in place to ensure that the translation produced meets the standards?**

Our senior news translators, such as Alhagi Musa Manneh, Alhagi Modou Joof<sup>7</sup> and Alhagi Karaboulie Konteh, comment on the performance and provide advice for improvement. Chief Editor Karaboulie Konteh once monitored me because he knew I received the script at the last minute. He was holding the script upstairs, listening to me. Mr. Konteh, a good news translator, was quite impressed.

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<sup>7</sup> Modou Joof is a veteran news translator and currently serves as Deputy Director General of State-owned Gambia Radio & Television Services (GRTS)

**What are the expectations of your audience, and how do you engage them to get their feedback?**

The audience's feedback matters a lot in our work. When we meet our listeners, they commend us for our work. Some of them raise concerns with our seniors to advise us.

1.9 Bemba Tamedou- Veteran broadcaster and former Minister of Information  
**Could you get to know who you are?**

My father originally came from Bakadaji, in Jimara, the ancestral home of the Tamedou clan. As for my mother, she hailed from Dampha Kunda village, a member of Jaiteh Kunda.

The Tamedou family decided to relocate to Bansang in the early forties because, in those days, Bansang was a bustling trading centre that offered much more employment opportunities to ambitious young men. Bakadaji, on the other hand, could not offer the same kind of opportunities. Most of the Tamedous were accomplished mechanics, so the move from Bakadaji to Bansang was the logical thing for them to do at the time.

On arrival in Bansang, The Tamedous were given a piece of land to construct their new home, which is still there to this day. In line with their passion, they quickly found jobs in the auto-repair sector and others in the driving industry. My father was one of those who opted to become a driver, one of the few in those days. No wonder he was spotted by one Doctor Jones, who encouraged him to move to Bathurst as it was known then. Ultimately, my father, a young man, decided to move to Banjul, leaving Tamedou Kunda firmly established in Bansang.

Dr. Jones became his landlord in Banjul at No. 2 Clifton Road, now Independence Drive. The Second World War was already in progress, and Banjul was an important Air-base for the British

Royal Air Force (RAF). Instead of joining the West Africa Frontier Force as was the case for many able-bodied young men who moved from the provinces to Banjul at the time, my father, probably through the influence of Dr. Jones, got a job with the RAF as a minibus driver. His job was transporting British Military officers between Fajara, Banjul, and the Yundum Airbase. I was told that there was a small military base at Old Jeshwang. He continued to do this job until the end of the war in 1945 and the end of RAF operations on the Gambia. Yundum Air Base was closed down soon after the end of the war.

At the end of the war, the colonial authorities left behind the Para-military Field Force and stationed them at the Fajara Barracks. The Medical Research (MRC) was Stationed next door to the barracks and empowered to conduct medical research activities.

I was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1947 in Banjul, two years after the end of world war II. Shortly after my birth, the family moved from Banjul to Lamin in the Kombos, where the family had acquired a compound. By this time, the RAF had completed wrapping up its operations in The Gambia and filling the void created by their exit; the colonial authorities decided to find alternate employment for those Gambians who worked for the Royal Air Force and had acquired experience in aircraft handling and maintenance. So when the RAF military flights were discontinued, they were replaced with a commercial civilian airline named West African Airways Corporation (WAAC). The new Airline operated weekly flights between the United Kingdom and her four West African colonies The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Nigeria.

**Tell me about your academic qualifications.**

Given my father's experience with the RAF, he was recruited to work for the new company WAAC and sent to establish the Airline's operations in Sierra Leone. He relocated to Freetown in Sierra

Leone in 1951, and the family joined him eventually, and Freetown Airport became our home for the next two decades. My siblings and I did primary and secondary school education in Sierra Leone up to O'levels.

Due to my mother's failing health, my siblings and I decided to return to Banjul in 1965 to continue our education there. I enrolled at Gambia High School and eventually sat for the A-Levels. My colleagues were Lawyer Ousainou Darboe, his brother, Momodou Darboe, the late Dr. Boro Suso, the late Malamin Sonko and several other high-ranking officials in government.

My initial ambition was to study Aeronautics to become an Aircraft Pilot. I had this ambition because, during most of my youthful days, I was exposed to airplanes and airlines through my father's involvement with airlines and planes, but also because we lived in an airport environment at the Freetown Airport. Unfortunately, I could not continue with my ambition due to financial constraints, so I was obliged, in 1969, to look for a job to keep the family going because of my mum's increasingly failing health condition.

### **Could you shed light on your career experience?**

My first job was at the Department of Agriculture's Agronomy Lab in Yundum as a Lab Technician. This was in February 1969. My monthly pay was Ten Pounds, today's D50. By October of that year, the Public Service Commission (PSC) advertised six vacancies at Radio Gambia for Production Assistants. The advertised salary was Thirty-Seven Pounds, far more than my Lab pay. I was interested, so I applied and went through the process like everyone else – voice and reading tests and interviews at the Public Service Commission (PSC).

On December first, 1969, I received my appointment letter from the PSC asking me to report for duty at Radio Gambia on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, 1969.

**Tell me how you got promoted.**

From Production Assistant, I was promoted to Producer, then to Senior Producer and Head of Rural Broadcasting. At some point down the line, I held the Ag—Deputy Broadcasting Officer position. Before resigning in 1982, I had reached the position of Broadcasting Officer, which today is equivalent to Director, the highest administrative position at Radio Gambia.

**Please tell me about the Early days of Broadcasting in The Gambia.**

Radio Broadcasting in the Gambia started in a very modest way in 1962. Captain Peters, a colonial officer and one Badou Lowe, a respected member of Bathurst, were the pioneers. It is said that Capt. Peters read the news in English, and Badou Lowe translated it into Wolof. Badou Lowe later became the first Gambian Manager of the nascent Radio Gambia.

The early broadcasts were facilitated by Cable and Wireless, who put one of their Short wave frequencies at the disposal of Capt. Peters and Badou Lowe every day from 5 pm until 8:30 pm on weekdays and 9 pm on weekends.

A disused Boys Quarter on Marina Parade just behind Cable and Wireless Headquarters in Bathurst (now Banjul) was converted into a studio. It was linked by cable to the transmitter in the adjacent Cable and Wireless transmission room a few meters away.

The single-room Boys Quarter was used alternately for Programme Production and Recording Studio during the day and for Transmission in the evening. Later, two small buildings were added, one for the office of Manager Badou Lowe and his small clerical staff and the other as the Tape and Music Library.

By this time, the staff was growing slowly as a veteran broadcaster, Joseph Gabiddon, replaced Capt. Peters in Reading the news in English. Later, news readers in Wolof and Mandinka (Mansour Njie and Saikou Beyai, respectively) were recruited. After independence, Joy Coker, Ransford Cline-Thomas, Sidi Jammeh, Hassan Njie, Maimouna Bah, Mahtar Nyang, Sarjo Manneh and Saikou Jalloh joined. The range of programmes widened, but the station remained in the Boys Quarter on Marina Parade in Banjul.

Meanwhile, a new studio complex was being built at *Mile 7*. In anticipation, the government recruited several new staff in late 1969 in readiness for the new station. That was six High school graduates, amongst whom my humble self was recruited in December 1969.

December 4th. 1969 was the beginning of a very fulfilling and rewarding career in broadcasting for me. I began that journey with five other colleagues as Production Assistant. They were Joseph Taylor-Thomas, Ebrima Cole, Baboucar Gaye, Sara Goddard and Theresa Nicole (later to be known as Lala Fatma Hydera). All of us reported to Sidi Jammeh at Marina Parade studio and introduced to the world of broadcasting. We met Joseph Gabbidon, Joy Coker, Ransford Cline-Thomas, Hassan and Mansour Njie and Saikou Beyai. There was Maimouna Bah, Yassin Kinteh and Aunty Katie Thomas, the Librarian at the time.

The six of us (Production Assistants) were to become the foundation of the new administration of Radio Gambia. Sidi Jammeh and the other veteran broadcasters ensured that we learned the fundamentals of radio journalism/broadcasting, such as Programme compilation, production and editing, conducting interviews, the use of portable recording machines (Uher) and presentation. In those early days, the principal News readers were Joseph Gabbidon, Joy Coker, and Ransford Cline-Thomas.

Being new to the job, the British Expatriate Director of Information & Broadcasting then ensured that we got off to a good start. He organized a series of in-house training on Techniques and Fundamentals of Radio Programme Production. We had sessions on Presentation, including Diction and Phonetics Reading, Pronunciation, Intonation, and Pace.

In those early days, my colleagues and I were involved in various programmes to make us versatile in both studio and outside broadcasting work, such as running commentaries and news reporting. Eventually, we rose to become Producers and later Senior Producers. In time I became Head of Rural Broadcasting, responsible for rural development programmes, particularly agriculture.

### **What was the recruitment Criteria at Radio Gambia?**

Recruitment in the sixties and early seventies was based on strict Civil Service criteria supervised and regulated by the Public Service Commission. I was one of the first Production Assistants at Radio Gambia recruited through those criteria. To qualify, candidates had to have a good level of competency in reading, writing and speaking English. A good O-level result determined whether one was considered for entry into Radio Gambia. Of course, other criteria, such as higher academic qualifications and the ability to embrace teamwork, were also important for recruitment.

### **When did Radio Gambia move from Banjul to *Mile 7*?**

Radio Gambia moved from Banjul to *Mile 7* in 1971. The move saw an end to Broadcasting from the converted Boys Quarter on Marina Parade and the beginning of broadcasting from modern studios fitted with state-of-the-art equipment of the era. The move also ushered in a completely new era of broadcasting, the introduction of Radio Gambia on the Medium Wave Band. Until the move, broadcasting had been on short wave thanks to Cable and Wireless. The transformation

from short to medium waves also saw the introduction of the first FM Radio Channel in the country.

The Mediumwave Transmitters were located in Bonto, about 40 miles away, and the FM frequency served as a link between *Mile 7* and Bonto. But listeners with FM receivers could listen to Radio Gambia on FM in addition to the Medium wave band. However, the primary function of the FM frequency was to remotely switch Bonto on and off from *Mile 7*. It was a real revolution in Gambian Broadcasting. Another novelty of the time was the commissioning of a new relay station in Basse to make Radio Gambia programmes more accessible to listeners in that part of the country.

Dr. Lamin Mbye, who had become the new Director of Information and Broadcasting, was assisted by the late Swaibou Conateh, the Broadcasting Officer and Sidi Jammeh, Head of General Programmes and Administration. The late Musa Manneh remained News Editor at the Information office in Banjul. When Sidi Jammeh resigned and left for further education in the US, Marcel Thomasi, newly graduated from Fourabay College, University of Sierra Leone, was recruited to become the new administrator.

**Now, let's move to some of the training courses that Radio Gambia offered at the time.**

I had the opportunity to travel to Germany in 1972 for my first overseas training, an 18-month-long Advanced Course in Broadcasting. Upon my return, I continued my line of duty and slowly gravitated to the summit. In the process, I did several short courses, such as one on the concept of Rural Radio Clubs in Africa in Addis Ababa sponsored by the Economic Commission for Africa ECA. In 1974, I took part in a University of Chicago-sponsored course in Yaounde, Cameroun, on Population and Development for Rural Radio broadcasters.

Other training I received included Advanced Diploma in Agricultural Research and Rural Development studies at Reading University in the UK, Drama in National Development in Ghana sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Management of Resources in Broadcasting jointly organized by the BBC and London Polytechnic.

**What are some of the Programs you've initiated?**

I was involved with many different kinds of programmes. The major ones were News Presentation both National and International, and several entertainment and Musical Programmes, notably - Siesta Time – which was aired every weekday from mid-day to 1 pm, One of my earliest music programmes was “Time for Highlife” featuring West African dance music cutting across generations, “Afro-beat” featured hits from the sixties and finally the presentation of the “Top Ten” sounds from the weekly listener’s request programmes.

Perhaps the most important programme to my credit was “Your History,” It was a translation of the oral history of Sene-Gambia narrated by our traditional griots, notably Jali Bamba Susso. The original stories, for example, the story of Sunjata Keita or Ansu Massing, were produced and broadcast as part of our Cultural and Historical programmes in Mandinka. The stories were mainly narrated by Jali Bamba Suso, but sometimes Jali Kunye Saho also contributed. The Narratives were translated into Wolof by the late Alhaji Mansour Njie. Their stories provided the raw material for my programme “Your History,” which became one of the most popular programmes in the history of Radio Gambia.

After the original stories were broadcast, I would pick up the tapes and transcribe/translate them into English. The transcription process was long and laborious. A whole week was sometimes

necessary to put together enough material for a half-hour programme because, in addition to “Your History,” I was also responsible for producing other weekly programmes.

Once the translation/transcription work is complete, the handwritten script is sent for typing. I want to acknowledge the immense contribution of Ms. Marian Forster and her team for their hard work to ensure the success of “Your History.” After final verification, I proceed to the next stage, the final recording of the programme.

The first indication of the success of “Your History” was noticed at the recording stage. Every Studio Operator, then, wanted to be the one to do the recording. They were so eager to hear the stories first-hand that each of them scrambled to be chosen for the recording session. In this respect, I want to recognize the invaluable contribution of operators Mahtar Nyang(late) and Sarjo Manneh, fondly called “Old Dad,” and Saikou Jallow.

Recording sessions were scheduled for mid-day every Thursday, and the programme was broadcast at 9:00 pm. It turned out to be one of the most popular programs on Radio Gambia at the time, and for many people, nothing in the world would make them miss 9 pm Thursday evenings.

Whatever glory is associated with the success and popularity of “Your History” is no doubt shared with people like Mansour Njie, Jali Bamba Suso, and the many others without whose contribution there would have been no glory to talk about.

**Could you walk me through the English news production process?**

The news Editor was based at the Information Office in Banjul, where the bulletins were compiled and edited and sent to Broadcasting House at *Mile 7*.

Once the news reached *Mile 7*, the News Reader on duty studied the text prior to the time for broadcast. News was never pre-recorded. The main news bulletin was broadcast in English at 6 pm every day, and translations into Wolof and Mandinka followed. As Radio Gambia developed, more local languages, Fula, Jola and Sarahule, were added.

The six Production Assistants took turns reading the News in English, joining other veteran broadcasters like Joy Coker, Joseph Gabbidon, and Ransford Cline-Thomas. As the years went by, Amie Joof, Tom Bright, Malick Jeng and Peter Gomez joined the team. On the Local Language side, Saikou Beyai, Mansour Njie, Musa Camara and Hassan Njie were the pioneers. Later Lalo Samateh, Musa Manneh, Sarjo Barrow, Serigne Fye and others joined the team.

#### **Who was the first Mandinka news reader?**

Saikou Biyaye. Though not a native Mandinka, he spoke Mandinka fluently. He was the first to deliver news in Mandinka. Hassan Njie and Mansour Njie replaced pioneer Wolof news reader veteran broadcaster Badou Lowe, founding father of Radio Gambia. When the radio moved to *Mile 7*, Director Dr. Lamin Mbye arranged for Alhagie Lalo Samateh to be transferred from Local Government to become the first Mandinka-born news translator. Dr. Mbye, a former Commissioner in Kerewan, where the late Lalo Samateh worked as an interpreter, knew his potential, and his recruitment resulted in a significant improvement in the delivery of news in Mandinka. Lalo Samateh was eventually joined by Musa Manneh, Sarjo Barrow and others.

#### **What were the criteria for hiring new Mandinka news translators?**

Just like any other local language, the first criterion was the ability of the candidate to understand the content of the news, which was written in English. The news translator will not be able to translate appropriately unless he fully understands the English text. Secondly, the News Translator

had to have a good delivery pace. In other words, he should not speak too fast nor too slowly. The pace had to be such that the listener would feel he was being talked to, not someone reading to him. It's never an easy process, particularly at the beginning, but it becomes easier as the news translator gains more experience.

### **What types of training did Radio Gambia offer to news translators?**

The local language news translators had fewer opportunities for overseas training compared to English language presenters. The station was being developed then and needed trained broadcast journalists/administrators. The six Production Assistants were recruited for that reason, so they benefited from most of the training opportunities available then. The second reason was that training offers came mainly from the Commonwealth Secretariat and International Radio Stations like the BBC, Deutsche Welle and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. The courses offered suited the English Language Staff more than those in Local Language. As a result, Local Language News Translators received less overseas and more in-house on-the-job training.

However, during the short-lived Sene-gambia era, cooperation between Radio Gambia and the Senegalese Broadcasting Service offered opportunities for some of our local language staff to go on short training attachments in Dakar. They formed part of the team of the two national broadcasters to jointly produce a series of cultural programmes with Griots and Artists from both sides. Many of our Local Language staff received training in this way.

### **What is the importance of news translation?**

Translating news in the local languages was particularly important in the early days of Radio Gambia because there was no TV in the country, no Internet or Social Media and no FM or Online radio. Newspapers were very few, so Radio Gambia was the only news source that Gambians

relied on. For that reason, the news in Mandinka and other local languages was very important for the rural population. Just as in the case of the news in English, the main news bulletin in the local languages was 6:10 pm. The headlines were repeated 5 minutes before the end of transmission at midnight. The same news bulletin was rebroadcast at 7:00 am the following morning for the benefit of listeners who might have missed the 6 pm version the previous evening.

**In your opinion, what are some of the challenges of news translation?**

The timely delivery of the News Bulletin to Broadcasting House in *Mile 7* was all too often fraught with unexpected difficulties. Banjul being 7 miles away meant that the News had to be transported physically by road and delivered by hand to the station. This was the only possibility at the time because there was no electronic transmission or reception equipment for that purpose between the Information office in Banjul and the *Mile 7* studios. It was, therefore, not uncommon that frequent delays happened. Sometimes the delays were caused by government departments failing to the Editor on time when they wanted important messages included in the news. Such delays adversely impacted timely delivery to *Mile 7*. It was always bad for the News Translators who needed adequate time to study and understand the text before transmission. In such situations, the challenge is compounded by breaking news arriving when the Red Light is on, meaning the News Translator was already On Air. Those were some of the bottlenecks. Translators had to contend with this from time to time.

Many online news translators today seem to have similar difficulties, But because of the sheer number of online radios, competition is stiff. Some, eager to sensationalize their stories, resort to the technique of repetition to convey an idea. Some try to translate word for word at abnormal speeds rendering the delivery hard to follow. That defeats the purpose of news translation when the idea is to inform your audience. News Translators ought to read their text beforehand,

understand it and then speak the ideas in a smooth and coherent manner in the local language. This can only be done when one fully understands the original text.

Sometimes, specific terms are challenging to translate. When faced with such a situation, the Translator has to be versatile enough to find a solution. For example, how does he translate “International space station” or “nuclear bomb”? We do not have these concepts, and they are challenging to express in any of our local languages. In such a situation, the Translator is expected to use his imagination to find a way of conveying the idea. Hence the need for Translators to have a good grasp of the text in English in order to do justice to it. A good News Translator is one who is precise and concise.

### **How do you compare Radio Gambia of yesterday and today?**

Early Radio Gambia was a government department like all other govt. Departments. The standard civil service salary scale was in use. Staff worked Civil Service hours and were bound by civil service rules and regulations even though working hours for broadcasters varied from those for other civil servants. In those early days. Some staff worked from 8 am to 4 pm while others worked from 5 pm to 8;30pm when the station closed transmission. Later closing time was extended (5 pm to Midnight).

During the early days in Banjul, the administrative structure was organized into three sections only, the Programmes, Finance and Records departments. After the move to *Mile 7*, a new organizational structure evolved. The Programmes Department was split into Current Affairs and Local Language departments. The latter, headed by Cham Joof, Technical/Engineering, Children and Rural Broadcasting departments were also created. Today’s administrative structure has

evolved to reflect the new realities of broadcasting. Today, Radio Gambia Broadcasts only on FM, the Medium wave transmitters in Bonto having been de-commissioned.

### **Any Unforgettable memories?**

In 1972, about a year after Radio Gambia moved to *Mile 7*, former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, paid a State visit to The Gambia as President Jawara's Chief Guest of Honour at the Independence Day celebrations that year. For the coverage of that visit, I was posted to be the anchor in the studio to coordinate the input of our reporters/commentators at the Airport, Serekunda Westfield intersection, Stink Corner and MacCarthy Square in Banjul. It was the first large-scale outdoor broadcast exercise since the move to *Mile 7*, and it proved to be one of the most successful ever. All the staff were proud to be part of a very successful coverage, especially after former President, Sir Dawda Jawara, sent a congratulatory message to the radio.

The other incident I will never forget was the 1981 foiled coup d'état by Kukoi Samba Sanyang. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1981, I was on Transmission duty on that fateful day. Suddenly, around 11 pm, a number of armed men burst into the studios and ordered the suspension of all programmes; we did not know what was going on until they told us that they were now in control of the country and that the Patriotic Revolutionary Forces led by Comrade Kukoi Samba Sanyang had taken over. In the confusion that ensued, I was forced at gunpoint to write down a statement they dictated and which one of them later read on air. The trigger-happy men proceeded to occupy the station. They suspended all programmes except for their statements which they ordered to be aired every half hour inter-spaced with marshall music. We had no option but to comply as we were held hostage at the station until 5 pm the following day. That was a day I will never forget.

**Now, tell me about your resignation and the end of a longstanding broadcasting career.**

In 1982, I resigned from Radio Gambia to go into politics. The run-up to the 1982 General Elections saw a great deal of political agitation by the people of Tumana Constituency, who wanted to have a new parliamentary representation. I agreed to answer their call for an alternate candidate, meaning I had to resign from my Civil Service Job at Radio Gambia. I contested the elections alongside the late Babucarr Baldeh. We ran as independent candidates, Baldeh in Basse Constituency against Kebba Kurubally, and I in Tumana against a long-standing and formidable PPP candidate MC Cham. I lost against him in the end, but that was the beginning of my entry into politics and my exit from Broadcasting. It has remained that way to this day.

#### 1.10 Sally Jeng- Former Paradise TV news translator and current RFI anchor in Banjul **Let's start by talking about your motivation to get into news translation**

I am a reporter and a news translator in Mandinka. Now, I only report in English, working for Radio France International (RFI). Education-wise, I have studied at ScanAid International. I also took a French course at Alliance Francaise. My friends have encouraged me to become a writer because I used to keep a diary at school where I recorded things. I used to write for the Standard newspaper. However, to increase my knowledge in journalism, I enrolled in Gambia Press Union's School of Journalism before the name changed to Media Academy for Journalism and Communication, where I obtained an advanced diploma in journalism. As for me, it was a coincidence. When I was going to school, I wanted to study law. I couldn't study law due to constraints. As I have previously said, I was encouraged by my friends to become an editor. I never thought I would be a journalist or a reporter. I have a passion for sports because the occupants of the compound I grew up in were mainly boys. We had a team in my compound. Therefore, I was a sports reporter for the Standard newspaper. That was around 2015 when it was not fashionable to be a journalist in this country due to dictatorship. Family members were supportive when they

realized I would only report on the news for fear of repercussions. However, I later realized the importance of highlighting issues affecting women in this country.

**How did your news translation start?**

I used to report sports tournaments for the Standard newspaper, where I came across Pa Kabba Susso. Before reporting on sport, I used to keenly follow Pa Kabba, the late Ahagi Sarjo Barrow, because of their mastery of the Mandinka language and knowledge. I used to send my reports to Pa Kabba; however, one day, he approached me, asking me to join him on Star FM. [B1]. He offered to mentor me, so I agreed. This is how I joined him at Star FM, where he coached and mentored me. When Pa moved to Paradise FM, I wasn't comfortable remaining at Star, so I moved to Teranga FM. After all, they have been urging me to join them for quite a while because they admired my Mandinka news presentation. I presented news in Mandinka on Teranga FM. Nfally, Fadera used to serve as a news presenter at Teranga FM. He was someone I admired too. However, it was not too long before Nfally left. I continued in that role until Paradise FM approached me. So I moved to Paradise, re-joining my former colleague Pa Kabba in a news presentation.

**In which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

I am fluent in Mandinka, so I translate news from English into Mandinka. I am not so grounded in Wolof to the degree that would qualify me to translate the news.

**Let's move to the types of training courses that you regularly take.**

I have never gone through any sort of formal training for news translation. I am unaware of any academic institution in the Gambia that trains people in news translation. In my opinion, it's high

that such schools open in the country due to the importance of news translation. For now, it's all about self-education and self-development. News translators typically learn from those who have preceded them in the field. I used to listen to the radio a lot to improve my Mandinka and translate like them. Pa Ksbba was exceptionally helpful. He was the person I would refer to when I encountered a difficult word to translate into Mandinka. On certain occasions, I would call my mom or other acquaintances to help me with a tricky word when Pa Kabba was not around, and I had to translate the news on my own. We learn from everybody.

GPU offers training on the code of conduct to journalists. Journalism students study media ethics and laws as part of their curriculum. The student learns about the media laws enshrined in the Gambian Constitution to know the Dos and Don'ts of the profession. The GPU hands out a booklet containing the code of conduct.

**What are the prerequisite requirements for hiring a news translator?**

Hiring criteria are minimal, where you find that most news translators or even reporters are grade-12 dropouts. Nonetheless, some news translators are fast learners. Honestly, it's better to have formal training than trial and error because we notice that some news translators routinely resort to literal translation when they come across some difficult words or expressions.

**Suppose you were in charge of Mandinka news translation; what measures would you take to improve Mandinka news translation?**

I would create a special department for Mandinka news translation with at least five news translators where someone listens to the translation before going on air to get rectified if there are any challenges. I would also organize in-house training at least once a week to learn from each other. It's not feasible to maintain only one or two news translators.

### **Who selects the news to be translated?**

Newspapers carry the most important stories on the front page, so we mainly focus on politics and human interest stories, which I focus on more. We select news mostly from Standard, the Point, Foroyaa and Voice. We mark the most important stories to be translated. I think it's essential to shed light on human interest stories, such as the lady who gave birth to triplets. The story generated much interest among the public, with some offering assistance. In rural areas, for example, some men and women suffer, and nobody reports their plight. Since I started work with RFI, I mainly focus on such stories though I occasionally touch on politics.

We do rehearse the news before going on air. With experience, you spend less time rehearsing.

How do you deal with difficult words or expressions

Usually, court-related stories prove more difficult because of terminology. I ensure I understand the message in totality rather than focusing on individual words or expressions. For instance, I look at the whole sentence and express it in Mandinka. Usually, court-related stories prove more difficult because of the terminology involved.

### **How do you identify yourself?**

I am a news translator, reporter and advertiser.

### **What are some of the professional challenges you face as a news translator?**

Low wages and a lack of professional respect are among the major challenges. English news presenters and reporters are more valued in the workplace than news translators.

### **How has regime change impacted your work as a news translator?**

Nobody can compare the media environment under the former autocratic regime and the current democratic dispensation. Under the former regime, even your relatives get scared and concerned about a family member engaged in journalism. A journalist used to refrain from discussing politics because the NIA operatives were all over. The Standard newspaper where I used to work would warn journalists to be mindful of the people we spoke with because they could be the State's secret agents. I used to report on sports avoiding anything related to politics exclusively. Having realized that the activities of artists were underreported, I decided to report on entertainment as well. Even in sports, the reporter would avoid touching on administrative issues involving the Government.

Now, people freely express themselves on various media platforms, including social media, to discuss a wide range of issues, including politics. For example, the public is free to take to Facebook to express opinions on certain political issues. International media houses used to send their own correspondents to the Gambia because it would be easy to trace them in case something happened. On the contrary, local journalists could face disappearance without a trace. So, it was hard for the international media to hire local journalists as their correspondents like Omar Wally is doing now, reporting for both BBC and DW. The environment is quite conducive for journalists to operate in the country.

**What are your audience's expectations, and how do you engage them?**

The public highly appreciate our work because they keenly follow us. We are treated like celebrities when some of our listeners or viewers meet us in person. Some of them share their expectations with us to improve performance.

**What are the Quality Control mechanisms in place to ensure that the translation produced meets the standards?**

PURA is the governmental body responsible for the oversight of media houses in the Gambia to ensure quality and adherence to the rules and regulations about the media. They are empowered to close down or penalize any media outlet found wanting. Among the media outlets, Paradise TV stands out regarding internal quality control. I remember that Paradise CEO Harona Drammeh would review the news translation to ensure quality by pinpointing errors. GPU is increasingly engaging news translators to ensure quality by organizing training courses.

**Is there anything you would like to add?**

Most importantly, I think it's essential for news translators to write their own stories rather than depend on newspapers because seeing is believing. A news translator can do a better job translating his own story.

[1.11 Ebrima Jarra Senior Report and news translator at King FM](#)

**Could you tell me something about your background?**

I hail from Aljamdu of the North Bank Region. I attended Sitanununku and Kerewan upper basic school to complete my junior secondary school. I moved to Charles Jow's Memorial Academy, where I completed my senior secondary school. I had in-house training for news presentation and translation at Paradise FM. I completed a four-year BA program in Economics and Finance at the International Open University.

**What motivated your into news translation?**

Realizing that many people out there do not read or understand English, I thought it was important to translate news into a language they understand.

**Could you walk me through your news translation process?**

We read the news in a newspaper, then translated it into Mandinka. When you come in, you must read the newspaper first and understand the content behind the scenes before getting into the studio to translate the news. You must read the news in such a way that it is compatible with Mandinka.

The process involves familiarity with the burning issues in the county first and understanding the kind of news required by the audience, particularly on the political front. Then you focus on the relevant news items in a newspaper, read them, understand it, and render it into Mandinka. In addition, we conduct interviews with people regarding issues of public interest after contacting them and gaining their consent to participate in the news. That is where news gathering starts.

We also have reporters that collect and report news from the field and collaborators who share news voluntarily.

**Is there a specific person who inspired me?**

Kebba Camara motivated me, particularly in 2016-2017, who was quite popular owing to his unique style of translating news from English into Mandinka. I got inspired, so he started mentoring and training me to translate news from English into Mandinka. I followed in his footsteps until we became what we are today.

**What keeps you interested in news translation?**

Translating news into Mandinka amounts to humanitarian service because there are a lot of local people who do not speak English. Translating news into the indigenous languages can help change people's lives and livelihoods. It also keeps them updated about the latest developments.

Reactions keep us updated.

**Why did you choose Mandinka to translate news?**

One needs to translate news into a language they are comfortable with so that the news relayed to the listeners is clear. I am fluent in Mandinka, and therefore I translate news into Mandinka.

**Do you undergo any training?**

Yes, I have undergone some training. The duration of training depends on your ability to learn fast. In the training process, the trainer hands you a newspaper to read and asks for any words you do not understand. Because English is Gambia's official language, all the newspapers are written in English, so the news translator must understand the English content before rendering it into Mandinka. Certain words or phrases have no equivalent in Mandinka, so the translator must find a word with the nearest meaning in Mandinka to ensure coherence and cohesion. However, before all that, a translator must have a certain proficiency in English to build on it going forward. The news translator needs to have a good mastery of both English and Mandinka to render the news optimally. Some would argue that news translation is a God-given talent in its own right because there are very fluent in English, yet they cannot render news into Mandinka. Besides, the longer you serve as a translator, the better you improve.

The Gambia Press Union, an umbrella institution for journalists and all media professionals, organizes periodic training programs for news translators. Radio journalism and print media are different; hence the training is tailored to the needs of each category. The news translators are also trained in the code of conduct and professionalism. However, the GPU does not train news translators on how to translate news; instead, the training they offer is about capacity building. The training is helpful because it increases the capacity and knowledge of the trainees. Any new training session exposes the trainees to new developments and trends in media practice.

**Were you hired as a translator or journalist?**

When I was hired, I was recruited as a journalist. It is not sufficient to be a mere news translator because you need to acquire other journalism skills such as conducting interviews and gathering news.

**What are the main hiring criteria?**

Hiring standards and criteria are limited. I have not come across any standard criteria. When a news translator undergoes training, the radio proprietor or owner listens to them. Recruiters require a Grade 12 certificate and a diploma in journalism. For the TV, it is different because you need to present your academic qualifications and previous work to hire you.

**How do you present yourself?**

I serve as a senior correspondent, meaning you can gather and present news. Literally, you wear two caps, a news translator, and a reporter. Here we do not carry a 'news translator title; instead, you are categorized as a news report.

**What are some of the professional and technical challenges you face as a news translator?**

There are quite many challenges. Emerging from dictatorship, news translators occasionally face verbal or physical assault in addition to online bullying at the hands of saboteurs. At times, reporters get harmed by the authorities. Additionally, low wages are among the challenges that journalists face.

**How do you compare your work under the current dispensation with the past regime?**

Under the previous regime, radio proprietors have shied away from hiring news reporters even though we had knowledgeable and experienced ones. When the Government transitioned into

democracy, the status quo considerably changed. In fact, nowadays, journalists are motivated to gather and report the news. However, some concerns persist up until today. King FM has been closed without any apparent reason. It was shut down without due process. According to law, only the information minister and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) are vested with the power to close down a radio station. In this case, the radio was closed down by the police contrary to the dictates of the law. The accusation levelled against the radio was mongering fear amid the protests the President's decision to stay beyond the three-year transition period. Such allegations were baseless. The move by the Government was meant to intimidate people and return the country to the dark days. That has raised fears that the authorities can simply take a radio off the air if they are not happy with your reporting, which accordingly creates a sense of insecurity for journalists. Overall, there has been a tremendous shift regarding freedom of expression. Journalists are entitled to express themselves freely, but uncertainty remains over the repercussions.

### **What is the importance of translated news to the community?**

The importance of a journalist's work cannot be overemphasized: to inform, educate and entertain. The Gambian Constitution mandates journalists to hold the Government to account, which makes journalists all more important.

### **How do you receive your audience feedback and expectations?**

The audience usually reacts to the news translated by contacting the news translator directly through telephone conversation because the news translators are accessible to the audience. On some occasions, the telephone lines are open; hence the audience calls in to express their opinion about the current issues. We also have a Facebook page where users can make comments. By the way, some listeners share our news on Facebook and YouTube, where people react. Besides, the

news is shared on WhatsApp through the Gambia All News platforms. I follow the feedback on social media. Overall, I believe that journalists should be visible and accessible to know their expectations to impress and attract them. We constantly monitor social media. I do not log out of my Facebook account to keep an eye on breaking news to air it and perhaps contact some relevant individuals to shed light on those stories.

**What are the Quality Control mechanisms in place?**

PURA is primarily in charge of monitoring the content aired by media outlets. PURA officers physically visit media outlets to verify documentation because they are also responsible for licensing. The Code of Conduct developed by GPU is meant for all journalists across the board, including news translators. It mainly focuses on integrity, honesty, professionalism, fairness, and neutrality.

**Who selects the news to be translated?**

We translate the news to be translated into Mandinka.

**What is the focus of the news you translate?**

With the proliferation of radio stations presenting news, we do our best to distinguish ourselves. Our news is mainly focused on politics and current affairs. We also translate editorials and opinion articles because they enlighten the public. We occasionally interview non-Mandinka speakers. In such a situation, we transcribed the interview and translated it into Mandinka.

**How do you deal with difficult words and ones that have no equivalent in Mandinka?**

To begin with, we all have dictionaries here. So, when we encounter a tricky word, we look it up in the dictionary to find a word nearest in meaning which is then translated into Mandinka. Such terms include retrospective, advantage, and opportunity.

You are dealing with a difficult word or expression you encounter during a live broadcast.

It happens, and when it does, a translation could be awkward.

### **What are some of the risks associated with journalism under the former regime?**

Under the former regime, journalists were routinely harassed, kept incommunicado or faced bogus accusations with no access to a lawyer for reporting a story unfavourable to the authorities. Some journalists lost their lives, while others were forced into exile.

Until today, infamous draconian media laws enacted by the former dictatorial regime are still in existence and have not been amended or repealed by the current government. The proponents of the ruling government can still assault journalists with impunity. Nonetheless, the current administration has been exercising leniency with journalists. The arbitrary arrest of journalists is no longer common, as had been the case under the former regime.

### **Future aspirations?**

I would like to be a prominent economist and a chartered accountant to improve the country's economic situation. I do not want to continue with my journalism career.

### **1.12 Alhagi Modou Joof**

#### **Please tell me about yourself.**

I Was born in Jerreh Kugoto, in Upper Niimi. I live in Kombo Sukuta Sabiji. I started primary school at Niimi Sita nunku, where I completed primary 1. My father was a carpenter, so he was

working PWD in Banjul. That's why he moved from Jerreh Kugoto to the Kombo region, specifically in Sukuta, in 1971. I resumed my primary education at Sukuta Primary school from primary 2 to primary 6, where I sat for the common entrance. I passed the exam with a grade that qualified me to move to high school. So I went to Muslim High school from 1 to form 5.

### **How did you join Radio Gambia?**

We were the first batch of students to sit the GCE O'level exam at Muslim High School. (May-June 1981). While awaiting the results, Radio Gambia contacted me that they wanted to recruit me as an announcer. I reported to the radio, where I met Thomas, Lalo Samateh, Mbemba Tamebdou, Cole and Cham Joof, who interviewed me. They said that they followed me while in high school. From form 1 to 5, I was a school prefect. In form 4, I was a house captain and the school head boy in form 5. During the time, we had social clubs where we had debates in different schools, including Nusrat High school and Saint Joseph's. During my time as a debater and a writer, I was recognized by Radio Gambia. I was quite popular in Banjul and the Kombos due to my role as school head boy. Radio Gambia hired me, and I loved my job as an announcer. After our GCE O'level exam results, I couldn't proceed to the sixth form due to financial constraints and the fact that I couldn't secure a scholarship. I decided to continue my work, particularly since my parents were ageing and increasingly dependent on me for a living. I had no regrets at all. After a while, I was appointed by PSE as Senior Assistant Announcer. In 1984 I had a scholarship to pursue a course in the Arab Republic of Egypt, where I graduated in 1985 with a diploma in mass communication. I returned home. In 1986, Sir Dawda introduced Economic Recovery Program (ERP), which has frozen promotions for 5 five years. Several government employees were laid off, and that's how PWD was shut down. That was quite difficult. America's Save the Children, an international NGO with a project in Badibou and an office in Kerewan (NBD), was advertised.

They wanted a youth coordinator for schools. I applied for the job and got hired after the interview. So I resigned in 1986 from Radio Gambia to take up my new assignment with America's Save the Children posted in Badibou Kerewan, where I spent at least 9 years. In 1991, we had World View International Foundation. They wanted a communications officer. I applied for the job and got hired after the interview. Some NGOs were closed in the country because of the military takeover. As a result, I returned to the Kombos. The military Government decided to bring the radio under the purview of Gamtel, which, in return, took over the radio and paid all the staff. The Human Resources Manager, Omar Camara, was keen to recruit a highly competent team to run the affairs of the national broadcaster. Omar contacted me saying that I was needed to run Radio Gambia efficiently. I complied.

Gamtel has accordingly appointed me as an information officer at Radio Gambia. After a while, the military government expressed a desire to open a TV station, so the Ghana government has helped them with technicians to open a TV station under Gamtel. Gamtel Exchange near Serrekunda post office was the temporary location of the TV. Ghanaians set up a studio there under Gamtel. They decided to send some staff to Ghana to learn TV. Three Ghanaian consultants came to the country to interview candidates, and I was one of them. I was one of the successful candidates sent to a 6-week training course. When we returned, the engineers had already set up the studio, so we assumed our duties immediately. It was initially called Gambia TV or GTV. In 2001, the government decided that the radio and TV would be independent. An act of Parliament was passed in 2004 to merge the radio and TV; hence it became Gambia Radio and Television Services (GRTS). This is how the Government took ownership of the radio and TV and separated from Gamtel. I rose through the ranks until I became Manager of TV Programs for three months, after which I was appointed Deputy Director-General of GRTS for five years and seven months.

In 2011, I received a letter in the morning that former President Yahya Jammeh had effected some changes at GRTS and that I was moved to the Radio as Senior Manager. The late Kebba Dibba was also affected by the decision. No reasons have been advanced for the decision. In 2022, I will retire because I was born in 1962. I currently serve as Human Resource Admin director.

TV and radio Program production is my main specialization though I got heavily involved in administration.

### **How many languages do you speak?**

I have travelled to Egypt and Saudi Arabia 20 times for Hajj. I Speak English fluently and basic Arabic and French. I speak fluent Mandinka and Wolof. For Sarahule, I have spent some time with Sarahules so that I don't speak the language fluently, but I can understand it.

### **Tell me about the news translation process**

A news translator must have a good understanding of the source language, spoken or written. They also must understand the target language. Each language has its own characteristics. An expression might be normal in one language and an insult in another. Thirdly, you must consider your audience. A listener in the urban area is different from, let's say, someone in Sitanunku vouz. The latter, who has never been to school, cannot understand English. The message is perceived and received differently. For instance, in the English news script, there was this headline: 'The project is in the pipeline.'" The news presenter mistranslated that there is a project in Pipeline," a place in the Gambia called Pipeline. Besides, cultural factors have to be considered.

Some technical terms are alien to our languages. How can you translate them into Mandinka? You need to paraphrase some of those terms. The way a news story is presented can destroy a country.

## Training

Training is necessary for news translation because the listeners are different, so you must be prudent in news presentation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The interview abruptly came to an end because the participant had an urgent matter to attend to

## Appendix 2: Interview questions

### 2.1 Interview questions for news translators

**Let us start by talking about yourself and your motivations to get into news translation.**

What continues to hold your interest in this field? (Probe)

**Overall, in which indigenous language do you translate news from English?**

What informed your language preference (probe)

**Now, please tell me how you go about gathering news.**

Who selects the news to be translated?

What are your criteria for news collection? (Probe)

**Great, what do you think of the translation process?**

What happens if you are unable to translate a particular word or expression?

Give me (an) example(s) of a word or expression you could not translate into Mandinka.

**Now, let us move to the types of training courses that you regularly take.**

What do you mainly take away from the training courses? (probe)

Is knowledge of English a prerequisite for hiring news translators?

**Well, suppose you were in charge and could make one change to improve news translation.**

**What would you do?**

What are some of the professional challenges that you face as a news translator?

How has the regime change impacted your work?

**Highlight the importance of your work to the public.**

What are your audience's expectations? (probe)

How do you engage your listeners to get their feedback?

## 2.2 Interview questions for Minister of Information

Let's start with your background as a renowned Gambian historian. Tell me about yourself:

Who is Honourable Mbemba Tamedou

- When and how did you join Radio Gambia?
- Now, tell me about the history of broadcasting in the Gambia.
- Who were the pioneers of Radio Gambia?
- News is translated into all major indigenous languages; how did it all start?
- How did the idea of translating news into Mandinka come about?
- Who was the first news Mandinka translator?
- What were the main criteria for hiring news translators?
- Were there training opportunities for news translators?
- Is Radio Gambia different today from the times you were there?
- What is the importance of news translation for Gambia's mainly illiterate population?

- From your point of view, what are the main challenges of news translation in the Gambia?

Closing:

Before we wrap up, of all the things we discussed, what do you think is the most important and have I missed anything?

Thanks again for the opportunity. It is highly appreciated. I promise to share the interview transcript for any necessary corrections, so please could you share your contact details?

### Appendix 3: Consent Form

#### **The Challenges of News Translation from English into Mandinka in the Gambia: Colonial Legacies of Translation Processes and Practices**

Student's name: **Basidia Drammeh**

Name of Supervisor: **Prof. Salah Basalamah**

University of Ottawa, School of Translation, and Interpretation

Master's Thesis, under the supervision of Prof. Salah Basalamah

**Invitation to Participate:** I am invited to participate in the aforementioned research study (*Basidia Drammeh*).

**Purpose of the Study:** To study the process and challenges of news translation in the Gambia as experienced by news translators.

**Participation:** My participation will be in an interview with the researcher. During the interview, I will be asked about (my experience, the process of news translation from English into Mandinka and the challenges we face in the process. I will be interviewed separately to answer the questions, which will be audio-recorded. The interview will last for about an hour. I will review the transcripts for any necessary corrections. The sessions will be punctuated with a break after half an hour, during which a refreshment will be served.

I want to be recorded during the interview ( Yes ) (No)

**Risks:** My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer personal information with my informed consent, and this may cause me potential risks or inconveniences, whether emotional, psychological, physical, social, economic, or other). I have received assurances from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks (e.g., option to refuse to answer, option to withdraw, identities will not be revealed, resources will be provided, etc.).

**Benefits:** My participation in this study will benefit me, first and foremost, understand the process of news translation, the challenges and how to overcome them in a scientific and systematic manner. Besides, society stands to benefit from this research, given that it's the first of its kind; hence it will advance knowledge about the evolution of news translation in the Gambia and the outstanding challenges.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential and that the contents will be used

only for purposes for which the data will be collected) and that my identity will be protected. Anonymity will be guaranteed. In the event that anonymity cannot be protected, I will be duly informed that no identifiable information will be included. The researcher will collect, analyze and report data without compromising my identity.

I want my identity and my organization to be disclosed in the publication (Yes) (No)

**Conservation of Data:** The data collected (*both hard copy and electronic data; including audio/video recordings, transcripts, researchers' notes, consent forms, etc.*) will be kept in a secure manner. The data will be kept at least five years after completing the research. Data will be stored on cloud-based servers, such as iCloud and Google Drive, as well as my password-secure laptop. It will be primarily accessed by the researcher and the supervisor.

**Compensation:** There will be compensation in the form of a cash gift of the equivalent of \$CA50.

If I choose to withdraw from the study, I will still receive this compensation.

**Voluntary Participation:** I am under no obligation to participate, and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of

withdrawal will be removed from the dataset and not used in the study. If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or their supervisor. If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity via email ([ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca)) or telephone (613-562-5387).

It is recommended that I (*keep/print/save*) a copy of this consent form for my records.

*If signed consent is sought:*

**Acceptance: By signing my name below, I agree to participate in this research study.**

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:-----

Participant's signature: -----Date:-----

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:-----

If verbal consent is sought and/or participation is anonymous (e.g., anonymous online survey):

**Acceptance: By selecting the consent statement below, I agree to participate in this research study.**

I want to participate in this research.

If consent is obtained online and personal identifiers are required (e.g., survey with name/email):

**Acceptance: By selecting the consent statement below, I agree to participate in this research study.**

**Yes, I want to participate.**

(Name/Code): \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**No, I do not want to participate.**

If consent is implied based on the action of a participant (e.g., anonymous paper-based survey):

**Acceptance: By completing and returning the survey, I am consenting to participate in this research study.**