

**Distortion of a text through narrative framing in translation:
A case study of controversy surrounding the Korean translation
of Angus Deaton's *The Great Escape***

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1. INTRODUCTION

This case study explores a politically contentious incident involving translation, namely, the publication of the Korean edition of internationally acclaimed economist Angus Deaton's *The Great Escape*. The book was translated by Hankyung BP, a subsidiary publishing company of the right-wing newspaper *The Korea Economic Daily* ('*Hankyung*' in abbreviated Korean). *The Great Escape* was brought to public attention after the author received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2015. Gimm Gong-Hoe, a researcher at the progressive Hankyoreh Economy & Society Research Institute (HERI), compared the original and the translation in terms of textual and paratextual changes and

reported that Hankyung BP had distorted the author's intention with textual omissions and paratextual changes to the subtitle, preface, and blurb. He investigated Hankyung BP's distortion of the text, publicized his findings, led a public discussion, and notified the author of the case. When the manipulation of the text was exposed, the publishing company released a public statement of apology and defended its position. The company refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing and mounted a counterattack on critics of the translation. A key source of contention has concerned whether the incident was premeditated or the result of normal "editorial changes", as the publishing company insisted in its public statement and subsequent articles, which will be presented later in this paper. This contentious issue prompted this study, which aims first, to investigate whether conservatives actually attempted to elaborate and disseminate their narratives through translation as claimed by Gimm Gong-Hoe and second, to explore how both parties used narratives to support their positions in this controversy. To explore the process before and after the publication of the Korean edition, newspaper articles and blogs related to the publication and paratexts, such as emails, blogs and public statements, were examined.

Drawing on narrative theory, this study regards translation as "a highly manipulative activity" (Bassnett and Trivedi 1999: 2) and translators not as neutral and apolitical mediators but as people who often hold strong beliefs (Baker 2013). The study uses paratexts and related documents for analysis rather than directly comparing the original and the translation because in a narrative analysis, surrounding texts are considered to provide a more robust understanding of the narratives and intentions underlying possible manipulation. This approach is consistent with Baker's notion of using narratives as the unit of research:

More can often be achieved by intervening in the space around the text (footnotes, prefaces, addition of visual material) and by the very selection of texts to be translated. This is particularly the case in politically sensitive contexts, where translators and/or those who commission them

are aware that other advocacy groups working on the same or similar issues are likely to have access to the source texts and to scrutinize the translations they produce carefully. (Baker 2010: 437)

These macroscopic aspects often determine the selection, structure, content, translation process and format of a translated text prior to linguistic and cultural transformations.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Narrative Theory

Narratives in the present study are “the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live” (Baker 2010: 350). That is, narratives provide an effective means of “describing and accounting for the complex, dynamic, constructed, reconstructed, and translated worlds in which we live and act” (Harding 2012: 287). This theoretical approach is particularly useful for explaining social and external conflicts because, as Briggs notes, narratives “constitute crucial means of generating, sustaining, mediating, and representing conflict at all levels of social organization” (as cited in Baker 2006: 3). In this context, conflicts can be disseminated or suppressed within a society by constructing and changing narratives through translation.

Every time a version of the narrative is retold or translated into another language, it is injected with elements from other, broader narratives circulating within the new setting or from the personal narratives of the retellers (Baker 2006: 22).

To determine how conflicts and power systems of the source text (ST) change through translation, it is necessary to analyse how the narratives in the ST change in the target text (TT). Thus, analysing how narratives are framed in a translated text offers an effective method for discovering who is

manipulating the text and for what political or ideological purpose(s). Using “narratives” as the unit of analysis moves us beyond the unproductive and widespread tendency to compare original and translated texts stretch by stretch and settle for making statements about their relative accuracy or inaccuracy at a semantic level because paratexts are commonly more effective devices for framing narratives (Baker 2010: 349).

When translators do not support the narratives in the original text, they may reinforce, weaken, and change these narratives through (re)framing of texts and paratexts. What is important here is that translators are involved in more tasks than just creating a narrative. As Baker writes, translators and interpreters play important roles in “disseminating public narratives within their own communities and ensuring that all members of a society, including recent migrants, are socialized into the view of the worlds promoted in these shared stories” (2006: 36). Accordingly, this study investigates the narrators themselves as well as their deeply held views on social issues and responsibilities. Then, what responsibilities does a society have with respect to assessing the truth-value of original narratives and narratives elaborated through framing in translation? Baker states that, to the extent that we can verify the truth of an event or narrative at any given moment in time, by whatever means, we are obliged to assess the narrative accordingly, whether consciously or otherwise, and to act on the basis of this assessment (2006: 18). Although this study does not aim to assess the truth-value of the narratives in the Korean edition, evidence of how and with what intention narratives were formed and undermined can help highlight the importance of assessing the truth of the narratives in a politically controversial text.

2.2. Framing Narratives in Translation

If narratives in the source text are to be changed in translation, they should be (re)framed. Goffman explained that people use frames not only to give

meaning to external phenomena and organize experiences but also to “take action both verbal and physical, on the basis of these perceptions” (as cited in Baker 2006: 106). As in the case of a photograph or painting surrounded by a “frame”, the frame around a narrative is important for defining the boundaries of the narrative. The frame also constrains the understanding or appreciation of a narrative (Baker 2008).

Framing can involve a wide variety of linguistic and non-linguistic devices called paratexts: titles, subtitles, intertitles, forewords, afterwords, epigraphs, illustrations and publishers’ jacket copies, devices and conventions both within and outside the book connecting book, author, publisher, and reader. Paratexts constitute the private and public history of a book and enable a text to become a book and to be presented as such (Genette 1997). They are important devices for framing a text because translators use them to reposition themselves, their readers, and other participants in time and space (Baker 2006: 133). For example, an introduction can establish the perspective from which to read the text, prompting readers to position themselves and the text in specific ways (Baker 2006: 134). It can alternatively provide a lens for interpreting the text based on the translators’ beliefs (Baker 2008:19). A translator’s preface can be used to avoid possible criticism for transcending one’s frame space as a translator (Baker 2006:110) to increase the translators’ visibility and to guide both average readers’ and translation scholars’ reception of the text (Dimitriu 2009: 204). As a unit of analysis, such paratextual devices are sometimes more useful than textual comparisons. Notable scholars who research paratexts as framing devices in translation include Ayoub who has investigated introductions, titles, cover blurbs, footnotes, and additional glossaries, poems, testimonials and questions in literary translation; Al-Herthani who has investigated the translation and re-narration of Edward said’s book into Arabid; and Boeri, who has examined data posted in online forums (as cited in Harding 2012: 299-290).

3. EXPOSURE OF DISTORTIONS IN A TRANSLATION

3.1. Text Analysis and Evidence of Changes in the Text

Deaton's *The Great Escape* has been promoted by Hankyung BP as a counterpoint to Piketty's *The Capital in the Twenty First Century*. The publishing company argued that whereas Piketty focuses on the detrimental aspect of inequalities, Deaton emphasizes how inequalities promote progress. Around the time Deaton won the Nobel Prize, however, an increasing number of economists began questioning the relevance of the Korean translation to the academic standing of the two economists. Among them, Gimm Gong-Hoe, a researcher at HERI and reporter for *The Hankyoreh*, initiated the probe that subsequently prompted the issuance of statements by the publishing companies of both the original and the translation. On October 18, 2015, Gimm published an article on his blog¹⁾ entitled "Is It a Great Distortion? On the Korean Translation of *The Great Escape*", which argued that the Korean edition distorted Deaton's arguments concerning inequality, growth, and health. In his blog and subsequent articles in *The Hankyoreh* (October 21 & October 30, 2015), Gimm performed a text analysis of the original work and the translation. The following passages show his analysis, which indicates egregious distortions in translation.

(1) The subtitle of the book was changed from "Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality" to "How Inequality Promotes Economic Growth", which is nearly the opposite of the original. Furthermore, the book included a new blurb in red promoting a slogan, "Piketty vs. Deaton".

(2) Most of the titles of parts, chapters, and sections were changed. These changes were particularly noticeable in the case of section titles, where new titles were added, and existing ones were omitted. The following table is a comparison of the original and translated titles.

1) <http://socialandmaterial.net/>

Table 1. Changes in titles

The original titles	My translation of the Korean titles (Original Korean titles)
The Wellbeing of the World	Chapter 1. Are People Around the World Living a Satisfying Life? (제1장 세계는 만족할만한 삶을 사는가?)
PART 1. LIFE AND DEATH	PART 1. Life & the Great Escape from Death (제 1부 삶, 그리고 죽음으로부터의 대탈출)
From Prehistory to 1945	Chapter 2. How Has the Human Life Changed through History? (제2장 삶이 어떤 모습으로 변화해 왔는가?)
Escaping Death in the Tropics	Chapter 3. What Perpetuates Inequalities (제3장 무엇이 불평등을 지속적으로 만드나?)
Health in the Modern World	Chapter 4. How to Solve Health Inequalities (제4장 어떻게 건강의 불평등을 해결하는가?)
PART 2. MONEY	PART 2. A Great Escape from Poverty (제 2부 가난으로부터의 대탈출)
Material Wellbeing in the United States	Chapter 5. Advancement in Material Wellbeing (제5장 물질적 웰빙에 변혁을 가져오다)
Globalization and the Great Escape	Chapter 6. The Great Escape Creating New Inequalities (제6장 대탈출, 새로운 불평등을 낳다)
PART 3. HELP	PART 3. HOW CAN WE HELP?(제 3부 어떻게 도울 것인가?)
How to Help Those Left Behind	7. Those Who Have Failed to Escape (제7장 탈출에 성공하지 못한 사람들)
Postscript: What Comes Next?	Epilogue: The Great Escape Continues (에필로그: '위대한 탈출'은 계속된다)

Gimm argued that the Korean edition was structured to appear as if Part 1 and Part 2 had proceeded consecutively, suggesting that human history is a history of the great escape from the threat of disease/death to health and from material poverty to prosperity.

(3) The preface in the original was entirely omitted, and only one-third of

the introduction was translated. Moreover, parts from different sections of the book were added in the Korean preface. Examples of missing text include the following: “A phrase in my subtitle, ‘the origins of inequality’, comes from thinking about the POWs who did not escape. (...) Yet we should think about them. After all, the number of POWs in German camps who did not escape was far greater than the few who did” (2-3), and “As growth has slowed, gaps between people have widened in most countries. A lucky few have made fabulous fortunes and live in a style that would have impressed the greatest kings and emperors of centuries past. Yet the majority of people have seen less improvement in their material prosperity...” (7). Gimm claimed these omissions were intentional because the missing parts mention inequalities created by progress, which does not fit the narratives of the Korean publisher.

(4) Several parts, particularly the discussion of global health issues, were omitted. Some parts were also moved from their original sections to other sections. Many parts mentioning health were deleted; in the introduction, the deleted text spans from page 5 to 8. Representative examples of the omissions are Deaton’s comment that “health inequalities are one of the great injustices of the world today” (7) and “This book is mostly about two topics: material living standard and health” (8).

(5) Sentences in *Chapter 5 Material Wellbeing in the United States* were intentionally omitted. Gimm examined this chapter most thoroughly because it includes Deaton’s analysis of the highest incomes in the United States, and he applauds Piketty’s achievements on this topic. The omitted parts primarily concern the following: inequalities in the United States, their positive and negative features and the importance of contemplating them (196); the importance of the fair distribution of wealth in mediating feelings of happiness (which is not directly related to economic growth) (203); the increased inequality and number of people living under the poverty line and the decline in progress in the US after the 1970s (214); an example of giving allowances to children based on performance to explain how incentives can worsen inequality and accelerate the accumulation of wealth (222); a decreasing trend in minimum wages (233-234); the questioning of whether the high income of a few elites can

be justified (236); and criticism of wealthy elites who have suffocated economic growth and will do so again if the situation allows (243-244).

(6) Gimm explains that the objectives of the distortion can be largely summarized as follows: although the author emphasizes both health and wealth, large discussions of health are omitted in the translation, thereby narrowing the focus of the book to economic growth. Moreover, Deaton's view on inequalities is significantly distorted, or an attempt to do so is evident. The original is as much the story of individuals left behind as it is the story of individuals who escaped poverty, but the distortions of Hankyung BP have reduced the narrative to an escape story.

3.2. Follow-up Measures

After Gimm's posts on his blog and subsequent articles in *The Hankyoreh*, the publisher of the translation issued a statement on its website²⁾ and Facebook³⁾ on October 20, 2015. The tone was somewhat apologetic: the publisher promised to recall the first edition and publish a retranslation. Yet, the publisher continued defending its position by insisting that the differences reflected "editorial changes" while denying that a mistranslation had occurred. The following is an excerpt from the statement:

Hankyung BP hereby explains our position on the controversy surrounding the distortion of Angus Deaton's *The Great Escape* in translation. The consolidation of the Preface and Introduction in the original into the Prologue in the translation was a major issue among readers, but it was an editorial change intended to convey the meaning [of these sections] more clearly to readers. We confirm that there was no intention or attempt to distort the original. Professor Angus Deaton has been fully briefed on this issue. However, as the controversy has emerged, in the new edition, the subtitle of the original will be translated as is, and the missing parts will be fully translated. (My translation)

2) <http://blog.naver.com/hankbp/220514349781>

3) <https://www.facebook.com/hankyungbp/posts/776763009097165>

앵거스 디턴의 <위대한 탈출> 번역 왜곡 논란에 대해 설명 드립니다. 논란이 된 Preface와 Introduction을 프롤로그로 합친 것은 독자들에게 쉽게 전달하고 싶었던 편집상의 문제였습니다. 왜곡의 의도나 시도는 없었음을 밝혀드립니다. 앵거스 디턴 교수님께도 자세하게 설명했습니다. 다만 논란이 일어난 만큼 부제는 원제 그대로 살리고, 빠진 부분을 되살려서 완역본을 준비하겠습니다. (The original statement by Hankyung BP)

Gimm said he had emailed Angus Deaton and Princeton University Press, the book's original publisher in the US, regarding the distortion of Deaton's ideas in the Korean translation (The Hankyoreh, 30 October 2015). On 22 October 2015, Princeton University Press released a press statement, "Regarding the Korean Version of *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*", declaring their position on the distortion:

Princeton University Press was recently made aware that the Korean edition of Angus Deaton's book, *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*, was published with changes that do not accurately reflect the original work. This edition, published by Hankyung BP, contained changes and omissions from the English text, as well as an introduction to the work by a Korean economist, explicitly positioning the book as a counterpoint to Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. These changes and the new introduction were not vetted or approved by either the author or Princeton University Press.

The Korean introduction written by Director Hyun Jin-Kwon, entitled "Picketty versus Deaton" became a source of contention in this statement because it represented decisive evidence that the introduction intentionally positioned Deaton's work as a counterpoint to Piketty's views on inequality. In the article, Gimm wrote he received a reply from Professor Deaton on October 24, thanking him for investigating the issue. Sales of the Korean edition were immediately halted, as Princeton University Press asked Hankyung BP to discontinue sales.

Even after the retranslation and much criticism by liberal readers and the media, Hankyung BP and *The Korea Economic Daily* have defended their position through various media outlets. An editorial in *The Korean Economic Daily* on November 1, 2015 denounced critics of the Korean version as doomsayers who predict economic disasters caused by inequalities and as the masterminds responsible for distorting Deaton's economic ideas. An article on November 2, 2015 referred to the renowned economist Kenneth Rogott from Harvard University and the prominent newspaper *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* as evidence that Hankyung was not the only institute comparing Piketty and Deaton. The paper argued that not only sections criticizing economic inequalities but also sections advocating the merits of economic progress compared with distribution were omitted. Therefore, Gimm Gong-Hoe's allegations were politically intended and misled the public. The attacks and counterattacks continued in this manner between liberal and conservative newspaper organizations, mostly through articles. A question arises regarding the intentions of conservatives in manufacturing narratives and the way liberals and conservatives used their narratives to attack each other.

4. INVESTIGATING THE MOTIVES UNDERLYING THE MANUFACTURING OF NARRATIVES THROUGH FRAMING

4.1. Parties collaborated in the publication process

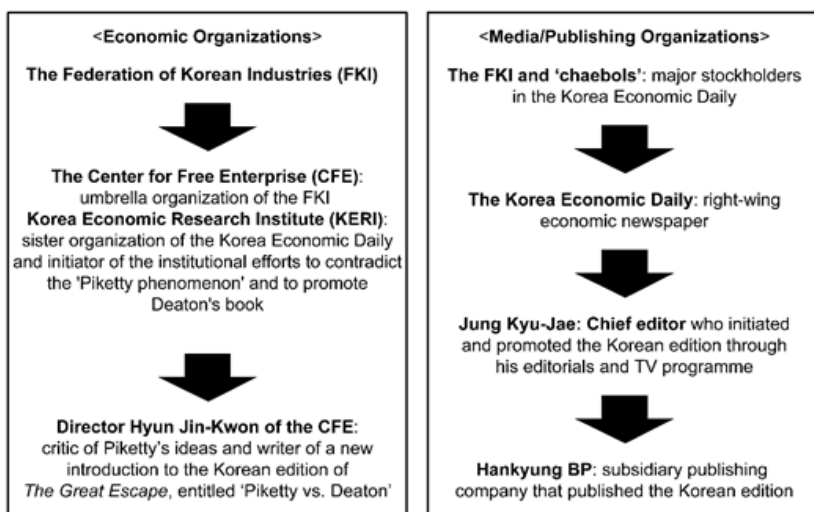
Piketty (2014) argues that wealth is concentrated in the top 1% and that return on capital is higher than the economic growth rate, thus generating social and economic instability and undermining democratic values. To reduce inequalities, Piketty proposes 80% progressive income taxes and a global wealth tax. Piketty's argument was expected to trigger an intense debate in the Korean economy dominated by Chaebols and their owner-families (*The Korea*

Joongang Daily, September 29, 2014). His ideas enjoyed popularity among Korean liberals who criticized deep-rooted economic inequalities and proposed a shift in the focus of economic policy from growth to distribution. However, Korean conservatives felt threatened by Piketty. *The Korea Economic Daily*, a right-wing newspaper with Korean conglomerates called *chaebols* and the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) as major stockholders, was one of his vehement critics. The newspaper cited a series of errors in Piketty's findings proposed by the *Financial Times* on May 24, 2014. Director Hyun Jin-Kwon of the Center for Free Enterprise (CFE) was one of the most vocal economists to attack Piketty. The CFE, led by its director, Hyun, hosted a symposium on June 26, 2014 entitled "Advocates of Free Economy Responding to Piketty", criticizing Piketty for undermining the entrepreneurial spirit. Hyun was also quoted as warning, "If Piketty's economic principle gained power in Korea, Korea's economic miracle will stop in our time" (*Huffpost*, September 26, 2014). The CFE has promoted conservative ideologies on many political issues, including government-issued history textbooks, which liberals regard as the glorification of authoritarian governments and family-owned companies (*The Korea Herald*, November 28, 2016). Given that the CFE is an umbrella organization of the FKI, the main large business association accused of funding a wide variety of ultra-conservative organizations under the Park Geun-hye administration, these activities supported the organization's stance.

Against this backdrop, Jung Kyu-Jae, editor-in-chief of *The Korea Economic Daily*, invoked *The Great Escape* in the editorial (June 16, 2014). The pro-government journalist suggested that Deaton's book should be translated into Korean. The Korean edition was subsequently published by Hankyung BP, with a new introduction by Hyun of the CFE. Following publication, Jung began promoting the Korean edition. On the TV programme "Jung Kyu-Jae TV" (September 17, 2014), he dedicated an entire programme to applauding Deaton and criticizing Piketty. The Korea Economic Research Institute (KERI), a sister organization of *The Korea Economic Daily*, also

hosted a symposium, “Piketty’s Capital in the Twenty-First Century and the Korean Economy.” The event was reported as “throwing cold water on the breakthrough popularity of the book and the potentially huge implication of Piketty’s measures on the Korean economy” (Yonhap News, September 16, 2014) and an attack by a right-wing think-tank in Seoul denigrating Piketty’s work as “an assertion that triggers the popular 1:99 sentiment” and “a theory by a novice economist born in 1971” (Yonhap News, September 20, 2014). This close-knit connection among economic and news institutions and their activities shown in Figure 1. demonstrates the ideological motives underlying the creation of a new narrative through translation.

Figure 1. The major parties collaborated in the publication process



The Figure 1. ‘The major parties collaborating in the publication process’ shows the relationships among the FKI, *The Korea Economic Daily*, its chief editor (Jung Kyu-Jae), Hankyung BP, KERI, the CFE and its director (Hyun Jin-Kwon). Despite these efforts, Deaton’s book did not garner the same amount of attention that Piketty’s did. Then arose an opportunity to reverse the

trend: Deaton won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2015. *The Korea Economic Daily* seized the moment and strongly endorsed Deaton's book. The CFE organized a symposium commemorating Deaton's winning of the Nobel Prize on October 14, 2015. Even after the exposure of the distortion in the Korean edition, KERI planned to organize a symposium entitled "Implication of Angus Deaton's winning of the Nobel Prize on the Korean Economy" at the FKI on November 3, 2015 but cancelled the event after intense criticism. Major news organizations in Korea aligned with these promotions without scrutiny and interpreted Deaton's receipt of the Nobel Prize in Economics as proof that "growth is a key to solve poverty and inequality", "inequality triggers economic growth", and "the Nobel prize advocated Deaton over Piketty" (*HuffPost*, October 13, 2014).

4.2. The "Piketty vs. Deaton" Framing

This section of the paper examines how the conservative objection to Piketty's book was framed into a new narrative. The first of many such framing devices used is Hyun's introduction to the Korean edition, entitled "Piketty versus Deaton: Talking about Inequality." It proposes an economic model in which the absolute income of the lower class increases as the income level of the nation increases, thereby improving the situation of every citizen in a country. According to Hyun, this model demonstrates that Piketty's zero-sum game model was incorrect. He concludes that although South Korea successfully avoided poverty, most North Korean people remain poor. Hyun suggests that this outcome demonstrates the effectiveness of the capitalist economy vis-à-vis the socialist economy, thus indirectly attacking liberals in South Korea who are often branded "North Korean sympathizers" or "Communists." However, prominent Korean economists were quoted as stating that pitting the two economists' arguments against each other was an act based more on ideological interests than on facts. They argued that the two

economists' perspectives are complementary in that Deaton's work explores inequalities of a global scope, comprising both developed and underdeveloped countries, whereas Piketty focuses on wealth inequalities in developed countries (*The Chosun Ilbo & Hankook Ilbo*, October 13, 2015).

The second piece of evidence is the book reviews by both publishers. A book review⁴⁾ furnished by the Princeton University Press illustrates Deaton's thesis is as follows:

The world is a better place than it used to be. People are healthier, wealthier, and live longer. Yet the escape from destitution by so many has left gaping inequalities between people and nations. [...] Deaton takes an in-depth look at the historical and ongoing patterns behind the health and wealth of nations, and addresses what needs to be done to help those left behind.

The following three aspects are noteworthy in the previous book review: Piketty is not mentioned; Deaton addresses both the wealth and health of nations, not exclusively wealth; and Deaton attempts to discover measures to address inequalities. By contrast, the book review on Hankyung BP's website⁵⁾ begins by introducing Piketty's book to prepare for a comparison of the two economists' perspectives:

Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the 21st Century*, which raised the issue of income inequality, is gaining international attention. This inequality we are now witnessing and experiencing is at its highest level in the past 300 years. However, after reading Princeton economist Angus Deaton's book *The Great Escape*, we might conclude that the world is more equal than ever. Which view is correct? It depends on whether you approach this issue from a global perspective or a national perspective. Inequalities within a country, particularly inequalities within wealthy countries, have

4) <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10054.html>

5) <http://bp.hankyung.com/>

enabled billions of extremely poor people in the underdeveloped world to escape poverty in the past few decades. (My translation)

The final sentence is particularly misleading, given that the author separated the inequalities in developed countries, which he considers detrimental (as Piketty does), from inequalities between the developed and the underdeveloped worlds, which he believes can be a source of economic progress for the underdeveloped world.

The third piece of evidence is articles and documents produced by conservative institutes to promote the “Piketty versus Deaton” marketing framework. *The Korean Economic Daily* promoted the translation in an article, asking, ‘Who would win the publishing war? Piketty or Deaton?’ (September 12 2014). A press release⁶⁾ distributed by the CFE at the symposium celebrating Deaton’s Nobel Prize on October 14, 2015, states that amid the controversy surrounding inequalities that was sparked by Piketty’s work, Deaton provides a solution, based on scientific research, that progress is the optimal remedy to curb poverty and inequalities and that underdeveloped countries should organize their own escape from poverty without economic aid. The institute clarified that this message was directed to both South Korean liberals and the North Korean regime, which desperately required foreign aid.

The controversy began with simple criticisms of Piketty and evolved into a more comprehensive attack as conservatives believed that the translation and promotion of Deaton’s book could contradict Piketty’s perspective. To effectively disseminate their narrative, they emphasized a “Piketty versus Deaton” frame using various channels, including business organizations, the media, and academics. These framing efforts seemed successful; major media outlets followed *The Korea Economic Daily*’s lead in pitting Deaton against Piketty, and a few economists who claimed otherwise were ignored until Gimm Gong-Hoe exposed the translation distortion in his blog.

6) http://cfe.org/aFiles/2015/mn20061221203838_1444796695.pdf

4.3. Ideological Conflicts

On the surface, this incident appears to be a typical online translation controversy in which readers criticize translation errors by comparing the original and the translation side by side. However, the problem here concerns not only merely linguistic issues but also ideological and political issues. The background of HERI, where Gimm Gong-Hoe worked, has crucial importance: it is a think-tank run by *The Hankyoreh*, a progressive newspaper well known for its nationalist, anti-American, anti-corporate philosophy and that positions itself squarely against conservative dailies such as *The Korea Economic Daily* or the *Chosun Ilbo*. The *Daily's* website⁷⁾ states that it is decisively committed to journalistic freedom, democracy, peaceful coexistence, and national reconciliation between both Koreas. It emphasizes the detrimental effects of an unbridled market economy and advocates regulations with various strategies. HERI's website⁸⁾ specifies a goal of fair research independent of capital and power. HERI portrays itself as an organization that serves minorities and the poor and discusses progressive agendas. This contextual background suggests that these websites' narratives focus more on economic equality and distribution than on a free market economy and progress. The ideological background of Gimm, currently an economics professor at Gyongsang National University, as a narrator also bears on this case. His left-leaning political stance is apparent in his *Hankyoreh* article on December 1, 2016, which argues that Korean *chaebols* are not innocent victims of political power abuse but accomplices to the crimes of former President Park because they have prospered by relying on cosy relationships between politics and business. In another article on February 12, 2017, he argues against monopolized economic power. Thus, the political stances of *The Hankyoreh*, the affiliated institute HERI, and the researcher Gimm are apparent. This case can be considered a

7) <http://english.hani.co.kr/>

8) http://heri.kr/e_about

demonstration of wider and ongoing conflicts between conservative narratives advocating progress and progressive narratives endorsing equality.

5. CONCLUSION

This case study has used narrative theory to investigate the manipulation of narratives through translation. The study found that the narrative of the original text, namely, “the world has progressed in terms of wealth and health; however, progress has inevitably created inequality” was altered to “inequality is the source of economic progress that we enjoy now.”

The study had two research aims: to examine whether there were elaborate efforts to create and disseminate conservative narratives through translation and to explore how narratives were used by both sides in this conflict. Although the publishing company and the newspaper agency that initiated the publication did not acknowledge any mistranslation distorting the author’s intention, the text analysis conducted by Gimm and the present study indicate a distortion of the text by conservatives, producing narratives upholding the latter position. As these narratives were increasingly disseminated in public, they were challenged by a collaborative attack from liberals, thus generating opposing narratives.

The following findings of this case study are noteworthy. First, both narrative creation through translation and subsequent attacks and counterattacks involve considerably more efforts than translation. The parties involved were varied yet closely related in terms of interests: the newspaper company, the publishing company, and various conservative economic research organizations. Major players acted long before the translation was released. Based on documents from various conferences, TV programmes, and newspaper articles, their primary motive of “initiating” the translation of *The Great Escape* appeared to be to attack Piketty’s ideas on inequalities in *Capital in the Twenty First Century*, even though the conservatives strongly deny this

allegation. Following the publication of the Korean translation, major parties again joined forces to promote the translation. When the translation was attacked by progressives, they mounted a series of sophisticated counterattacks. Notably, the players on the investigative side are also from the news media industry, enabling them to attack the publishing company systematically.

Second, narrative creation is an elaborate and sophisticated process involving many devices. The narratives in the book were framed with paratexts such as a new introduction, blurb, subtitles and titles of parts, chapters, and sections and textual omissions as well as other promotional efforts through newspaper articles and TV programmes.

Third, a narrative can be thwarted by an opposing narrative. This type of ideological confrontation is not a one-time incident but an ongoing struggle entailing attacks and counterattacks from each side. The reader who led the investigation was a researcher at one of the most progressive research institutes in Korea and was supported by the newspaper company that owned the research institute. Thus, this case is not a mere controversy over mistranslation; it represents a head-on collision between right-leaning and left-leaning newspaper organizations regarding the issue of inequality. Moreover, this case forms only part of a continuing collision of public narratives between conservatives and liberals in Korea.

Fourth, translation is fundamentally an institutional activity. Translators are virtually invisible, whereas the initiators of the translation are major players. The fact that rather than the actual translators, Lee Hyun-Jeong and Choi Yoon-Hui, the publishing company Hankyung BP and *The Korea Economic Daily* masterminded the creation and dissemination of the narratives and subsequently became the objects of attack by the liberals suggests that ideological and institutional concerns dominate the publishing world. This suggestion confirms the idea that “translators possess an inferior status among the more dominant roles in an institutional setting” (Kang 2012:459).

Fifth, the characteristics of the major players in narrative creation are important for framing a text. In the present case, newspaper companies

employed a wide variety of framing devices to construct and undermine narratives. According to Tankard, “Framing can be realized by means of various strategies, including selection and deselection of information, as well as careful use of the various components of news texts, including headlines and subheads, leads and the selection of quotes, and graphs and photographs” (as cited in Valdeón 2014: 56). Considering that this type of framing is a daily aspect of translation in news organizations, *The Korea Economic Daily* and similarly, *The Hankyoreh* are clearly knowledgeable concerning the choice and usage of framing devices for constructing narratives and attacking an opponent’s narratives.

Sixth, it is important to attempt to assess the truth-value of narratives by comparing a narrative in a text with external reality so that distortions made with the intention of changing the situation to pursue one’s political interests are revealed. Assessing the truth-value of narratives and producing objective evaluations are challenging, however, not because of the difficulty in finding evidence proving the distortion of reality but rather because one can justify one’s legitimacy by claiming that all changes are mere “editorial change”, as Hankyung BP did, as if such changes are norms in the translation community. This situation demonstrates how interested parties can leverage conventional translation strategies (changing the titles of chapters, sections, and the text, omitting parts deemed unnecessary, and adding a promotional blurb or an expert’s introduction), particularly strategies involving paratextual devices, to distort a text for their own purposes. Gimm also admitted that he could not prove the actual intention of Hankyong BP because the latter claimed no intention to distort the text. It is only possible to presume the company’s intention based on the extent and severity of the distortion (*The Hankyoreh*, October 21, 2015). Although this inability to prove intention poses a limitation to assessing the truth-value of narratives in translation, efforts to reveal the underlying facts are worthwhile because they spur actions from both sides and enable people to make judgements based upon evidence and facts.

This study demonstrates that narrative theory is an effective research tool for investigating and determining who participated in creating narratives and with what intention as well as how the narratives of an original can change in politically charged situations. The analysis of both sides' political positions, actions and comments shows that the initiation of the translation and the attack on the translation were both intended to uphold one side's narratives while undermining opposing narratives.

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[Abstract]

Distortion of a text through narrative framing in translation: A case study of controversy surrounding the Korean translation of Angus Deaton's *The Great Escape*

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This study explores a process in which narratives are manufactured in translation and subsequently undermined by opposing narratives. Hankyung BP, a publishing company of a right-wing news agency, published the Korean edition of the economist Angus Deaton's *The Great Escape*. However, a massive controversy surrounding the translation was sparked by a researcher at a progressive research institute who exposed gross distortion of the text by Hankyung BP. The publishing company was discovered to have changed the subtitle of the book, added a blurb, included a new preface, and made many omissions, all believed to be an attempt to manipulate the text. Many conservative economic institutes were also found to have collaborated in creating narratives by falsely positioning Deaton as a counterpoint to the French economist Thomas Piketty, whose progressive ideas gained enormous popularity among liberals in Korea. However, the publishing company did not acknowledge any wrongdoings or mistranslation, stating that the alterations were merely editorial changes. The conflict entailed attacks and counterattacks between the concerned parties. This investigative case study uses news articles and paratexts leading up to and following the publication of the Korean translation to demonstrate that a text can be manipulated by social institutes to uphold their own position and challenge opposing views.

- ▶ Key Words: paratextual framing, narrative theory, translation as political distortion, translation and ideology, translation controversy
- ▶ 주제어: 결텍스트 프레이밍, 내러티브 이론, 정치왜곡으로서의 번역, 번역과 이데올로기, 번역 논쟁

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