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Research Article

A Study of Cultural Bias in Translation of News Reports from Arabic into English

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Abstract

The problem that faces translators when they translate Arabic cultural texts into English involves, cultural, religious, and political ideologies. These obstacles are hard to overcome due to political issues relate to the translators' governments or other hostile countries.

Finding a solution to cultural bias in translation of reporting news between the target language audience and the source language audience is challenging. This difficulty stems from cultural differences and political matters that generate ongoing hostility between conflicting parties, such as Russia and Ukraine, Palestine and Israel. Thus, the research problem lies in finding fair solutions to cultural bias in the translation of news reports from Arabic to English.

This research aims to reveal the cultural bias in the reporting news translation process, identifying its various types while also limiting the reasons and impact of bias in translation. Additionally, it seeks to uncover the immoral methods employed in biased journalistic translation and propose strategies for minimizing its influence.

The model adopted in this study, Venuti (1995), functions as a translation model. A number of (4) Diverse samples are taken from different Arab news agencies and translated by three various translators from different news agencies. Bias is discovered through analyzing four procedures: addition, modulation, transposition, and equivalent. The result of this study shows that the translators face political, cultural, religious, and social problems in rendering Arabic journalistic texts into English, and it also reveals that cultural bias is the highest degree than all.

1. The Notion of Bias

According to Delgado-Rodriguez and Llorca (2004, p.1), bias refers to the lack of internal validity or the incorrect assessment of the relationship between an exposure and its effect within the targeted group.

2. Types of Bias

Nicole Murphy in (2023) shows six types of bias which are the most popular biases: political bias, religious bias, gender bias, racial bias, racial bias, ideological bias.

2.1 Cultural Bias

According to Haddad and Purtilo (2019, 60-76), cultural bias is a tendency to interpret a word or action according to the culturally derived meaning conveyed to it. Cultural bias derives from cultural variation.

Peer and Cornell (2023, p.16) say that "When we are predisposed to view a situation through a cultural lens, it is known as cultural bias. This can cause cultural disagreements, confusion, and offense." Example of this, when we travel to another country or meet people from a different culture, we can encounter things that are different. When our expectations aren't met, it causes an initial sense of shock that can later turn into a negative perception of those circumstances because they are so unlike the ones we are used to.



2.2 Political Bias

"Political bias is a bias or perceived bias involving the slanting or altering of information to make a political position or political candidate seem more attractive" (Wikipedia). "Political bias is associated with media bias; it commonly refers to how a reporter, news organization, or TV show covers a political candidate or a policy issue" (ibid).

Jackson & Morelli (2007, p. 2) mention that most political bias appears in articles, reports, and news that relate to war or economic situations and political regimes.

In many nations, charges and suspicions of political bias are widespread. For example, a number of Americans feel that there is "a fair amount" of political bias in news coverage, and over the past few decades, accusations of political bias against the media have been made during almost every presidential campaign (Gross and Simmons, 2006, p. 11).

2.3 Religious Bias

Religious discrimination or bias occurs when someone or a group is treated differently because of their specific religious beliefs, as stated by Wikipedia, and as cited in Masood, M. (2022, p.3); Torrens (1999, p. 2) shows that the idea that religion is always right in cases where religion and science disagree is another widespread illustration of religious bias. Belief bias, defined as the "tendency to accept conclusions that accord with one's beliefs regardless of the actual validity of those conclusions," is consistent with the idea of religious bias.

An example of religious bias is seen in the United States, where Muslims and Atheists are the most affected by religious discrimination, as they suffer the most. According to Eckart, K. (2020, September 22), research from the University of Washington suggests that Americans identified as Muslims or atheists face religious bias more frequently due to their faith than Christians. This ongoing disparity highlights the need for greater awareness and efforts to address religious discrimination.

2.4 Gender Bias

"Gender bias refers to the systematic favoritism or prejudice toward one gender over another, often resulting in unequal treatment or opportunities based on gender alone." Ridgeway, C. L. (2009, p. 142).

Gender bias, as defined by Ridgeway, entails the systemic inclination or prejudice towards one gender over another, often leading to disparities in treatment or opportunities solely based on gender. This phenomenon permeates various aspects of society, ranging from educational and professional settings to interpersonal relationships.

2.5 Racial Bias (Ethnic Bias)

Racial discrimination is defined as any act, practice, or belief that reflects a racist worldview, by dividing human beings into separate biological groups, and separating them on the basis of inherited physical traits, personality traits, intelligence, morality, and other cultural and behavioral traits, and considering that some races are superior to others. This is what Hadeel Tayseer Sharari shows in her article "The Concept of Racial Discrimination" (2022, April 26).

Racial bias, also called ethnic fanaticism, is based on distinctions among humans regarding their origins, color, and nationality. It is considered one of the deepest and oldest types of fanaticism, as racial bias causes destabilization of economic, social, and political structures. This is what Ruwaida Ibrahim writes in her article "Types of Intolerance" (2023, August 16).

As stated in Rogers (1994, p. 7), there is a racial bias between African-American students and Anglo students about the acts of discrimination. Children learn their attitudes toward their own race and ethnic group early in preschool years. They have many opportunities to see and learn prejudices from the media and from people in their homes, schools, churches, and communities.

2.6 Ideological Bias

According to Smith (2020), ideological bias is defined as "the tendency of individuals or groups to favor certain beliefs, values, or perspectives over others due to their own ideological commitments or preconceptions" (p. 45). He adds that the French philosopher and economist Destot Tracy first explored the concept of "ideology" after the French Revolution in his book "The Project of Principles (ibid. P. 45). Gentzkow et al. (2023, p.1-2) note that ideological divisions often lead to persistent disagreements about objective facts in society.

3. Journalistic Language

Language of journalism is political. Language can be used to persuade, argue, inform and expose. It is not neutral. Journalistic language always contains layers of meaning that goes beyond points of view. Journalism strives to be neutral and objective, and linguistic analysis can help to uncover these strategies and pitfalls of this endeavor (Smith & Higgins 2020, p. 6-7).

4. Characteristics of Journalistic Language

Halliday (1989), journalistic language refers to the specialized language used in news reporting and media discourse. It is the language employed by journalists to convey information to the public through newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms. Halliday outlines several key characteristics of journalistic language.

Firstly, it tends to prioritize clarity and conciseness, aiming to deliver information efficiently to a broad audience with varying levels of literacy and familiarity with the subject matter (Halliday, 1989, p. 27). Secondly, journalistic language often exhibits a degree of objectivity, striving to present facts impartially and without bias. (Halliday, 1989, p. 56).

Furthermore, Halliday discusses how journalistic language frequently incorporates specific stylistic features to engage readers and enhance readability. This can include the use of atractive headlines (Halliday, 1989, p. 73). Additionally, journalistic language often follows a standardized format, with articles structured according to the inverted pyramid model, where the most important information is presented at the beginning, followed by supporting details in descending order of importance (Halliday, 1989, p. 104).

5. Definitions of Translation

According to Venuti (1995, p. 17) "translation is a process by which the translator replaces the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text with a chain of signifiers in the target language based on an interpretation."

Generally, translation is a process of rendering meaning, ideas, or messages of a text from one language to other language Nugroho, (2007, p. 1), but Hatim & Munday (2019, p.6) Define Translation as "the process of transferring a written text from source language (SL) to target language (TL)".

6. Translation Strategy

In his work in 1995, Venuti outlines two translation strategies: domestication and foreignization. He suggests that the choice of strategy in a given socio-cultural context can carry ideological implications. Domestication involves the translator making changes to the source text (ST) to align with the values and norms of the target-language culture. This strategy aims to make the translated text (TT) "transparent, fluent, and natural" by adapting it to the target culture. On the other hand, foreignization aims to preserve the foreignness of the text by retaining cultural and linguistic elements from the source text, thereby replicating the effect of the ST on its original audience (Venuti, L. 1995. P. 24-38).

In this research only domestication strategy and its procedures are used and they are as follow:

- 1. Transposition: This involves grammatical shifts from SL to TL, such as changing active sentences to passive voice or altering singular nouns to plural for generalization purposes. Transposition may indicate ideological mediation.
- 2. Equivalence: This procedure seeks to find equivalent expressions in the target language to convey the same meaning as the ST.
- 3. Omission: Although considered a misunderstanding of the author, omission involves deleting words from the ST during translation, often due to ambiguity or ideological disagreement.
- 4. Addition: Translators add new expressions to the target language, such as honorific terms, to convey nuances present in the ST.
- 5. Magnifying: This procedure involves choosing lexical options that exaggerate the meaning of words in the translation.
- 6. Glossing: Translators add cultural, technical, or linguistic information to the translation to provide context, particularly useful for ideological texts.
- 7. Moderating: Negative terms in the ST may be softened in the TT to align with the target culture's sensibilities.
- 8. Label Translation: A temporary translation enclosed in inverted commas, indicating a departure from the literal meaning or a disagreement with the term used. This is the least utilized procedure (Venuti, L. p. 34-42).
- 9. Modulation involves altering the form of the message by shifting the perspective. This technique enables the translator to imbue their target text (TT) with a sense of naturalness while maintaining the meaning and fidelity of the source text (ST).

7. The Source language texts (SLT) and the Target language texts (TLT).

The source language texts (SLT) are collected from Al Jazeera, The Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA), Dw.com, while the target language texts (TLT) are from Reuters, CNN, The Time Magazine of Israel, Al-Jazeera News, The Guardian, Middle East Monitor, Voice of America The New York Times.

8. Data Analysis

SLT (1)

أعلنت وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية، استشهاد ثلاثة فلسطينيين بر صاص قوات الاحتلال الإسرائيلي في الضفة الغربية ", (وكالة " الانباء الكويتية كونا ـ ٢٩ / ١ / ٢٠٤٤).

The Arabic SLT (1) is mentioned by the Kuwait News Agency (Kuna) on January 29, 2024, regarding the Palestine-Israel war in October 2023.

TLT (1)

"This morning three young men were **martyred** by the bullets of the occupation [Israeli] forces the Ministry of Health said" (AlJazeera News).

TLT (2)

"Three Palestinians shot dead by Israeli forces in West Bank, says health ministry." (The Guardian).

TLT (3)

"Three Palestinians were **killed** Thursday by Israeli fire in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said." (The Hindu.Com).

Analysis:

In the TLT 1 the translator of Aljazeera News Agency, adopts equivalent expressions. Such as "martyrdom, occupation, and Israeli forces" for the Arabic expressions الأحتلال "", and " قوات" " The term "martyrdom" is a religious concept; it reflects the translator's Islamic ideology. The translator conveys the SLT accurately to the TLT using an equivalent procedure that does not create any type of bias. She / he is also so faithful to the SL text, and he or she does not show any sort of manipulation to the original text. The translator is committed to translation ethics.

The translator of TLT 2 is one of the Guardian translators. She / he follows domestication strategy and uses the expression "shot dead" for the Arabic concept "استشهاد" in which he modulates the expression "martyrdom" into "shot dead" to be suitable for the audience of the target language and to make his translation fits with the ideology and the authority system of the guardian. The use of "modulation" strategy leads to cultural bias because it changes the meaning of the expression "martyrdom" from its spiritual meaning into just normal killing. This translated text displays the translator's tendency towards his/her cultural and religious ideology, and doing this type of translation makes the translator commit religious bias for Israel and reflects that the translator is unfaithful to the SLT.

The translator of TLT 3 is of the Hindu Co., he behaves the same as that of the Guardian translator; he adopts modulation strategy. He changes the term "استشهاد" into "killed." This type of manipulation of the SLT alters the meaning of the original text and the connotative meaning of the term "martyrdom." The translator of the Hindu Co. makes a mistake because he replaces the SL expression within an expression that is not intended in the SLT. The bias that she / he has committed is because of his/ her culture, represented by the environment in which the translator lives, the translator's religious doctrine, and because of the ownership of the institution in which the translator works in. Using this type of strategy of "modulation" and manipulation with the SL T leads to an obvious religious bias for the translator. All the evidence mentioned in the target text shows that the translator is not faithful to the source text.

The text	Strategy	unbiased	Type of bias / Neutral	Appropriate/
		Biased/		inappropriate
SLT 1		Biased	Political	inappropriate
TLT1	Equivalence	Unbiased	Neutral	appropriate
TLT 2	Modulation	Biased	Cultural and Religious	inappropriate
TLT 3	Modulation	Biased	Cultural and religious	Inappropriate

SLT (2)

"أفادت السلطات التابعة لحماس سقوط مئات القتلي والجرحي في ضربة جوية إسرائيلية على مستشفى بمدينة غزة، فيما نفي الجيش الإسرائيلي

مسؤوليته وقال إن "حركة الجهاد الإسلامي مسؤولة عن الهجوم الصاروخي الفاشل الذي أصاب المستشفى". (dw.com,2023, Oct. 17)

The SLT 2 is mentioned on DW.com on October 17, 2023, regarding the casualties from a hospital in Gaza bombed by Israeli warplanes.

TLT (1)

"According to intelligence information from a number of sources we have, **Islamic Jihad terrorist** organization is responsible for the failed rocket launch that hit the hospital." (Time Magazine of Israel).

TL text (2)

"The Israel Defense Forces has "categorically" denied any involvement in the hospital attack, blaming instead a "failed rocket launch" by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad **group**, a rival Islamist militant group in Gaza." (CNN News).

"Israel's military denied responsibility for the bombing, saying military intelligence suggested the hospital was hit by a failed rocket launch by the enclave's Palestinian Islamic Jihad **military group**." (Reuters 17 October 2023).

Analysis

The translator of TLT 1 uses the strategy of domestication in which biases for Israel by employing the expression "Islamic Jihad terrorist organization," as an equivalent for the Arabic expression حركة الجهاد الإسلامي. She / he utilizes "addition" procedure, which introduces bias because he alters the expression حركة الجهاد الإسلامي with an expression that is completely the opposite of it and does not exist in the SLT. The type of bias is a cultural, political as well as religious bias. The bias is caused by the translator's method that she / he follows in translating the event, associating the term "terrorist organization" with the group mentioned. The way of achieving bias is by using loaded language, such as "terrorist organization," which carries a negative connotation in the target language. The translator appears to manipulate the information by using biased language. This manipulation suggests a lack of faithfulness to the original text

The bias expression used by the translator of TLT 2 is the choice of the word "blaming" and referring and "the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group" to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas as a "militant group" which carry out a hostile connotation in TL. It is perceived as biased depending on the context and intent behind the designation. The translator uses "addition" and "modulation" strategy implicitly and explicitly, implicitly she / he adds the expression "blaming" and explicitly the translator uses the phrase "militant group" and "the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group" instead of the "Palestinian resistance movement Hamas". The bias achieved in the target language is attributed to religious ideological factors, as it reflects a perspective favoring or aligning with the Israeli narrative over the Palestinian one. The bias is achieved through the selective use of language that casts doubt on one party's denial while emphasizing the accusation against another party. The translator appears to be leaning towards manipulation rather than fidelity.

Bias Expression in TLT 3 refers to Hamas as a "militant group" instead of a "resistance movement". It introduced bias by framing Hamas solely within a militaristic context rather than acknowledging its broader social and political roles. The translator employs domestication strategy she / he uses the "addition" procedure which is the implicit use of the term "blaming" when attributing responsibility to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad military forces suggests a certain skepticism or doubt regarding their involvement, potentially influencing the reader's perception and the translator also uses the strategy of domestication and the procedure "modulation" of the term "Palestinian Islamic Jihad military group" instead of directly translating the organization's name, can introduce bias by downplaying the significance or legitimacy of the Palestinian and treating them as hostile distinct entity. The bias introduced in the target language text is stemmed from political, cultural and ideological factors, reflecting a perspective that aligns with the Israeli narrative over the Palestinian one, possibly influenced by societal or institutional biases. The bias is achieved through the selection of language and framing of the text, such as using terms like "militant group" and "blaming," as well as the choice of domestication to downplay the significance of certain groups. The translator's alterations in the target language text, such as using "militant group" for Hamas and employing domestication for Palestinian Islamic Jihad, suggest a departure from strict fidelity to the source text. These changes contribute to a narrative that may favor one side over the other, indicating a lack of faithfulness to impartial translation. Therefore, the translator appears to be more manipulative than faithful.

The text	Strategy	unbiased Biased/	Type of bias / Neutral	Appropriate/ inappropriate
SLT 2		Biased	political	inappropriate
TLT1	addition	Biased	Cultural, political and religious	inappropriate
TLT 2	Addition	Biased	Cultural and political	inappropriate
TLT 3	Addition and modulation	Biased	Cultural and political	inappropriate

SLT (3)

The Arabic SLT (5) eleven is presented by Al-Jazeera News, in October 2023 about the continuous violations against the Palestinian people.

TLT (1)

"The Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs held Israel alone responsible for the continuous violations **against the Palestinian people**." (Al-Jazeera News. 2023, October 13).

TLT (2)

"In a statement, the Qatari Foreign Ministry said Israel is "solely responsible for the ongoing escalation due to its continuous violations of **the rights of the Palestinian people**." (Middle East Monitor). TLT (3)

"Qatar was even less equivocal, saying Israel was solely responsible for the ongoing escalation due to its continuous violations of **the rights of the Palestinian people**." (The Guardian News. 2023, October 8).

Analysis

The translator of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs in TLT 1 does not incorporate any biased expressions. Instead, she / he utilizes semantic equivalents to accurately convey the meaning of the SL text into the TL text. He employs an equivalent strategy; the translator ensures the faithful reproduction of the SL text's meaning. This strategy does not result in any bias. Rather than achieving bias, the translator successfully produces an accurate and equivalent language Add the ideology and the religion/ culture of this translator that cause unbiased translation. Overall, the translator demonstrates a high level of fidelity to the source language text.

TLT 2 presents a case where the Middle East Monitor translator introduces a bias translation through addition strategy by incorporating the expression "the rights of the Palestinian people" instead of simply saying "Palestinian people" in the translated text. This addition strategy fosters political and cultural bias, particularly in emphasizing the rights of Palestinians, possibly influenced by the translator's religion and cultural ideology. Consequently, the translator's deviation from the source language text suggests unfaithfulness, as she / he manipulates the content rather than maintaining fidelity.

TLT 3 depicts a scenario where The Guardian News translator introduces a biased text through exercising addition strategy by incorporating the expression "even less equivocal" and "the rights of the Palestinian people" instead of simply "Palestinian people" in the translated text. This addition strategy contributes to a political and cultural bias, particularly emphasizing the rights of Palestinians, possibly influenced by religious and ideological factors mention the religion and the ideology of the translator. This political bias is executed through the inclusion of the phrases "the rights of, even less equivocal," thereby altering the original meaning. Consequently, the translator's deviation from the source language text suggests unfaithfulness, as he or she manipulates the content rather than maintaining faithfulness.

The text	Strategy	unbiased	Type of bias / Neutral	Appropriate/
		Biased/		inappropriate
SLT 3		biased	Political and religious	inappropriate
TLT1	equivalence	unbiased	neutral	appropriate
TLT 2	addition	biased	Political and cultural	inappropriate
TLT 3	addition	biased	Political, cultural and religious	inappropriate

SLT (4)

The Arabic SLT 4 is presented by Al-Jazeera on November 15, 2023 about finding rifles, ammunition, body armor and Hamas uniforms at Al-Shifa Hospital.

TLT (1)

"The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) said that the Israeli occupation army's **claim** that it found weapons in Al-Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip is a **"farcical farce."** (Al-Jazeera. 2023, November 15). TLT (2)

"Israel said it found weapons, **intelligence material** and communications gear belonging to Hamas. The Hamas-run Health Ministry said the Israeli military **did not find any weapons**." (Voice of America (VOA) News. 2023, November 15).

TLT (3)

"An Israeli officer said he had found **rifles, ammunition, body armor and Hamas uniforms** at Al-Shifa Hospital. Hamas called the **claims** "a **fabricated story.**" (The New York Times. 2023, November 15).

Analysis

In TLT 1, the translator of Al-Jazeera accurately translates the Arabic text into English without any bias expressions. Equivalence words are employed by the translator, enriching the TL text with meaning, while no omissions, additions, or modulations are made. This strategy ensures that there is no bias introduced in the TL. There is no evidence of bias achieved in the TL, suggesting that the translator's ideology aligns with the SL text (mention the religion, ideology, and culture which causes this unbiased translation). Furthermore, the translator does not utilize any means to achieve bias. He or she appears neutral. Overall, the translator appears faithful to the SL text, demonstrating a commitment to accuracy and fidelity in the translation process.

In TLT 2, the translator of Voice of America (VOA) News introduces new expressions not found in the original text, such as "weapons, **intelligence material**, and communications gear belonging to Hamas." **This addition strategy** leads to a bias in the TL, introducing details that are not presented in the source language. The resulting bias takes the form of an adversarial **political bias**, mainly influenced by **cultural** ideologies and **religious** factors mention the religion, ideology, and culture which causes this bias. The means by which bias is achieved is through the addition of new phrases and expressions that are not existed in the original text. Consequently, the translator appears **unfaithful to the original text**, demonstrating a departure from fidelity in favor of introducing biased elements into the translation.

In TLT 3, the translator of The New York Times introduces new expressions that are not presented in the original text, such as "rifles, ammunition, body armor, and Hamas uniforms at Al-Shifa Hospital".

He employs **an addition strategy**, inserting these expressions and suggesting a bias in the translation. This bias manifest as **political bias**, typically influenced by **religious perspectives**, **cultural and Zionist ideology**. Consequently, the translator appears unfaithful to the original text, introducing elements not present in the original content.

The text	Strategy	unbiased	Type of bias / Neutral	Appropriate/
		Biased/		inappropriate
SLT 4		biased	Political and religious	inappropriate
TLT1	equivalence	unbiased	neutral	appropriate
TLT 2	addition	biased	Political and cultural	inappropriate
TLT 3	addition	biased	Political, cultural and religious	inappropriate

9.The findings

The percentage of the strategies used by translators in conveying the SL Arabic texts into English are as follow:

- 1. 12 % of the translators use **"equivalence"** strategy when translating political, cultural and religious texts from Arabic into English.
- 2. 58.33 % of the translators use "addition" strategy when they translate political, cultural journalistic texts from Arabic into English.
- 3. 12 % of translators employ **"modulation"** strategy when they translate political, cultural journalistic news texts from Arabic into English.

The table below shows the number and types of strategies used in translating Arabic texts into English.

Type of Strategy	Number	Percentage
1. Equivalence	3	12 %
2. Addition	7	58.33 %
3. Modulation	3	12 %

The percentages of the types of bias used by the translators are illustrated as follows:

- $1.\,75\%$ of the translators use "cultural" bias, which is the highest percentage.
- 2. Political bias is used by 58.33% of the translators.
- 3. Religious bias is used by 41.66% of the translators.
- 4. 25% of the translators use a "neutral" strategy, which shows the equivalent meaning when translating Arabic text into English and vice versa.

Table (2) shows percentage of the type of bias used:

Type of bias used.	Number of biase used	Percentage
1. Neutral	3	25 %
2. political	7	58.33%
3. Cultural	9	75 %
4. Religious	5	41.66 %

10. Conclusion

- 1. Through the analysis of the research samples, various types of bias strategies such as addition, equivalence, modulation, and transposition are found.
- 2. The translators use the "addition" strategy more than other strategies in order to manipulate the meaning of the original text to please a certain party at the expense of another party.
- 3. The "modulation" strategy also participates in the deviation of the meaning of the source language text.
- 4. Some translators uses the "equivalence" strategy, which is the preferred strategy in translation because it conveys the text fairly and preserves the meaning of the source language text.
- 5. There are many reasons that lead the translator to deviate from objectivity in translation. Among these reasons are political, cultural, religious ideologies.

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The samples links:

SL text 1

- http://tinyurl.com/nhdxk8bb
- https://tinyurl.com/4vxzajrt
- https://2u.pw/QFCzDLF3
- https://2u.pw/dJiHyI3OTL

SL text 2

- https://2u.pw/FFAke2fF
- https://2u.pw/3fWs513Z
- https://2u.pw/XRno1tu
- https://2u.pw/i3g3jjUq

SL text 3

- http://tinyurl.com/bdej86sz
- http://tinyurl.com/bdej86sz
- https://2u.pw/cMz3u9c1
- https://2u.pw/5s3Q0BGp

SL text 4

- https://2u.pw/1atI0EX7
- https://2u.pw/1atI0EX7
- https://2u.pw/BYXrAz7y
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