

Heptaglot Approach for Better Understanding Events of International Concern

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A major challenge of news sources on the internet are the filter bubbles making it extremely difficult to find unbiased information, but this can partially be circumvented by using sources in different languages, as shown in this talk. Brazilian Portuguese turns out to be particularly valuable regarding information on the crisis in Eastern Europe.

Following international news in different languages one gets (slightly) different pictures. The barriers between the different languages allow for somewhat separated flows of information. Having a particular bias in one language on a subject does thus not necessarily mean that one has the same bias in a different language. For many years the author has been following international news in German, English, French (year abroad “licence de physique”), Russian (radio surveillance of Sov. troops during military service) and Spanish. Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Russian media depicted a different narrative compared to channels in d, e, fr and sp (referring mainly to media in Germany, UK/US, France and Spain). After the invasion, this gap widened, as expected. Having a closer look one has the impression as if the French media are slightly more critical concerning the US. In Spanish media one has the impression that sometimes details are explained that are obvious to people living in Central Europe, thus helping to become consciously aware of special aspects. Regularly consulting French and Spanish media thus already helps a lot to become a little bit more sceptical of information disseminated in German and English language channels. During the course of 2022 the author increasingly also consulted Ukrainian and Brazilian Portuguese channels, which are accessible to him with slowly and clearly speaking orators. Direct access to information in ru and ua allows understanding much better how Western media work and to trace errors/distortions in different Western channels. In summarizing one can say: All information in ua/ru might be biased, as these are the languages of the countries directly involved in the conflict. d, e, fr, sp, might also be biased (countries indirectly involved). Only in pt/Brazilian did the author find a neutral channel, which helps enormously to get a more neutral picture of the situation. A big country far away from the conflict obviously creates conditions so that a YouTube channel can stay neutral. A corresponding channel in Europe might perhaps be inclined to be either pro or against the government line. On one occasion this Brazilian channel concluded e.g. that Germany would also deliver Leopard 1s to Ukraine long before announced by the German government or read in media in d, e, fr, sp. Finally possible concepts and potential challenges for developing a metrics for neutrality / partiality of the different languages channels will be presented. It seems, however, difficult to find completely objective criteria. It has also to be noted, that finding a neutral channel concerning the crisis in Eastern Europe does not say anything about the political situation in Brazil itself or the position of the Brazilian government concerning this crisis. It just shows that there seem to exist conditions allowing for a neutral channel in that matter, which may perhaps not exist in European countries or the US e.g.. It is very important to clearly distinguish these points, which necessitates a very subtle approach for analysing the situation in Brazil.

Abstract: Heptaglotistics

Question treated

What can be learned by simultaneously following international events on the internet in many different languages and not just in d and e? For the treatment of this question a paradigm change is applied. The starting point is not a priori knowledge on the credibility of the different channels, but plausibility checks of the material presented in the single channels (absence of contradictions) and cross checks between the different channels. It is in some sense the perspective an extraterrestrial would have when listening/watching/reading the different channels without directly seeing what is happening on Earth. More specifically the author follows the current crisis in Eastern Europe in his 7 working languages (d, e, fr, ru, sp, ua, pt/br).

Results

Many of the channels consulted by users in Germany (Spiegel, SZ, German TV, BBC...) in addition to not being free from internal contradictions, are in many points also in contradiction to information given in channels in languages other than d and e. A common feature are translation errors from Russian and Ukrainian sources. The impression is that these translation errors are not randomly distributed but tend to coincide with the generally accepted narrative of the country these media are located in. **Only in pt/Brazilian did the author find a neutral channel, virtually free from internal inconsistencies of the material presented and also virtually free from objective errors, as far as the author can judge** (5 minor factual errors found in ca. 200 YouTube videos of about 10 min each.).

Discussion

It is a striking fact that by following the crisis in Eastern Europe in many languages one gets a significantly different picture from what one gets by following the crisis only in German and English. Directly comparing the material presented in 7 languages by one person seems to give significantly better results than by using translations. The common way used to follow international events in d and e and then to consult other languages when judged necessary seems not to be adequate for avoiding to stay in a filter bubble. A very significant result is that the author could find one channel in Brazil that seems to be virtually free from errors concerning the crisis in Eastern Europe serving him as a guide to better understand the military aspects of that crisis. The next step will be to supplement this qualitative analysis by a more quantitative investigation.

Earlier works directly related to heptaglotistics:

Part of the ideas presented is based on the author's long standing experience in organising political round tables:
http://berlin-3d-art.de/politische_hintergrundgespraeche.htm

Besides the heptaglot approach summarized in this abstract the author quite recently presented a concept of applying physics based models to geopolitics:
<https://www.dpg-verhandlungen.de/year/2023/conference/smuk/part/aga/session/8/contribution/1?lang=en>,
http://berlin-3d-art.de/tmp/equilibrium_country_size_schubert_dpg23.pdf

These two concepts are somewhat complementary in the sense that they follow the line of extending the scope to other disciplines (linguistics, physics) to open a broader view on current international events.

Languages in sales process:

http://berlin-3d-art.de/tmp/Sprachen_DAAD_e.pdf
http://berlin-3d-art.de/3D_psychologie_preprint.pdf#page=3

Other publications of the author: http://www.stereoscopicscanning.de/Portrait/portrait_d.html

Richards speech samples (e, fr, ru, sp): http://berlin-3d-art.de/tmp/Sprechproben_Schubert.pdf