Effects of Translator Age, Gender and Ideology upon Translation Strategies: A Case Study of English-Japanese Translators in Community Translation

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ABSTRACT

Several studies have explored the effects of translator ideology and/or background upon translated texts, viewing translators as active rather than impartial agents, in intercultural communication. However, only a few studies have examined the effects of gender as a sociolinguistic variable upon translations and their ideological implications and other sociolinguistic factors are left unexplored, resulting in a less holistic picture of translator background (Furukawa 2010; Leonardi 2007; Santaemilia 2005, 2015). The objective of this study is to examine the relationships between translators' various social attributes (age, gender, intercultural experience and professional experience), ideological opinions regarding the text being translated and use of translation strategies in an Australian community translation setting. Thus, I conducted a quantitative, sociolinguistic case study of 15 English-Japanese translators who translated an NGO informative text dealing with the sex industry. In particular, the study showed the strong effect of age upon the relationship between translators' shifting register and manifestations of their ideologies. It also found positive correlations between the use of register shift strategy and both translator ideology and the male gender. This paper reports on these findings and their implications for future studies on translator subjectivity and professional ethics.

1   Introduction

The principle of impartiality is inscribed in many professional codes of ethics for translators around the world, including that maintained by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT 2012). Yet, translation is a social and cultural practice (Lefevere 1992; Venuti 1992, 1995; Wolf 2011; Wolf & Fukari 2007). Therefore, a translator can play an active, visible and sometimes advocative role in intercultural communication by reflecting, and reproducing or resisting the ideologies surrounding the translational act (Cronin 2003; Simeoni 1998; Tymoczko & Gentzler 2002; Venuti 1992, 1995). Several studies have investigated how a translator's ideology and/or background affect their translations (e.g. Bai

2014; Beaton 2007; Charlston 2013; Furukawa 2010; Hatim & Mason 1997; Kang 2007; Leonardi 2007; Munday 2007, 2008; Santaemilia 2005, 2015).

This study extends the enquiry on translator ideology and background to a quantitative, sociolinguistic investigation of how translators' translation strategies are related to their ideologies and social backgrounds, focusing on gender, age, intercultural experience and professional experience. The study draws on English-Japanese translations of an informative text regarding the sex industry in an Australian community translation setting. This enquiry on translator subjectivity is interlinked with the academic argument for translators' responsibilities, self-reflexive practice and empowerment (e.g. Cronin 2003; Tymoczko 2007, 2009; Tymoczko & Gentzler 2002; Wolf 2011). Furthermore, it is also relevant to practising translators in terms of their day-to-day translation practice, interpretations of professional ethics and responsibilities, and identity construction. The possible effects of a translator's ideology and background on their translations could ultimately impact translation receivers who have difficulty in accessing information necessary for their life without translations (Taibi & Ozolins 2016: 10-11).

In the following sections, I firstly discuss previous studies concerned with translator gender and ideology, as gender is one of the most studied sociolinguistic factors in translator background, though this is still very limited, and then define the term "ideology" as applied in this study. After describing the methods, I will present the results relating to: i) the participants' translations; ii) their personal ideologies on the text being translated; and iii) the relationships between these factors and their social attributes. Lastly, I will discuss the results in relation to the existing literature and their implications for further research into translator subjectivity and ethical norms including the principle of impartiality.

2 Background
2.1 Translator Ideology and Background: Literature Review

Among the studies about the effect on translations of translator ideology and background, a few have focused on a sociolinguistic factor, namely gender. These gender-focused studies have investigated the relationships between translator gender and translated texts and the possible ideological implications of these relationships. Leonardi (2007), for example, analysed how differently male and female translators translate feminist texts from Italian into English for ideological reasons, in comparison with cases where they translate texts written by male authors. The author concludes that male translators' translations can be "ideologically slanted" just as much as translations by female translators or feminist translators (Leonardi 2007: 303). Furukawa (2010) similarly examined the differences between male translators' translations and a female translator's translation in terms of the use of women's language in Japanese. Her study suggests that male translators tend to use women's language for female characters more than female translators, assumedly projecting male translators' stereotypical image of female speech patterns.

On the other hand, focusing on how sexual expressions are translated, Santaemilia (2015: 145) claims scarce textual evidence exists that male and female translators translate differently, revoking his own results in Santaemilia (2005). He then turns to the translation of sex-related language as an arena to observe the discursive and ideological construction of plural and relational gender identities. Following Santaemilia (2015), in this study, I utilised a

text dealing with the sex industry to elicit translations that may reflect translators' own ideologies.

From the gender-focused studies above, however, the relationships between a translator's gender, ideology and translation performance remain inconclusive; a quantitative investigation is limited to Furukawa (2010). Moreover, other sociolinguistic factors, such as age, intercultural experience and professional experience have not been explored, which results in a less holistic investigation of translator background. Arguably, while gender and age are sociolinguistic variables that could reflect both individual and collective experiences (Eckert 1997; Wodak & Benke 1997), professional experience and intercultural experience are more variable on an individual basis. So, are there any differences in the effects of these factors? Additionally, the preceding studies mainly draw on the translated texts and the cross-cultural and ideological contexts of translation; therefore, the translator's self-reported justifications for their translation decisions have not been considered.

The issue of translator ideology and background is under-explored in community translation, compared with other translation domains such as literary translation or legal translation (Taibi & Ozolins 2016: 1; Tymoczko 2009: 189). In the present study, community translation is defined as a domain of translation wherein original texts produced by mainstream institutions, such as governmental institutions or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are translated for linguistic and cultural minorities in a multicultural society (adapted from Taibi & Ozolins 2016: 7-8). This is an indispensable part of intercultural communication as it provides minority groups with the means to access essential information (Lesch 1999; Taibi & Ozolins 2016; Valero Garcés 2014; Valero Garcés & Gauthier Blasi 2010).

Against this background, this study investigates the relationships between translators' social attributes, ideologies and translation strategies in an Australian community translation context. In doing so, it aims to observe the effects of gender, age, length of professional experience, and length of time in Australia as an indication of intercultural experience. I attempt to provide answers to the following two questions:

1. What kinds of relationships are identified between the translators' use of translation strategies and their manifestations of personal ideologies regarding the text being translated?
2. Is there any evidence of a correlation between the translators' social attributes, translation strategies and ideologies regarding the text?

Therefore, I conducted a case study of translators from English into Japanese to quantitatively examine the correlational effects, upon their use of translation strategies, of their social attributes and ideologies regarding the text dealing with the sex industry. Before describing the methods of this study, it is necessary to define the terms "ideology" and "ideological opinions" as applied herein.

2.2 Definition of Ideology

Two main definitions of ideology are commonly applied in translation studies: i) a critical definition; and ii) a comparatively neutral definition. The critical definition views ideology as beliefs, assumptions or value-systems, which are taken for granted, naturalise dominant

social practice such as discourse, and maintain power dominance (Fairclough 1989: 84-108; Thompson 1990: 7). In translation studies, this critical definition has been applied, for instance, by Lefevere (1992) and Venuti (1992, 1995) and in a body of work categorised as "power turn" (Tymoczko & Gentzler 2002).

The neutral definition of ideology explicates ideology as a fundamental system of socially shared beliefs (Simpson 1993: 5; Van Dijk 1998: 3-4), which is not necessarily associated with power struggles. A representative work on the neutral definition of ideology is a multidisciplinary theory of ideology by Van Dijk (1998), which aggregates cognitive, social and discursive dimensions of ideology. Van Dijk (1998: 79; 2006: 116) defines ideology as an axiomatic system of social beliefs shared by a group, which governs the group's "ideological attitudes" toward specific issues and the "ideological opinions" of individual members on those issues. The current study focuses on how the personal ideologies of individual translators are related to their translation strategies in the discourse dimension, rather than a power struggle in the translation context. Therefore, linking several translation studies on ideology (e.g. Hatim & Mason 1997; Leung 2006; Munday 2007, 2008), this study adopts Van Dijk's definition of ideology and his term of individual "ideological opinions" to refer to translators' personal belief-based opinions on the text being translated (1998: 116).

3   Methods

In this study, I aimed for a bigger sample group than previous studies with the goal of identifying any tendencies across their translation performances. In total, 15 professional translators were recruited. All were accredited as a professional translator by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters; 13 held accreditation from English into Japanese and 2 from Japanese into English. They all had some professional experience in translating from English into Japanese. Eight of the participants were self-identified as female and 7 as male. They varied in age, length of time in Australia and length of professional experience: age range = 26-67; mean age = 46.47; time in Australia range (years) = 1-29; time in Australia mean = 17; professional experience range (years) = 1-25; professional experience mean = 11.20.

A two-stage process was used for data collection: i) a translation experiment; and ii) an online questionnaire. During the translation experiment, the translators were tasked with translating one English text of about 300 words into Japanese. The source text (ST) was extracted from an information booklet (2011) entitled *The Manual: An Informative Guide for Women Considering Entering the Sex Industry*. The booklet was produced by a Melbourne-based feminist NGO, Project Respect, which provides support for female sex workers. The ST was preceded by a translation brief, which specified the target readers as Japanese-speaking women who are considering entering the sex industry in Australia and indicated the purpose of the translation as supporting and advocating for those women. Considering the ST producer, target readers, intended purpose of the translation and other socio-cultural contexts, the translation of this NGO text was considered to simulate a community translation setting. The notable textual characteristic of this ST was its casual, familiar and outreaching register addressing the reader in the second person. The sex industry is an ideologically polarising topic (Project Respect 2016: 2); hence, the text was expected to highlight the translators' distinct ideological opinions.

After completing the translation task, the participants were requested to complete an online questionnaire, which asked for their biodata, including the social attributes in focus, and justifications for their translation decisions for 19 selected ST items ([Appendix 1](#)). All questions were posed in English. Fourteen of the participants responded in English, and one in Japanese. Translation justifications were asked in order to elicit the participants' ideological opinions and the direct link between their opinions and use of translation strategies, as alluded to above. The 19 items were selected because those words and phrases, which refer to sexual organs, sexual acts or people involved in the sex industry, are likely to induce translators' ideology-driven translation decisions

4   Results
4.1 Translation Shifts and Strategies

The translated texts were analysed using comparative shift analysis (Van Leuven-Zwart 1989). Nineteen textual units between the ST and each participant's target texts (TTs) were compared to analyse how the ST items were shifted in the corresponding TT items. For this analysis, I assigned a relevant translation strategy to each translation item completed by each participant, for example, direct rendering, register shift, explicitation, implicitation, omission or addition. According to the shift analysis method developed by Van Leuven-Zwart (1989: 166), purely language-bound syntactic shifts, which do not affect semantic, stylistic and pragmatic contents, were excluded from the strategy identification. This is because those shifts are not a result of the translators' decisions.

The shift analysis identified two dominant strategies applied by the participants: register shift and direct rendering. The register shift strategy was predominantly the use of more formal, less colloquial and less familiar register. The direct rendering strategy maintained the semantic, stylistic and pragmatic contents between the ST item and the TT item. However, I categorised, as direct rendering, cases where the semantic shifts were only omissions or explicitations of the subject pronouns (you, they) or of the second person genitive pronoun (your). This is because sentence constituents in Japanese are often omitted when their interpretations are clear from contextual information; otherwise, the constituents are explicitly expressed instead of being expressed by pronouns (Tsujimura 1996: 212-213; Yoshimi 2001: 88). Additionally, those omissions and explicitations seem to have a minimal effect on other stylistic and pragmatic contents.

Below are two examples of shift analysis for the ST item "while they are inside you".

> TT1: ペニスがあなたの膣の中にある間 (back translation: while penis is inside your vagina)
> TT2: 挿入時は (back translation: at the time of insertion)

TT1 was categorised as the direct rendering strategy. The semantic constituents, penis and vagina, implied by the pronouns in the ST are explicitly expressed in TT1. However, these explicitations were most likely triggered by the conventional Japanese pronoun system, as explained above. The direct address to the reader as "you" in the ST is maintained in TT1, so the relationship between the author and the reader is not shifted. Hence, TT1 was categorised as direct rendering. On the other hand, TT2 is an example of the register shift strategy. Here the direct description of the physical state in the ST is transformed into a noun

phrase, and any explicit or implicit reference to the reader is absent. The register in TT2 is less colloquial, less personal and more formal; the distance between the author and the reader is further than that in ST. Thus, TT2 is categorised as register shift.

4.2 Translation Justifications and Translators' Ideological Opinions

The participants' translation justifications provided in the questionnaire were analysed using an inductive content analysis method (Elo & Kyngäs 2008). For each of the 19 items, their justifications were coded according to the words and expressions used in the responses. Consequently, two main themes were identified: textual justification and ideological justification. The textual justification refers to the textual comparison between the ST and TT, or the linguistic characteristics of the Japanese language, such as "this translation sounds natural". On the other hand, the ideological justification expresses the translator's own ideological opinion regarding the text.

Furthermore, two distinctive themes were identified within the ideological justification. One theme represents the translator's attitude neutralising the discourse about the sex industry. The other is based on the attitude advocating for and/or empowering sex workers as professionals. The first type of attitude was denoted by semantic codes, such as "detached", "matter-of-fact", "medical", "clinical" and "technical". The second type of attitude was denoted by the expressions such as "important for women", "empower", "business" and "profession".

These two types of ideological justifications are exemplified in the responses below, which were provided by two translators, respectively, for the translation of the ST item "putting a condom on, with their mouth". Translator 1 justified their translation by stating that "I've omitted 'their' to make the act less personal". This implies the neutralising attitude toward discourse about the sex industry. Contrastively, Translator 2's justification was as follows.

> I tried to take a little distance from the act, as I felt a description too close to the sexual act can trigger people. For the verb phrase 'putting xx on', I used the verb 'equip (attire)' often used for professional protective attire. This was also to reinforce a professional role on the woman in the situation.

While this statement can be partly interpreted as a representation of a neutralising attitude, it also emphasises a professional position of women in the sex industry, which shows the translator's empowering attitude to sex workers. This example of Translator 2 suggests that these attitudes may not necessarily be mutually exclusive.

Additionally, in a few justifications, the neutralising attitude, as well as the empowering attitude, was expressed at the same time as mentioning the translation purpose which the translation brief indicated as supporting and advocating for the intended target readers. This phenomenon suggests that the empowering attitude was not simply the direct reflection of the translation purpose described in the translation brief.

4.3 The Relationships between Translators' Social Attributes, Translation Justifications and Strategies

The relationships between the translators' social attributes, translation justifications and strategies were quantitatively analysed in R (The R Foundation 2018). A random effect logistic regression model was fitted to the data of 285 observations (19 translation items by 15 participants) to identify correlations in the use of translation strategies as the dependent variable with translation justification, gender, age, years in Australia and years of professional experience as the independent variables (Skrondal & Rabe-Hesketh 2004, ch. 9). It must be noted that this study aimed to observe correlational relationships between these variables, rather than causality.

As a result of the shift analysis, the translation strategy was considered to be a factorial variable with two levels: direct rendering and register shift. The results of the content analysis also suggested treating the translation justification as a factorial variable with two levels: textual justification and ideological justification. In order to limit the scope of this study to the translators' manifestations of ideological opinions, the two sub-types of ideological justifications were aggregated in the ideological justification. Consequently, the initial, saturated model was set with the use of the register shift strategy as the dependent variable, as opposed to the direct rendering. As to the translation justification in the independent variables, due to this study's interest in translators' ideological opinions, the model focused on the ideological justification as opposed to the textual justification. The saturated model also included age, time in Australia and professional experience as covariates as well as the squares of these variables. The squares were included to allow for curved relationships, found to apply for age. The saturated model was then pruned by backwards selection to keep only independent variables with significant effects (p-value < 0.05); Table 1 shows the final model.

Table 1: Final model summary of register shift strategy use

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	p-value	Significance
(Intercept)	-8.25751	1.81776	-4.543	<0.001	***
Ideological justification	9.63561	2.60653	3.697	<0.001	***
Age	0.30871	0.07376	4.186	<0.001	***
Age^2	-0.00311	0.00075	-4.174	<0.001	***
Ideological justification:Age	-0.35564	0.09615	-3.699	<0.001	***
Ideological justification:Age^2	0.00339	0.00096	3.547	<0.001	***

(.: p<0.1; *: p<0.05; **: p<0.01; ***: p<0.001)

Firstly, the final model indicates that there was a significant, positive correlation between the use of register shift and references to ideological justifications (estimate = 9.64, p-value < 0.001) (Table 1). Within the data of this study (Figure 1), when the participants referred to an ideological justification, the frequency of their using a register shift strategy increased to 45% compared with 26% in the case of referring to a textual justification. This indicates a significant positive correlation between the use of register shift and ideological justification.
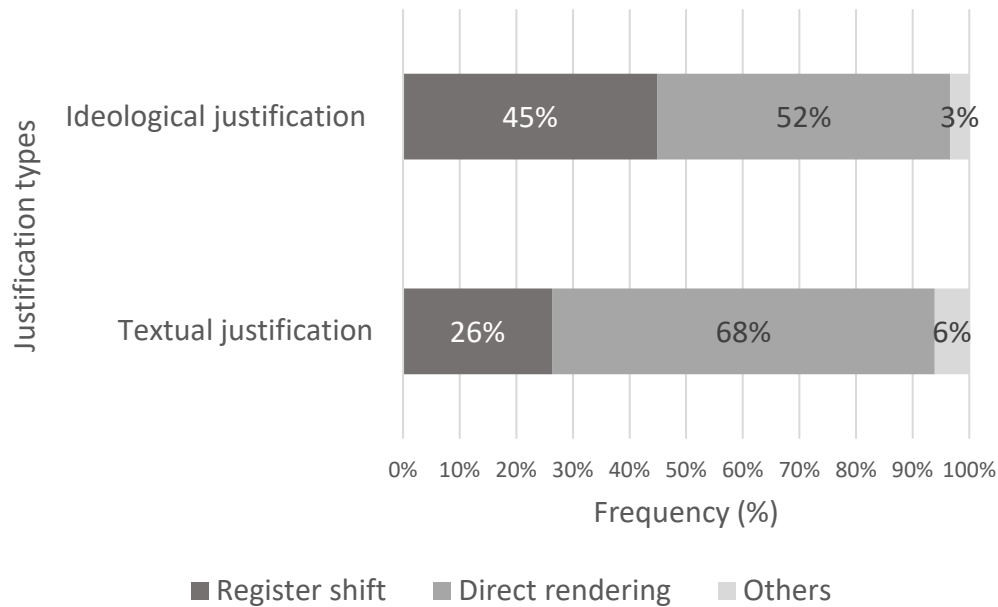
Figure 1: Frequency of the use of translation strategies in relation to justification types

Secondly, the analysis was extended to correlations between the translators' social attributes, manifestations of ideological justifications and use of register shift strategy. Table 1 indicates that age and its interaction with references to ideological justifications had significant effects on the use of register shift, while gender, the length of time in Australia and professional experience did not. As plotted in Figure 2, when the translators referred to the ideological justification, the probability for younger translators to use a register shift strategy was higher, starting at 60%, and the probability decreased as age increased. These correlations also confirm that the translators are more likely to use a register shift strategy and justify it by ideological reasoning, as presented in Figure 1.
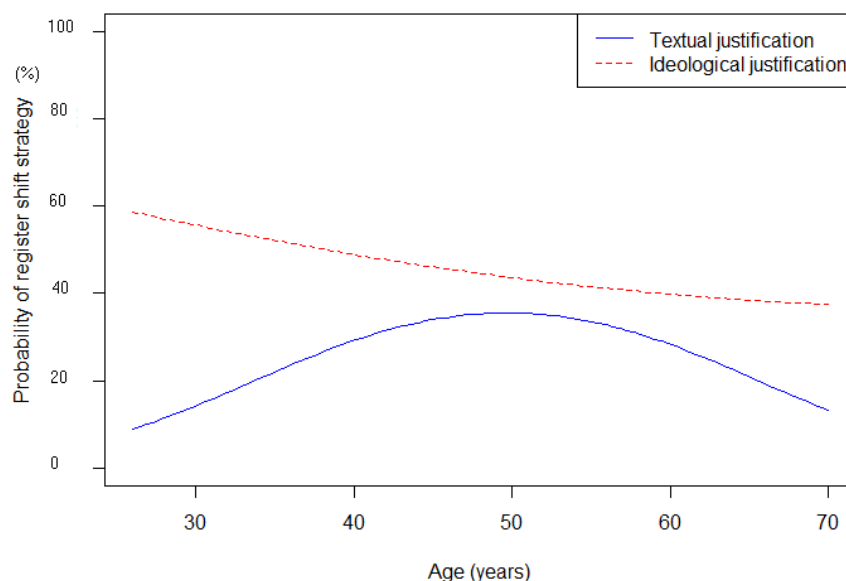

Figure 2: Prediction of register shift strategy use in relation to justification types and age (based on the model in Table 1)

Additionally, according to the second best model (Table 2), which includes the independent variables with a significance level of up to p-value=0.1 (Rasinger 2013: 173), gender had a marginally significant effect on the use of register shift strategy. The probabilities in Figure 3 were calculated by averaging all of the other independent variables individually (age, time in Australia and professional experience). As shown in Figure 3, male translators were more likely to use a register shift strategy than female translators (estimate=0.48, p-value=0.073), regardless of the types of justifications they referred to for the translation item.

Table 2: Model summary of register shift strategy use including marginally significant effects

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	p-value	Significance
(Intercept)	-8.40389	1.60738	-5.228	<0.001	***
Ideological justification	9.41193	2.44053	3.857	<0.001	***
Age	0.33261	0.06269	5.306	<0.001	***
Age^2	-0.00341	0.00062	-5.474	<0.001	***
Gender female	-0.48378	0.26994	-1.792	0.073	.
Ideological justification:Age	-0.35756	0.08788	-4.069	<0.001	***
Ideological justification:Age^2	0.00350	0.00087	4.041	<0.001	***

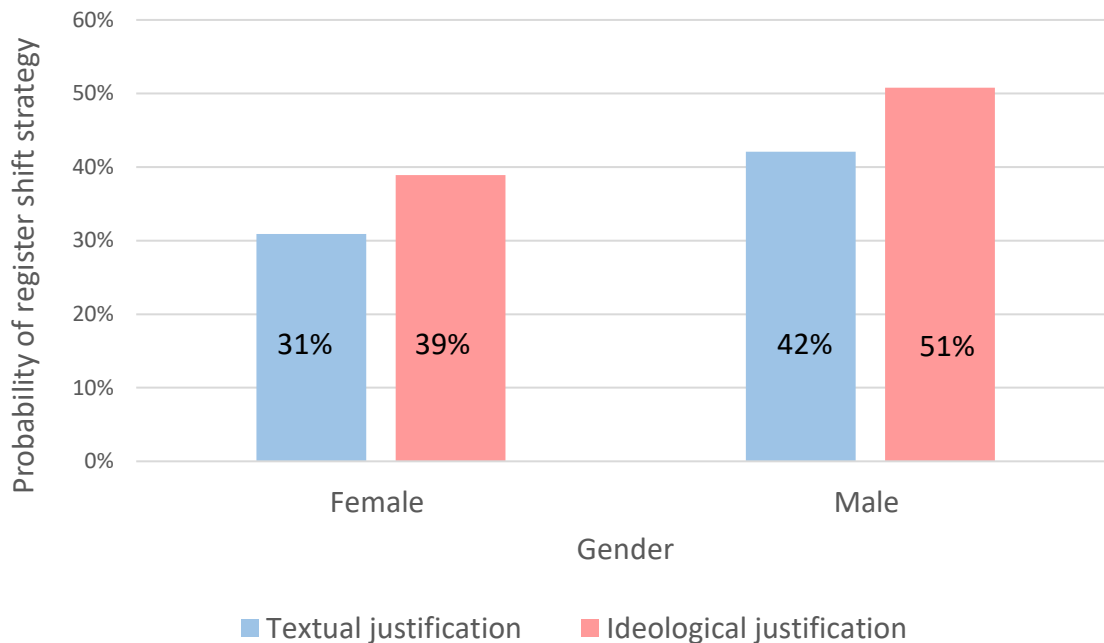(.: $p<0.1$; *: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$; ***: $p<0.001$)

Figure 3: Probability of register shift strategy use in relation to justification types and gender (averaged over other independent variables)

This result also confirms that the use of register shift is positively correlated with the ideological justification (Figure 3). However, the effect of gender did not interact with the effect of ideological justification because the differences in the probability of register shift strategy between female and male translators are not significantly different between the two justification types.

5   Discussion

Firstly, this study shows that the translators' ideological opinions were represented by two attitudes: i) neutralising the discourse dealing with the sex industry; and ii) advocating for, or empowering, women in the sex industry as professionals. The translators' ideological opinions, including both types of attitudes, were more often manifested when they used a register shift strategy.

The participants' lexical choices resulting in shifting register may have been partly because of the overall polite register that participants applied to their translations. Polite forms, one of the Japanese honorific classes, was selected by all participants as an overall register, in accordance with a Japanese stylistic convention for informative booklets similar to the ST in focus. However, the influence of the overall polite register does not fully explain why some participants used a register shift strategy for certain items, while others did not and why the participants explicitly or implicitly expressed their ideological opinions in their justifications. Therefore, it is safe to say that register shift was significantly associated with the translators' ideological opinions. This implies and confirms the influence of translator ideology upon their translation practice, as has been suggested by previous studies on translator ideology (e.g. Bai 2014; Beaton 2007; Charlston 2013; Hatim & Mason 1997). This may further indicate that once an individual translator's ideological reaction to the text is evoked, they are more likely to shift content, intent and/or function in their translation. However, testing this causality was beyond the scope of the present study.

Secondly, this study examined whether any evidence exists of a correlation between the translators' attributes, translation strategies and ideological opinions regarding the text. In this participant group, no significant effects of time in Australia and professional experience were identified on the use of register shift strategy. This means that individual-based attributes did not have a significant conditioning effect on the translators' use of translation strategies and manifestations of ideological opinions.

On the other hand, age and gender showed a significant, and a marginally significant, effect respectively. Younger translators tended to use a register shift strategy and manifest their ideological positions more often than older translators. This may suggest that younger translators tend to have internalised ideological attitudes and opinions regarding sex work/prostitution, which have become increasingly more diverse and visible in Australia since the 1970s (Sullivan 1997: 11) and, although to a lesser extent, in Japan since the 1990s (Kikuchi 2015: 38-39; for public opinions on prostitution in mid-1980s Japan, see Tomita 1993). Therefore, younger translators' opinions may have been more directly reflected in their translation practice.

However, when I focused only on the relationships between the participants' ages and their manifestations of each sub-type of ideological opinions (Figure 4), translators in their mid-forties to mid-fifties, who may have experienced the process of diversification of discourses regarding the sex industry in the 1990s, tended to associate more translation items to ideological opinions than younger translators. Moreover, I did not identify any age-based tendency as to which sub-type of ideological opinions the participants manifested more. As exemplified above, some translators also associated several translation items to both sub-types, which suggests that these two sub-types may not be mutually exclusive. Thus, to further understand the significant correlation between translators' use of register shift strategy,

ideological opinions and age, in-depth interviews with the participants about their fundamental ideology and opinions related to the sex industry may be useful.
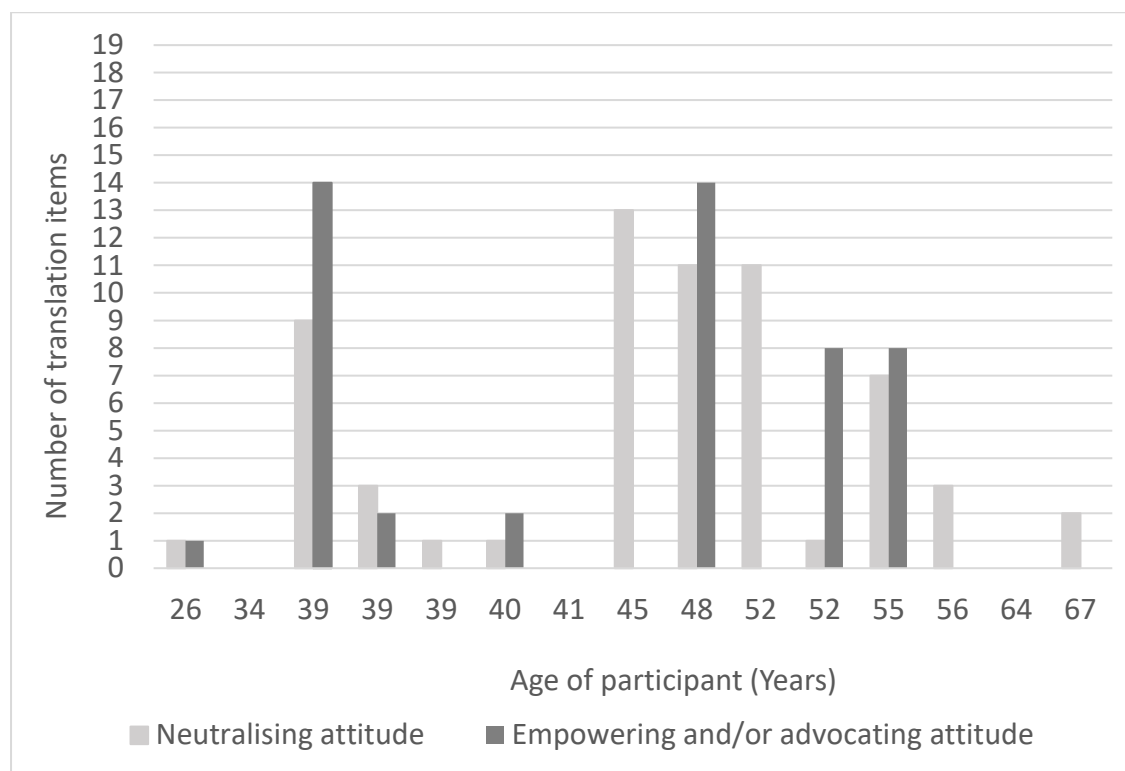

Figure 4: Number of translation items associated with each sub-type of ideological opinions against ages of participants.

Regarding gender, male translators tended to use a register shift strategy more than female translators. This result is similar to the finding by Furukawa (2010) that male translators tended to make a translation shift by using a specific language variety. However, despite suggestions by Leonardi (2007) and Furukawa (2010) that ideological reasoning is behind gender-differences in translation shifts, this study did not find any evidence of gender-specific manifestation of the translators' ideologies. This may be partly because the two sub-types within the ideological justification were not differentiated in the statistical analysis. Yet, no meaningful difference was observed either, when I compared, between female and male translators, the relative frequencies of translation items associated with each of the two sub-types of ideological opinions.

These findings regarding age and gender arguably suggest that more inherent attributes in translators' backgrounds can affect translator practice, despite the commonly shared impartiality principle. In particular, younger age could lead to a strong association between translators' textual decisions and their ideological manifestations in their translation practice, while intercultural and professional experience may not be able to interrupt the association.

Although this study's sample size, and therefore, the generalisability of these findings is limited, the outcome of the study warrants further in-depth observations and descriptions of how a translator translates while negotiating their subjectivity, on the one hand, and shared ethical norms, on the other. Further research may then lead to more nuanced interpretations of the ethical principal of impartiality in specific translation contexts. These enquiries on

translator subjectivity and professional ethics are unavoidable to achieve self-reflexive translation practice and successful intercultural communication, on the understanding that translator ideology, and rather inherent background, can inevitably affect their translations whether or not the translator is conscious of it at the time of translation.

6   Conclusion

The study shows how a strongly positive correlation *between* shifting register between the ST and TT *and* manifestations of the translators' ideological opinions on the text being translated explains the translation strategy. Younger translators, in particular, showed such a correlational tendency. Additionally, male translators were more likely to shift the register. However, the manifestations of their ideological opinions did not differ between male and female translators. These findings broadly support the existing studies on the effect of translator ideology and background on translation products, with the exception of the specifics of the influence of gender. The findings also highlight the need for further research into translator subjectivity and professional ethics with the ultimate goal of achieving successful intercultural communication.

Appendix 1: List of 19 ST items
(1) condoms
(2) (water based) lubricant
(3) lube
(4) clients
(5) "Aren't you wet?"
(6) you are not aroused
(7) make a woman dry and irritated
(8) even if she is naturally wet
(9) penises
(10) a vagina
(11) when erect
(12) while they are inside you
(13) putting a condom on with their mouth
(14) when they give the client oral sex
(15) a client has finished and
(16) pull out of your vagina
(17) end up inside you
(18) won't be able to ejaculate
(19) coming

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