

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis in Translation of Political Speeches and Interviews

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ABSTRACT

CDA as an important theme in translation of political discourse (PD) has not been fully examined by the professional of translation studies (TS) up to date. To the best knowledge of the researcher nobody has constructed an informative framework for translation of PD. CDA as an emerging field within critical applied linguistics (CAL) is continuously being adapted to new phenomena, one of them being TS. The existing research in the respective field consists of a cluster of different approaches and to my best knowledge may not provide an applicable framework that may be used as an auxiliary tool in the translation process for the analysis of source texts (ST) and target texts (TT). Adopting Critical Discourse Analysis with particular emphasis on the framework of Fairclough (1989) and utilizing the notions of SFL by Holliday (1985), the present thesis is an attempt to shed light on the relationship between language and ideology involved in translation in general, and more specifically, to uncover the underlying ideological assumptions invisible in the texts, both source text (ST) and target text (TT), and consequently ascertain whether or not translators' ideologies are imposed in their translations. Therefore, the major aims of the study are to work out a framework of CDA, to apply the framework for the analysis of the ST and TT and to analyze the translators' choices in the TT on the text-linguistic level. Having collected the texts and translations, the researcher decided to analyze the data. The obtained results proved the fact that the application of CDA for the analysis of the ST and TT helps the translator to become aware of the genre conventions, social and situational context of the ST and TT, and outlines the formation of power and ideological relations on the text-linguistic level. Therefore, it can be called critical translator awareness.

KEYWORDS: CDA; Translation studies; Power; Ideology; Source tongue; Target tongue

INTRODUCTION

The issue of genre and text type has been the topic of hot debates in the field of translation. Every genre has its own conventions and approaches, which distinguish it from other text types; therefore, only the matter of word choice and structure cannot be the determining factors in the act of translation. Amongst different genres, political texts may appear more challenging for translation.

In political discourse, words are at the service of transferring the power or ideologies of one group or nation to the other. As a consequence of globalization, political texts may be required to be translated to other languages. Here, the task of the translator is not just rendering the linguistic features of the source text, but s/he should be aware of the underlying theories and ideologies scaffolding a political text and in some cases try to add, delete or clarify the text in order to make it comprehensible for the target text audience. Translation, although often invisible in the field of politics, is actually an integral part of political activity (Bassnett & schaffner, 2010, 22).

CDA has been principally applied to political texts in one language and one culture with a goal to analyze the underlying power and ideological struggle created by the text producers. Political discourse originates from the historical and cultural development of a particular community and involves power and ideological struggle that is stated through linguistic means.

The linguistic analysis of political texts and speeches is the search into politicians' words and syntactic structures to see what they are trying to accomplish: how they are attempting to influence people to think and act in a specific way. Therefore, it sounds necessary to investigate political discourses for better understanding and interpretation of the aims and intentions of politicians. This analysis, on the one hand magnifies the hidden ideologies of the ST, and on the other hand, may be used as a yardstick to assess and evaluate the TT produced by the translator.

Due to the significance of political speeches and especially those delivered by the leaders of powerful countries, there seems to be an urgent need to analyze these comments and speeches for better understanding and interpretation of the aims and intentions of politicians and statesmen. The sensitivity and salience of political texts are the matters of high importance that should be taken into account while translating.

The approach to CDA chosen for this study is that of Norman Fairclough (1995, 2000, 2003). For Fairclough, in contrast to the social psychological approach of Wetherell and Potter (1992), the social-cognitive model of van Dijk (1993, 1998, 2001) and the discourse-historic method of the Vienna School (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 1996,2002; Wodak et al., 1999), CDA means the analysis of relationships between concrete language use and the wider social cultural structures. [...]. He attributes three dimensions to every discursive event. It is simultaneously text, discursive practice - which also includes the production and interpretation of texts - and social practice. The analysis is conducted according to these three dimensions (Titscher et al 2000: 149-150).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Translation Studies today is no longer concerned with examining whether a translation has been 'faithful' to a source text. Instead, the focus is on social, cultural, and communicative practices, on the cultural and ideological significance of translating and of translations, on the external politics of translation, on the relationship between translation behavior and socio-cultural factors. In other words, there is a general recognition of the complexity of the phenomenon of translation, an increased concentration on social causation and human agency, and a focus on effects rather than on internal structures.

There are three key concepts that are very significant in all CDA trends: the concept of power, the concept of ideology and the concept of history, (Wodak 2001, cited in Andreassen 2007). Out of these concepts, the first two which are more relevant to the present study are expanded further of course in relation to discourse (language).

The integration of discourse analysis in translation studies (TS) was initiated in the functionalist theories of translation by Munday (2001) which, including text analysis of the ST, aimed at the analysis of text type, language function, the effect of the translation and the participants of the translation event. The discourse analysis approach to TS applied Michael Halliday's register analysis model, which was mainly used to analyze the pragmatic functions of linguistic elements in both ST and TT, e.g. the first theoretical frameworks were proposed by Mona Baker and Julian House.

The objective of a political discourse analysis, which adopts critical goals, is to denaturalize ideologies. Denaturalization involves showing how social structures determine the properties of discourse and how discourse determines social structures (Fairclough 1995).

METHOD

Methodology is one of the most complicated issues in the field of CDA. Meyer (2001), for instance, claims that there is no common methodology or theoretical viewpoint in CDA. CDA theoreticians draw on a number of theoretical levels in their analyses, from epistemology or general social theories, socio-psychological theories, discourse theories to linguistic theories (cited in Walker, 2004).

As stated, various factors must be taken into consideration in analyzing a piece of discourse such as linguistic elements, social elements, historical elements and cognitive ones. However, the linguistic element is still at the core of the CDA approach. Fairclough's model of CDA, provides a more accessible method of doing CDA than alternative theoretical approaches. He argues that to fully understand what discourse is and how it works, analysis needs to magnet the form and function of the text, the way that this text relates to the way it is produced and consumed, and the relation of this to the wider society in which it takes place.

Description is the first stage of the CDA, which includes the analysis of the texture of texts, (Fairclough 2003:158). The first stage of the textual analysis is the examination of the linguistic analysis of the text on morphological and grammatical levels. The main parts to be analyzed in this stage are vocabulary and grammar.

Interpretation deals with the understanding of meaning implanted in texts. The level of interpretation is adapted to participant's text production and text interpretation (understanding). The entire process of interpretation happens simultaneously in two stages. In the first stage the interpreter arrives at a determination of the institutional setting of the interaction on the basis of societal social order stored in his/her MRs (e.g. at the school). In the second stage the interpreter arrives at a determination of the situational setting (the situation type of the interaction, e.g. classroom) on the basis of the institutional social order in the first stage.

The focus of analysis is based on linguistic choices within the three functions or components of Hallidayan model of language. Furthermore, the researcher will take into account the lexical choices (emotive language) used by George W. Bush in addressing the Iran's nuclear issue. Therefore, the linguistic choices which are to be analyzed in President Bush's comments regarding Iran's nuclear program are as follows:

- Passivization and nominalization within ideational meaning.
- Modality within interpersonal meaning.
- Thematic structure (thematization) within textual meaning.
- Lexical choices (emotive language).

PROCEDURE

As the nature of this study is based on CDA are discussion and analysis of the discourse according to the pre-planned categories, most of them fall into qualitative research design. Since this research could not achieve all the researcher goals, the statistical part, which is computing lexical variety of discursive structures in ST and the eight corresponding TTs is computed and added to the discussion part. Consequently, the design of this study is mixed method for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the current phenomenon.

For the sample of this study, a wide array of Bush's comments regarding Iran's nuclear issue collected. To make the study feasible, the researcher has to base this analysis on a sample of comments. Thus, he has decided to focus on 20 excerpts of Bush's comments randomly selected from 20 of his political speeches and press conferences concerning Iran's nuclear program from 2005 to 2008.

First, the selected parts of the ST are analyzed according to the mentioned factors, which are active/ passive voice, thematic structure, modalization, nominalization , and emotive language, and the social and situational context of the speeches are also analyzed. The next step is the analysis of translation of those parts in Persian produced by a group of eight translators all having M.A. in translation studies on the basis of the same factors applied to the source text . For selecting the translators the researcher used convenient sampling. The data will be shown comparatively and the areas of similarity and difference between the ST and TTs will be identified to understand in which categories the translator deviated from the dominant ideology of the ST. Therefore, the researcher selected mixed method design for this study. The qualitative part includes the analysis of ST and TT and the quantitative part comprises calculating the lexical variety of discursive structures in ST and eight corresponding TTs according to Williams and Cehsterman (2002), for calculating lexical variety, the following formula should be applied: Lexical variety= $\frac{\text{total types} \times 100}{\text{total tokens}}$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As fully discussed, Hallidayan and Fairclough's models meet the goals of the present study. Therefore, this study is conducted within these frameworks. Thus, the analysis will be carried out in terms of the following linguistic features:

- Active and passive voices
- Nominalization
- Modality
- Thematization
- Emotive language (emotive lexical choices)

In this study, the number of tokens is the total number of running words and types are considered as the total number of different discursive structures in the corpus. Following, the calculated lexical variety for each discursive structure in ST and TTs is shown on a bar graph.

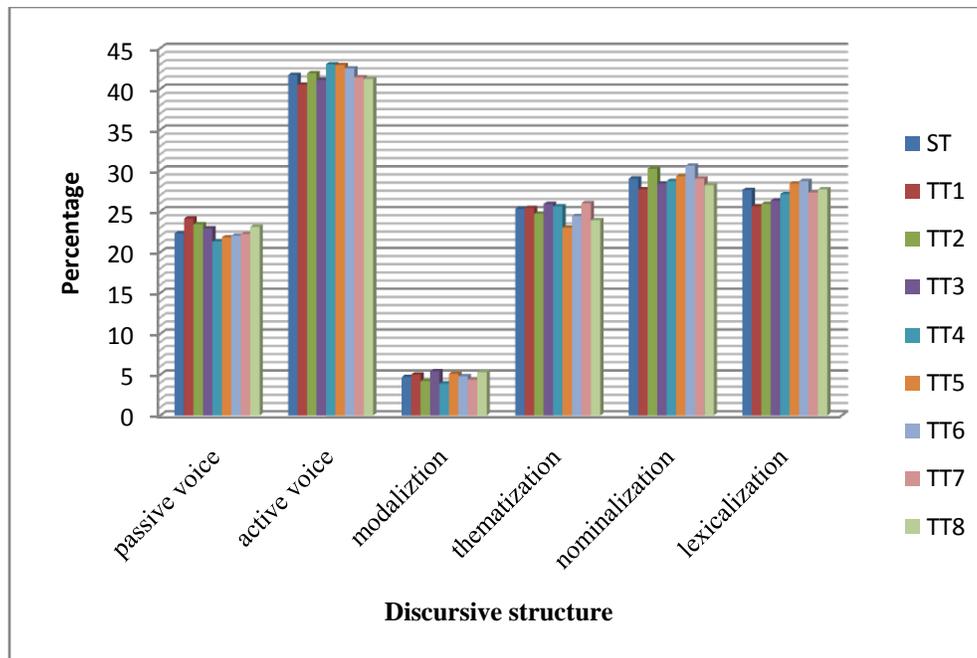


Figure 1. Lexical Variety

The aforementioned TT analysis exposed a number of complications related to the translation of political texts. Even though the text type required a dynamic translation, most of the translators have used the static strategy to translation and have applied a very literal approach. Hence, most of the translations reflect the SL structure, which delays the level of perception of the TT. It may be related to the phenomenon of “foreignizing”, i.e. the usage of borrowing from the English language and grammatical structures, but may also be related to the lack of time and accurateness during the contentment of the translation task.

Most of the translators failed to pay attention to the situational and social contexts, background information, linguistic choices, semantic and pragmatic relations in the text and thus created literal translations causing some misunderstandings in the TL. These findings demonstrate the fact that the translation brief alone is not enough to provide the translators with the valuable information regarding the underlying power and ideological struggles in political texts and thus leads to the conclusion that CDA framework may become a useful tool, which would help the translators to perform a critical analysis of the ST at the initial stage of the translation process. Additionally, the application of the CDA framework in translator training would provide the future translators with an analytic tool which helps them to found a step-by-step procedure for the analysis of the ST and the production of the TT, which would advance their awareness of the importance of the role of language in the socio-cultural context as well as the impact of their own textual choices in the translation process.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main aim of this study was to prove the hypothesis that CDA is a helpful implement in the translation process of political texts. The CDA integration in translation is a very new field within TS and has not been researched comprehensively. The present research – contains a variety of approaches and reflections and does not offer an applicable model for translation-oriented analysis of both STs and TTs within political discourse.

In this study the modern approach to TS overcomes, which considers translation as a communicative act between the SL and TL cultures and which involves the interpretation of the text producer’s intended meaning in the ST, the production of a new communicative act in the TL and the interpretation (understanding) of the end-product of the translation process – the TT.

This comparative analysis located within Translation studies from a CDA viewpoint can provide a broader analytical angle for translation students helping them to recognize texts in connection with all kinds of textual and extra textual constrains such as ideology, power relations, and cultural and historical backgrounds. Indeed, this enquiry was an attempt to emphasize that the underlying ideological filter, most often as an invisible hand, makes every text unbiased or innocent let alone texts having politicized language. Therefore, translators, as any other

language users who actively participate in the process of creating meaning, need to be very aware of and conscious about every discursive strategy or choice, ranging from deletion and addition to syntactic and lexical variations, they might adopt during the process of producing the target text on the basis of the source text.

In view of this, the findings of the present paper and/or other CDA based research aim to contribute to a better understanding of politically slanted texts whose contents are more or less transparent, and accordingly to give translators a deeper insight towards subtle persuasive strategies which place readers in specific ideological positions. The results of the TT analysis show that most translators have not been able or have failed to pay attention to the power and ideological struggle in the respective political text and have not transferred the same effect in the TL.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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