

The Theory Behind Journalistic Translation

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to provide an understanding of main theoretical concepts related to journalistic translation, how ideologies in journalistic texts are formed and the way these ideologies are reproduced in the translation process. It also raises the issue of objectivity in translating news and whether and, to what extent, it can be achieved. The goal is to offer a holistic view on the theoretical approach with which a translator needs to familiarize himself in translating news. The methodology applied is purely theoretical by investigating key-terms and theoretical models related to news translation through literature review. To this end, the article explores among others journalistic work and its characteristics, criteria for selecting news stories, news translation as a specialized type of translation and the issue of objectivity. What follows is a comprehensive analysis of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model and its practical contribution to news translation. In the concluding section, some final thoughts are expressed regarding the significance of the findings of the article. It is hoped that the present analysis will make up a useful theoretical tool for professionals who wish to occupy themselves with the highly demanding specialised field of news translation.

KEYWORDS: the structure of news stories, journalistic translation, critical discourse analysis, objectivity in journalistic translation, the ideology in news translation

1. INTRODUCTION

As Claude Chabrol, Patrick Charaudeau and Anne-Marie Houdebine (Charaudeau, 1988, p. 5) observe, journalistic discourse by no means is a simple apposition of words with the goal of achieving accuracy and clarity due to the multifunctionality of journalistic texts, which, apart from their informative function they also serve the operative function. Each piece of news can be reproduced in many different ways depending on the journalist's ideological beliefs, the socio-cultural framework of its production, the expectations of the target readership and other related factors.

As far as journalistic translation is concerned, it makes up a thematic field of specialised translation the research on which has become nowadays more prevalent than ever before due to globalization, the advances in communication technologies and multiculturalism. Indeed, every event that takes place beyond national borders of a country reaches the local reader through the translation channel. As a consequence, Translation is called upon to adapt to these challenges and, thus, the academic interest of translation studies addresses its attention to news translation more and more often.

However, it has to be stressed that the term "translation" is rarely used by professionals in the field of journalism. According to Bassnett & Bielsa (2005, p. 143), the significance of translation in the production and transmission of information has been silenced internationally, rendering the translation "act invisible" by creating the impression that information is being circulating unchanged among languages and cultural communities. The truth, however, is that information is seldom remaining unchanged. Baker's study (2006) has shown that quite often translation modifies the narrative order of events; more specifically, the journalistic covering of a political event makes up a form of "contextualization" and every contextualization obligatorily encompasses the modification of a range of textual elements.

Within this framework, the objective of the present article is not to describe the features of a quality news translation but rather to provide a holistic approach into the subject. It aims to explore the theoretical literature on the subject and a number of studies on journalistic translation. These studies are related to the characteristics of journalistic work, the criteria for selecting and reproducing news as well as the structure of news in the print. In addition, the factors that differentiate the thematic field of news translation in relation to the rest of text-typologies are brought into consideration. The subsequent section investigates the notion of critical discourse analysis and its contribution to translating journalistic discourse. Finally, the issue of objectivity in news translation is also raised before we come to express the final conclusions of the present study.

2. NEWS IN THE PRINT

Nowadays, with the development of online media, the news industry has changed a lot and has been adapted taking into account the distinction between the production of online news and that of their print equivalents, regarding content and interaction with the

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target readership. The print model that was introduced in the 1920s and is still used in media nowadays is the pyramid-type model in which articles present their content in the form of a pyramid, with the most significant piece of information on the top followed by the minor piece of information. The specific model has been a subject of criticism in academic circles nowadays since there is the intense need to keep the readers' interest far and beyond the reading of the first paragraphs of the text. Pulkkinen (2008: 162) stresses the need for transmitting significant information across the whole article in order to meet the needs and reading habits of contemporary readers.

An additional model is described by Bragg (quoted in Pulkkinen, 2008: 163), according to which, the news article consists of five main parts defined as follows: the first part involves a picture in order to grab the reader's attention, the second part provides the article's main idea and analyses why the reader should focus on it. The third part refers to the initial introduction of the article and while the third element makes up the main body of the article, the last part is a powerful citation aiming to create an emotional effect to the reader.

Regarding online news, the main characteristic is that it is mostly reliant on advertisement money and the more visits a site can do, the more money it can ensure. The dependence on advertising has an impact on the strategies journalists have to follow in order to gain readers and be competitive, often sacrificing traditional journalistic ideas and principles.

Another important distinction that has to be made is that between hard and soft news on the one hand, prestige and yellow news on the other hand. Hard and prestige news involve articles on economics, political matters and technical reports. On the other hand, Curran (2010: 4) reports that soft news or yellow press centralize on stories of human interest. Although these two types of news seem to be dissimilar, it is often hard to distinguish between the two with hard news adopting the features of soft news or vice versa. In such circumstances, the appropriate categorization is in accordance with the way the same article is set into context. Crime stories are in fact a representative example of how the same story is categorized either as "soft" or "hard" news. Particularly, if the text focuses on the crime itself and its victims, it is characterized as "soft" news. If, however, focuses on the social circumstances and conditions that caused the event, then, it could be characterized as "hard" piece of news. The same applies to political news which although it is typically considered to be "soft" news, it can also be characterized as "hard" news if the focus is on personal characteristics or news is examined from a personalized angle.

The distinction between the two types of news is not clear-cut but, generally speaking, soft news bears the following characteristics: popularity, personalization, digestible content and entertaining or emotional impact on the target readership. Tabloidization refers to change from hard news focusing on political and economic matters and social ideals to soft news and the intense element of personalization, a shift which is often accompanied by considerable decrease of professional standards in both selecting and reporting information. This type of tabloidization obtains different meaning in multiple sociocultural environments in accordance to the element of locality as well as the extent of the journalist's professionalization. (Esser 1999: 301).

The taxonomy line that distinguishes tabloids from prestige news is not clear-cut since online webpages frequently apply tabloid techniques so that they can have some financial gain. Regarding the value of soft news, Curran (2010) states that it can be also considered as a useful tool by stirring discussion on social norms although it cannot contribute in helping people form attitude about important matters.

Soft news does not differ from hard news only in content but also in methods used in order to attract the target readership's attention. Some of the means of expression used in tabloid news is shock and ambiguity aiming to raise readers' attention and also "forward-reference" as one of the key-techniques defined as "the act of referring to a later part of the text" used mainly in the headlines of tabloid news in order to secure that the target readership does not read only headlines. This technique is divided into the two subcategories of "discourse deixis" and "cataphora". Discourse deixis refers to the discourse dimension of a text and not to autonomous language references. However, cataphora refers to individual lexical items, phrases and sentences in the text. What is unsure is whether the technique of forward-reference contributes to readers' willingness to read the whole story since, according to Blom and Hansen (2015), high level of is likely to demotivate readers from reading the whole story.

3. NEWS TRANSLATION

Before we address the characteristics of journalistic work, we will consider the concepts of the translator and translation itself. Loupaki (2010) stresses that in the field of journalism, translation activity makes up a complementary act and it is a usual practice in the field of journalism not to characterize a text as a translated product.

Alike the idea of journalistic translator entails various different implications. Although it may be clear that the word is used for professionals, who mainly work on translation tasks, according to (Mohan, 2009), journalists who are involved in such cross-culture communication and in working conditions similar to those of translators, do not consider themselves as professional translators.

This is explained by the fact that although news organizations admit that fluency in multiple languages is definitely advantageous, however, they show preference to journalists rather than to translators, since journalists seem to have better understanding regarding the tasks in which they are involved (Bassnett & Bielsa 2005, pp. 136-137). In addition, the parametre of immediacy which is raised in journalism is likely to influence the journalist's awareness of himself since news sites seldom refer to their texts as translations.

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The goal of journalistic translation is to feed its recipients with constant information. Consequently, journalistic translation is governed by the need for speed, especially in daily news where a translation task needs to have been completed within hours, the same applies also with weekly newspapers where time restrictions are non-negotiable. (Bani 2006, quoted in Conway 2010: 37).

This is reflected in news translation in the economical use of language. Specifically, target texts are characterized by the frequent use of noun phrases and simple clause structures aiming to describe news stories without any distortions and deviations from the content. This in practice results in translating the text quickly at the expense of language faithfulness and afterwards making corrections, a practice which is commonly preferable to the methodological process traditionally concerning the act of translating.

Furthermore, the final aim is making a translated product that transmits enough information so that the readership is not obliged to search for other pieces of news in other journalistic sources of information (Bassnett & Bielsa, 2005). This factor in combination to shortage of time devoted to the act of translating, create cultural domestication, although the lack of cultural entails can be covered by various sources of information, such as books and articles on specific subjects. However, taking into account the fact that news texts are consumed quickly, these extra links providing extra information often pass unnoticed or they are completely ignored.

Regarding the translators' visibility or invisibility in translating journalistic discourse, they are in a condition of obscurity since the target audience does not even realise that there exists a translator and that a translation act has taken place. The ultimate goal is to produce a translation that sounds like the original (Bassnett & Bielsa, 2005: 92-93). Others consider the issue of invisibility as non-existent, thinking that a translator can be involved in all levels of hierarchisation. For example, in Italy, the author of the original text usually puts his signature, (Bani 2006, in Conway, 2010: 36), although still this practice varies depending on the culture and the news outlet's internal policies. Undoubtedly, providing signatures of the source text's author may help in informing that a translation act has taken place.

4. THE STRUCTURE OF JOURNALISTIC WORK

In this chapter we will discuss the main features of journalistic work focusing on those characteristics that present similarities with the translation activity. There is a number of misconceptions regarding its basic principles and activities, just like translation suffers from such misconceptions which is partly due to its interdisciplinary nature. The most popular misconception is related to its objective nature and the impossibility of reaching absolute objectivity in journalist since it is likely that a journalist is not associated to the original story. This is due to the fact that many stories are reproduced by news bulletins created by popular agencies which are then adapted to be published by small agencies, taking into account parameters such as cultural and geographic proximity.

Additionally, news production depends on a range of specific criteria that determine which stories will receive focus and coverage such as frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, references to elite nations or people, reference to persons and reference to something negative (Galtung & Ruge, 1973). Frequency refers to the possibility of an event being reported. Threshold is the intensity for an event to become newsworthy. As far as unambiguity is concerned, unambiguous facts have most possibilities to be mentioned. Meaningfulness involves the culture and geography distance of a fact. Consonance involves facts which the target readership aspires to take place in future. Unexpectedness makes up another main criterion with unforeseen events having high level of journalistic description. Continuity involves the duration of an event, that is, the time within which it is regarded as news. Composition involves the reliability of a story in comparison to identical stories (Fowler 1991: 13-14).

Another key element of journalistic work that has certainly affected the work of translation relates to technological advancements and the presence of the Internet. The Internet has certainly brought about changes regarding the available means of information. Indeed, most information is available online before news is produced in printed form, and so the target audience seems not to have any incentive to pay for subscriptions since and printed press finds difficulty in justifying its existence. As Honkonen and Lankinen (2012) mention, editorial staffs have suffered several cutbacks of experienced personnel over the last years. They limit the number of professionals with specialization in the fields of politics and economics, domains which call for specific knowledge and skills. Consequently, journalists are assigned several different duties including the translation of both printed and online content. Thus, a journalist is forced to produce more material, with less time for conducting research, checking and revising.

Furthermore, there is the widespread belief concerning the power of journalism and the influence over society and public opinion formation that the press have. As surveys have shown, the majority of the respondents seem to believe that the media have much power, possibly even more than elected official aiming to manipulate readers.

5. THE QUESTION OF OBJECTIVITY IN JOURNALISTIC TRANSLATION

One of the key-issues to consider in translating news is the ideological dimension of translation and the extent of objectivity in translating news texts. One of the most popular misconceptions in journalistic work is the concept of objectivity given that language is a system that is rarely value-free. The contemporary trend in western societies is that news should aim to objectivity, an approach which according to Bielsa and Bassnett goes back in American journalism of the 19th century, which because of the actions of transnational agencies such as Reuters and AFP, the issue of objectivity has become major issue in journalism across the globe,

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although true objectivity is hard to achieve if we accept that discourse is related to social action. Bielsa and Bassnett suggest that objectivity should be understood as 'impartiality', a term that they define as "primarily as a question of balance so that the text effectively reflects a complex and disputed reality" (Bielsa & Bassnett 2005: 89).

The issue of objectivity and by extension the matter of ideology has been handled in considerable variations. The so-called news values that is a set of criteria based upon journalistic ideals, cultural norms, the target readership, political conditions and geographic location influence the reporting of news. He also talks about "socially constructed news", which means that apart from the criteria used in the selection act, some criteria listed above are fake, without bearing any intrinsic news value. The above values tend to be characterised as "gatekeeping tools" that limit the events to be published, process done whether consciously or unconsciously.

Pölonen (2012) touches upon the subject of news selection and the factors to consider in choosing topics over others for reporting. He introduces the following approaches: according to the first, the selection of articles is in accordance to the journalist's ethical and vocational code. Similarly, it depends on the hierarchy of the news organisation. Another criterion is the extent to which the story reflects society itself. Finally, according to Gans (Polonen, 2012) external factors such as economic factors, ideologies and power relations play a major role in this process.

6. THE TERMS "DISCOURSE" AND "DISCOURSE ANALYSIS"

Fairclough (2001) defines discourse as the language of social practice and as such it is closely related to social norms and ideologies. This implies that language is not regarded as an individual unit, given that it is used by, individuals who act according to their cultural background. In other words, discourse is formed as such that it covers the expectations of its parent organisation. Similarly, target readership processes texts based on discourse models used in previous texts and it is most likely that it chooses from deviations from the norm. What Fowler actually describes is a kind of a continuous cycle where discourse is negotiated by both authors and audiences.

As far as the term "discourse analysis" is concerned, a number of different approaches have been described coming from different scientific fields that examine the interrelationship between language and social activities. Consequently, it is fairly difficult to form a certain definition of discourse analysis that integrates all aspects of discourse analysis since it makes up a subject of interest for various domains such as linguistics, sociolinguistics and psychology, focusing mainly on linguistics. Although linguistically-oriented discourse analysis may be a comprehensive analysis incorporating important parameters of text production such as power, culture and identity.

Another fundamental question that is raised regarding discourse analysis is whether it can function as instrument for sociocultural reform which is dilemma that leads to the distinction between descriptive and critical discourse analysis. Fairclough, although he stresses the importance of critical research, calls for attention on (1995: 7) on matters such as textual form and organization and various levels such as the phonological and lexical levels.

Regarding a news article, this model could be used not only for the analysis of the text itself but for the writer's preferences, as well. Within this framework, texts and discourse have to be viewed as acts of social interaction. The model could be applied in posing matters related to ideology, governance, globalization, the struggle of social classes and the hegemonic battles (Fairclough 2003: 7).

Discourse analysis involves a wider range of different approaches bearing wider academic perspective. However, it has to be stressed that discourse analysis has been the subject of severe criticism, as well. Although it is recognized as a form of social action, Fairclough observes that it should avoid reducing social life to language (2003: 2). Another point of criticism is that discourse analysis reduces people into collectives (Taylor 2013: 80-85), that it lays emphasis on the interpretive approach rather than factual knowledge and, finally, that it has no practical applications.

6.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

This approach goes back in the 1970s by critical linguistic research which was developed by Fowler, although as an autonomous approach it was developed in the early 1990s. The main ideas upon which CD was built are the following: first of all, researchers maintain that the study of discourse either of a newspaper article or a political speech cannot be implemented unless the conditions in the production process and the social conditions are considered. The emphasis is on context by relating the text's surface features to discourse practice and social practices. The second feature of CDS is that it uses research in order to promote social change and improve social conditions. Van Dijk (1993), characterizes CDA as a goal-driven framework that should be used to achieve social goals by challenging power relations which favorize dominant cultures. The main goal of CDA is not to form abstract theoretical approaches for academic purposes but to closely examine social matters such as hegemonic relations, inequality, power relations e.t.c. Thus, empirical techniques and theoretical ideas are chosen on the criterion of their contribution to the achievement of sociopolitical goals. It has to be stressed that van Dijk suggests that the principles of a study must be interpreted in relation to the disciplines and society as well.

CDA consists of three main parts as described by Fairclough (1996), that is, text, discourse practice and social practice. The first part of this approach canters on the simple features of a text such as its form register and other features that can be found either on

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a written or a spoken form of text. This involves basically the analysis of grammatical patterns, paragraph properties, unusual vocabulary, order of provided piece of information etc. Regarding the translation of news, some of the features to be examined could involve shifts regarding information order, the application of formal language, metaphors and the application of translation techniques such as commissions or explication. The second part is discourse practice, that is, connecting the findings from textual analysis to our knowledge regarding the acts of text production and consumption. Discourse practice is actually comparing the text discourse(s) to discourse of rules of the relative scientific domains. Discourse practices involve the time that readership is likely to dedicate on reading a text, the way it interacts with it and the type of information that is promoted. Social Practice involves examining the sociocultural parameters involved in text production. Social practices is closely connected to discourse practical applications, affecting text forming and readership. Out of the main parts of CDA, social practice makes up the most theoretical part and the hardest to describe efficiently, because of the fact that many different factors are involved.

The main point of criticism against CDA is that the particular framework is focusing mainly on fragment evidence excluding the study of other scientific fields that study as well as the significance of analysing discourse. In other words, CDA makes up a theoretical model rather an autonomous methodological approach. What is suggested is that it be used in collaboration with other research methods of respective disciplines. Regarding news translation, CDA is suggested that it be used in accordance with corpus linguistics in order to analyse the matter of ideology in corpora at different historical eras. Generally speaking, the overall conclusion is that CDA is mostly a theoretical framework rather than a strict methodology to follow.

CDA is a theoretical framework that can be applied in journalistic translation by the interplay between text practice, discourse practice and social practice covering a number of textual features connected to news translation and the ideological dimension of journalistic translation such as order of provided information, omission and addition of information, the use of the voice and metaphors as well as the use of titles.

Furthermore, texts influence social practice leading once more to text production. Thus, it is important to analyse the features of the target readership structured into the texts, not only the traits of the people mentioned within texts. Finally, the role of the CDA in bringing social justice should be posed. Van Dijk says that analysts must apply CDA so that they can bring change in society, an opinion which encourages the use of CDA as a useful model for deepening into multidimensional social issues.

7. CONCLUSION

The goal of this article was to provide an overview of basic theoretical models and concepts related to news translation as a specific type of translation and the notion of objectivity in translation. These descriptions were followed by the study of discourse analysis and, more specifically, the critical discourse analysis, as a model that could add to the process of news translation the features of transparency and objectivity.

The main conclusion drawn through the present analysis is that language does not make up a simple linguistic system that consists of neutral units but it is rather a social phenomenon. Within this framework, discourse makes up an important component both of society and culture functioning as a form of social action.

To summarise, since language is rarely value-free, objectivity is hard to achieve in translating news. This can be explained by the fact that there are certain criteria both in selecting and reproducing news that in turn influence objectivity in translating news. Such criteria are related to the political and economic conditions of a society, its cultural norms, power relations as well as the journalist's ideals and beliefs.

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