Discourse Analysis for Translation with Special Reference to the Consecutive Interpreter's Training

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Abstract

The sentence is generally considered the upper limit of linguistic investigation. Several linguists have approached the problem of linguistic structure beyond the sentence. In the late fifties, studies of structure of whole texts began to appear as an awareness of grammatical relations obtained across sentence boundaries and increasing interest in discourse structure in general as well. Those linguists using the functional model, which is adopted in this study, to recognize the requirement for the linguistic analysis to be applicable to whole texts. As a result they made insightful contribution to the field of discourse analysis.

Hence, there is a confusing tendency for translation theorists to regard the whole text, the basis of discourse analysis, as the unit of translation. Free translation has always favored the sentence; literal translation the word. Now, free translation has moved from the sentence to the whole text.

Trosborg (2000:217) argues that the argument has been revived in the recent years by those who maintain that the only true unit of translation is the whole text. This view had been supported in discourse analysis which examines a text as a whole in its relations and cohesion at all levels higher than the sentence. The present study explores the connections that might usefully be made between discourse analysis and translation, and how can discourse analysis help the translator? It falls into four sections:

Section one is an introduction which refers to some related definitions of the basic terms.

Section two sheds the light on the discourse analysis studies .

Section three discusses the concept and the significance of text as the basis of discourse analysis and translation.

Section four is a concluding chapter of this study with some suggestions that may be helpful in solving the students' problems in the perspective of seeing the text as a whole.

Preliminaries

1.0 Introduction

Linguistic investigation can no longer treat the sentence as the basic unit since language does not occur in words or sentences, but in connective discourse. A discourse may reveal meaning and significance which is not apparent in the isolated sentence. Therefore, linguistics has moved towards the study of aspects of language beyond the sentence through discourse analysis because linguists have realized that language cannot be studied in isolation from the communicative intentions of language users and the context within which they use language. Discourse analysis, then, is demanded as a new approach to linguistic study (Stern, 1983:133).

As an interdisciplinary discipline, translation has been influenced by this recent development in discourse analysis. It has changed from a concern with isolated words to text in situation with emphasis on cultural background. Work in discourse analysis, then, may be directly relevant to translation studies and language learning and the recent interest in this area is representative of the shift in emphasis in language learning from the view of language as a set of structures to the view of language as communication. In such a shift, meaning and the use of language play a major part (Trosborg, 2000:217).

1.1 Discourse

Carter (1982:184) defines discourse as "the organization of connected text beyond the level of the sentence". It is "a unit of linguistic performance which stands complete in itself" (Chapman, 1980:100). Hoey (1991:266) views discourse as "all aspects of language organization (whether structural or not) that operate above the level of grammar".

It also represents "the meaningful combinations of language units which serve various purposes and perform various acts in various context" (Steel,2002:1). Discourse, then, is studied to investigate how people produce and understand connected language.

1.2 Cohesion

As Halliday and Hasan (1976:4) have defined it, cohesion is a semantic concept which belongs to relations of meaning that exist within a text and that define it as text. It occurs when the interpretation of an element in the text is dependent on that of another element. It covers "those features in a text which link its components parts" (Hartman and Stork, 1972:40), i.e. the features that bind sentences to each other grammatically and lexically. Halliday and Hasan (ibid) have identified five types of cohesive ties; they are: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, repetition, and collocation.

1.3 Coherence

Coherence is a characteristic of a connected text. It refers to the logical integration of sentences within a paragraph (McCrimmon, 1957:567). Text coherence is determined by two factors. First, it depends on consistency in tense. Second, it results from arranging one's text according to perceivable order (Corbett, 1977:70).

Coherence is described as "a quality assigned to text by a reader or listener, and is a measure of the extent to which the reader or listener finds that the text holds together and makes sense as a unity (Hoey, 1991:296).

Therefore, it has to do with an impression of wholeness. "If a text is coherent, it makes sense and is not just a list of disconnected words and sentences" (Christmas, 2001:1).

Discourse Analysis Studies
2.1 Discourse Analysis :Beyond the Sentence

People in a variety of academic departments and disciplines use the term "discourse analysis" for what they do, how they do it, or both. It can be characterized as a way of approaching and thinking about a problem. It enables to reveal the hidden motivations behind a text to interpret it. Discourse analysts create many different questions and propose many different sorts of answers (Johnstone, 2008:1).

In this perspective, discourse analysis presents a methodology for considering the perspective of seeing the text as a whole within its communicative situation and cultural orientation, from which communicative translation may arise.

The study of discourse is known as discourse analysis. It consists of attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that it is also concerned with language in use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers (Bahrami, 1999:60).

In view of the previous definitions, it is noted that the main aspects of discourse are act of communication, context, social interaction, and functions and purposes which underlie the linguistic units above the sentence level. Hence, discourse analysis is looked upon as involving both language form and language function and including that part of communication that is unfolded in spoken or written texts by means of various linguistic devices.

The origins of discourse analysis lie in classical rhetorical theory (Aristotle, Cicero, Longinvs) and its successors (Lemke, 2002:5).According to this theory, discourse "ought to be constructed like a living creature, with its own body, it must not lack either head or feet; it must have a middle and extremities so composed as to suit each other and the whole work" (Stewart, 1987:6).

Allerton (1979:5) sees this field of enquiry as having been remarked since 1945 when "a new generation of Prague Linguists (F. Danes and J. Firbas) has made notable contributions to aspects of grammatical theory concerned with relations between sentences in a text (or a discourse).

Yet, the evolution of discourse analysis as a linguistic discipline has been ascribed to Zellig Harris (1952) who was the first that introduced the term 'discourse analysis' and to whom we owe the following definition:

> **Discourse analysis is a method of seeking in any**
> **connected discrete linear material, whether language**
> **or language like, which contains more than**
> **elementary sentence, some global structure**
> **characterizing the whole discourse (the linear material),**
> **or large section of it. (p.5)**

An attempt is made by Harris to analyze "the distribution of elements in extended texts and the relationship between the text and its social situation" (McArther, 1992:1). The scope of his analysis is marked as limited because his concern is not to characterize discourse as communication, but to use it to exemplify the operation of the language code in stretches of text larger than the sentence" (Widdowson,1979:91). That is why the main importance of his method had lain not in discourse studies but in the introduction of transformations to syntactic theory (Hoey, 1983:2)

2.2 The Development of Discourse Analysis

Major contributions to the development of discourse analysis were made by works of scholars, which have originated in a variety of disciplines. Discourse analysis seems to be a meeting point between five disciplines: linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology, and social psychology. Dell Hymes (1972), the American Anthropologist, has broken such a basis of studying speech in its social setting to cover the forms of address. The work of British linguistic philosophers, J. L. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), was influential in the study of language as a social activity. M.A.K. Halliday (1970) and his systemic linguistics emphasized the social functions of language and the thematic and informational aspects of speech and writing above the utterance/ sentence level. Discourse analysis may be recognized as covering aspects of discourse structure falling within the textual component of the linguistic system such as cohesion, thematic development, etc.(Butler,1989:9).

Also Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and their model of description of spoken interaction in school classroom is grounded on a revelation of a structural hierarchy…with such levels as move, act, exchange, etc (Robinson,1980:55).

The field of 'conversational analysis' is in line with this development where the emphasis is not on structure but on the behaviour of participants in talks and on patterns recurring within a wide range of natural data as basic units to be studied within the field. W. Labov's (1970and 1972) studies are major contributions.Van Dijk (1972, 1981) sets out an analytic approach to discourse which has its origins in attempts to produce a 'text grammar'. He makes a distinction

between 'macrostructures' and 'superstructures' and argues that "the semantic presentation of discourse is its macrostructures" (Van dijk,1981:4).

2.3 Approaches to Discourse Analysis

Schiffrin (1994) provides several different approaches to the linguistic analysis of discourse: speech act theory, international sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversational analysis and variation analysis.

However, Text linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Argumentation Theory, Genre Studies, Discursive Psychology, Holistic Discourse Analysis, and so forth, may all be included within the category of approaches mentioned above. Each approach emphasizes different aspects of language use, and they all view language as social interaction (Yalden, 1987:44).

2.4 The Data of Discourse Analysis

The material with which discourse analysts work consists of "actual utterances of discourse", which are sometimes referred to as "texts" (Johnstone, 2008: 20). Lyons (1976: 30) views text as "any connected passage of discourse, whether it is spoken or written". It is "a series of sentences linked up to form a continuous and cohesive sequence" (Fowler, 1977: 45).

Nord (1991) refers to it as "communicative action which can be realized by a combination of verbal and non-verbal means" (quoted in Robinson, 1997:209). Text, then, serves the basis for linguistic analysis and represents the product of communicative discourse.

The form and function of any text is partly the result of what other texts are like and what their functions are. One commonly used term for the relationships between texts and prior texts is "intertextuality" which refers to the ways in which all discourse draws on familiar formats and texts (Johnstone, 2008:191).

2.5 Discourse Analysis and Translation

speaking about translation with reference to discourse analysis has a very strong tradition both in the discipline of translation studies itself and translator training. Interpretation is not supposed to take place from the micro level of the word (bottom-up processing) but from the macro structure of the text to the micro unit of the word (top-down processing).Orientation towards the function of the target text prevails prescriptions concerning the target text by relating it to the source text, and translations are regarded as concrete assignments serving specific functions. Translation quality assessment is no longer based exclusively on the criterion of equivalence. For one thing, equivalence may not be possible because of diverging linguistic systems in source and target language. For another, equivalence may not even be a desirable criterion.

The drawbacks of a "bottom-up" approach are many when it comes to translating: Students may be tempted to as closely as possible to source text structures, which is likely to lead to linguistic interferences and mistakes even when translating into the native language; they also run the risk of losing sight of the text as a whole, just as differences in cultural orientation may easily be neglected (Trosborg, 2000:217).

Newmark (1982:7) vouches that translation "a craft consisting in an attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". He suggests two main types of translation, i.e. semantic translation and communicative translation.

Semantic translation aims at conveying the semantic and syntactic structure of the (SL) text. In other words, it concentrates on the content of the message rather than the effect of the message. In semantic translation, the translator is very loyal to the author of the original text more than anything else. Then, semantic translation seems to be more complex, more concentrated and inclusive of more details. Anyway, semantic translation may result in loss of meaning and may sometimes lead to poorly written texts.

On the other hand, communicative translation aims at producing the same effect on the (TL) reader as that of the original (SL) text on the (SL) reader. It emphasizes the force of the message rather than its content. In communicative translation, the translator gives himself the

right to remove obscurities, to eliminate repetition or to add certain lexical items in his rendering in order to make thought and cultural content of the original text more accessible to the reader.

Spoken Discourse Interpreting

3.1 Characteristics of Spoken Language

Leech, et al (1982:133) states that discourse includes the use of written, spoken, and sign language and also other forms of communication. The unit of discourse can be larger than the sentence, or a single utterance, or a set of newspaper articles, or a conversation, or even silence. The analysis of a unit tends to investigate how linguistic forms relate to functions. A discourse analysis of written text might include a study of topic development and cohesion across the sentence, while an analysis of spoken language might focus on these aspects in addition to turn taking practices, opening and closing sequences of social encounters, carrying out certain conversational activities such as requesting and giving information, as well as how speakers express different aspects of their identity as they do talking. However, it is assumed that each of discourse units performs different functions in society, uses different forms, and exhibits different linguistic characteristics.

Brown and Yule (1983:1) concluded that of paramount importance is the defining characteristic of interaction which is usually ascribed to spoken discourse, and they maintain that language can be seen as having two functions: transferring information (transactional function) and establishing social relationships (interactional function).Whereas interactional language is listener-oriented, transactional language is message-oriented).

3.2 Consecutive Interpreter's Training

A consecutive interpreter listens to a speech (spoken discourse) and then reproduces it in a different language. This means that he must resort to short-term memory. For this reason, improving the memory techniques are of paramount importance in interpreter's training.

One possibility is that of internally visualizing the content of a speech, creating images in one's mind, and concentrating on ideas, not on single words. Another option is that of connecting the main ideas and on the links among them, trying to reproduce the structure of the speech as a kind skeleton. The objective is to create a telegraphic version of the discourse, and to link its different parts through its semantic-logical connections.

In the context of speech analysis, we have to underline another basic point, which is the importance of the beginning and the end of the text to be interpreted. The beginning is just like the starting point of a journey, and it often includes significant elements which are useful to understand the overall meaning of a speech.

The end is usually the most important part of a message, since it contains its conclusions, or a summary of what has just been said, or a comment of vital significance, and therefore interpreters, sensing the end coming near, have to redouble their concentration in order to provide a precise, well-structured and clear oral translation of the final part of a speech.

Since the present study draws the line at the spoken translation (interpretation) in terms of cohesion and the links between different parts of a text, it is turned out to mention the basic principles of interpreting in terms of a consecutive interpreter's training.

The essential part of a consecutive interpreter's training is done in three activities: the understanding of the speaker's original message, the immediate analysis of its content, and the re-expression of the same content in another language, with the help of some notes the interpreter writes down upon hearing the original message (www,2006:1).

3.2.1 Understanding

The understanding we refer to here is not of words but of ideas, since an interpreter has to convey concepts. But what happens if an interpreter does not know a word or an expression that he hears in a speech? First of all we can underline that an interpreter can understand a speaker's meaning without actually understanding every single words and expression used.
For example, let's imagine that a delegate says :

1. *I don't think that the advisory committee is the appropriate forum for discussion of this point. What is important is that the groundwork be done in the technical working parties, in order to prepare the basis for a decision in the executive committee.(ibid:2)*

Let's assume that the interpreter understands neither *forum* nor *groundwork*. Yet this does not prevent him from understanding that (1) the advisory committee is not the right place to discuss the matter, and (2) the question has to be properly prepared for the executive committee by the technical working parties. The interpretation is possible without all the words and without changing the meaning. There otheroccasions, however, where a word is too important to be left out. In a paragraph like this, for instance :

2. *Given the topography of the country, the construction of motorways has been very expensive. The Norwegians have found the solution to their financial problems by imposing tolls. And these are pretty expensive. The roads are wonderfully built, and are a pleasure to drive upon, with beautiful scenery, but when the poor drivers get to the end of their journey and have to pay the toll, they certainly feel that their wallets are much lighter.(ibid:4)*

The key word here is *toll* and if the interpreter does not know it there can be problems. But the interpreter can also benefit from working in consecutive, since after hearing the speech, he should be able to deduce the meaning of *toll* from the context, given the numbers of clues they have: here it is clear that we have to do with a some of money.

Moreover, in order to understand meaning without knowing all the lexical items, and to be able to deduce from the context, interpreters must in any case have a thorough knowledge of their working languages, and that is one of the reasons why it takes three or four years on average to form a professional with sufficient knowledge to allow him undertake the this career.

Another key element in interpreting is the kind of attention required, that is to say an active attention, which must lead the interpreter to ask himself:
- What does the speaker mean?
Let's examine an example:

-" Despite the apparent confidence shown by the government in the latest measure it has proposed to boost the economy, business confidence remains low and the consumer climate is gloomy."(ibid:6)

Here we have three ideas, immediately expressed:
1. The confidence of the government;
2. The confidence is apparent;
3. Despite this confidence, something bad is going on.

These are ideas that have to be transmitted, not through a word by word analysis, but after analyzing the whole paragraph. The kind of attention needed here is not a natural gift : it is something which can be internalized through a specific training.

3.2.2 Analysis

In the analysis of a message, the interpreter has to identify the main ideas and give them their proper relevance in the interpretation. Moreover, owing to the intrinsic difficulty of a speech or to the speaker's speed, he might be forced to omit one or more elements of the original. It is clear that if the interpreter does not translate some details, the interpretation will not be perfect but still adequate, whereas, if he misses significant points of the discourse, the result will be a seriously flawed performance.

Indeed, interpreters should be capable of providing a summary of a speech, since delegates often do not want a detailed interpretation but only an exhaustive and precise summary of what has been said. Generally, one can say that delegates need answers to these three basic questions : who does what, and when, and who says or thinks what.
Let's take an example:

3. *"The Secretary-General has put forward to the member states a new proposal for the reform of the functioning of the U.N. US State Department sources conformed yesterday that, although in principle they recognized the need for reform, they did not see it being along the lines suggested by the Secretary-General".*
    All this could be reduced to:

4. *The secretary-General has made a proposal for U.N reform. The US has said that it is against the proposal, although it is in favor of reform in principle.(ibid:8)*

This simplification represents the main ideas according to the subject-verb-object model, but we have to keep in mind that there are always secondary details, expressed by adverbs, adjectives, lists of examples, exclamations which also have a role to play in the speech, and that if left out, do not necessarily impinge on substance of the message.

To sum up, the interpreter has to stress the most important ideas of a speech, pay great attention to verb forms, identify the relative value of the secondary elements of the discourse and leave out anything which is irrelevant to the understanding of the original message.

3.2.3 Re-expression
After understanding and analyzing, interpreters have to re-express the speech they have just heard. It must be clear that they are not required to give an academically perfect translation. Their role is to make sure that the speaker is understood by the audience. First, interpreters must recognize that they are public speakers and therefore they have to establish contact with the audience, speaking clearly and articulating precisely. They are supposed to establish eye-contact with the audience, since there is always the risk of looking at their notes all the time, thereby losing contact and communicative interaction with the recipients of the message.

A good interpreter will look at his notes only from time to time, and express the translation in an effective way, without wavering or repeating ideas, through a steady but not monotonous rhythm. When dealing with figures, for instance, he will reduce the pace so that the delegates can jot down notes. The general gist of the speech will be conveyed also by means of a correct use of pauses and changes in tone, in order to enliven the performance.

Interpreting is a profession that is all about communication. In order to communicate well, interpreters have to "make their own speech" out of the speeches they interpret, and their speech must be faithful to the original and as accurate as possible.

Interpreters understand the ideas of a discourse and have to re-express the same ideas: therefore they can invent the order of two sentences, merge two sentences in one, or divide long sentences up into a number of shorter ones. In order to do that, they must have clearly understood and completely analyze the original speech before starting with the re-expression.

Here, there's another point to be kept in mind: real interpreters have to continue to work on their working languages, including their mother tongue, with the aim of keeping them rich, lively, effective and up-to-date (www,2005:1-6) .

Conclusions and suggestions

It has been made clear that discourse analysis is based on the assumption that language does not occur in isolation, it is dependent on social context. Rather than emphasizing the phoneme and the word as the basic units of language (as in structural linguistics), discourse analysis focuses on linguistic units above the rank of clause and studies the sequence of these units. Translation, in turn, cannot proceed without recognition of units above the sentence. Work in discourse analysis, then, is directly relevant to translation studies. The interest is in the shift of emphasis in language learning from the view of language as a set of structures to the view of language as communication. Meaning and the use of language, in such a shift, play an important part.

Hence, translation should not become a code-switching operation with emphasis on lexical and syntactical equivalences, i.e. with the focus of attention directed towards smaller units of language. Instead, the perspective of seeing the text as a whole within its communicative situation and cultural orientation has been emphasized.

To this end, it is possible to suggest the following:

1. Be informed about the latest national/international events with the purpose of learning new terminology and also of grabbing the spirit of the era we're living in.

2. Constantly enrich one's general vocabulary and style, through regular reading of a broad range of well-written publications in all working languages.

3. following the press in one's native language too, which is of particular importance for interpreters living abroad.

4. Watch television, see movies , go to the theatre, listen to songs in their original language.

To sum up, take advantage of all the possible resources available in their working languages in order to reach an effective, clear and elegant level of performance.

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