Islamic Azad University of Tehran
Central Tehran Branch
Faculty of Foreign Language Department of English

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in Translation Studies, Faculty of Foreign Language at Azad University-Tehran, Iran

Subject:
A Critical Discourse Analysis of English News Headlines and Their Translations in Fars News Agency

Advisor:
Masoud Motahari, PHD

Reader:
Mansor Fahim, PHD

By:
Mohammad Esmail Bitarafan

June 2012

In The Name Of God
The Compassionate The Merciful

To My lovely parents and my supportive wife

Acknowledgment

I would like to sincerely thank all those who made this effort possible. My deep thanks go to my advisor, Dr. Motahari whose rigorous supervision and precious advice helped me to pave the way. I necessarily should express my hearties gratefulness to my reader, Dr. Fahim for his sympathetic help and support.

Abstract

According to CDA advocates, all language use, including translation, is ideological and this means that translation is always a site for ideological encounters. Assuming that media and translation both serve ideological interests and are used as tools to reinforce power relations, the present study aims to describe and explain how the Iranian principlist website Fars news (Farsnwes.com) undertakes the task of translating texts from English news resources. Actually this study focuses on news headlines specifically. The ultimate goal is to identify and categorize translational differences which appear to have ideological cause/effect. The data collected for examination were limited to the well-known Iranian website Fars. Selection of translated material underwent certain limitations. Firstly, it was limited to headlines with explicit discrepancies between ST and TT translations. Secondly, the researcher tried best to include texts which witness almost the sharpest contrast of values and interests between the west and Iran. Adopting Van Dijk and Fairclough's framework (1999) to analyze news translations and their original texts, the researcher focused on both lexical items and syntax of the materials to uncover the differences between them. Analyzing all the headlines, the researcher found that there are remarkable differences between headlines, ranging from nominalization to addition and omission of ideas.

Table of Contents

List of tables

CHAPTER ONE

Background and purpose

1.1 Introduction

For years translations were considered as derivatives, copies, and translators as mechanical devices replacing linguistic codes (equivalents) from one language into another, and the translator's autonomy was always questioned (and is still being questioned). A thorough study of the history of translation uncovers that, translation, over centuries always, as a meeting point of different cultures and civilizations has been dynamically involving with an introduction of various perspectives on the path of enlightening and awakening nations around the world. It indicates that translation, in fact, cannot be considered as an isolated and lonely mode of writing. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), translation is an act of communication that is permanently dealing with at least two different languages along with a broad network of elements including cultural, historical, political and ideological differences (cited in Khajeh & Khanmohammad, 2006).

Since the early 1990s, Translation Studies has been influenced by the discipline of Cultural Studies. Bassnett and Lefevere are the two translation scholars who first mentioned the so-called 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies. In their introduction to the collection of essays Translation, History and Culture, they emphasized that "translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture" (1990;

12). The scholars of contemporary Translation Studies – like Bassnett and Lefevere – are no longer interested in the linguistic theories of translation. Rather, as Christina Schäffner states in her article entitled "Political Discourse Analysis from the Point of View of Translation Studies," they concentrate 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" (2004; 136). That is to say, they have begun to recognize the "complexity of the phenomenon of translation", and focus on "social causation and human agency" and the "effects rather than the internal structures" (ibid.).

Regarding translation not as an isolated activity, but as a social practice that takes place in a specific environment and involves a set of social actors and institutions, it can be said that any theory in translation studies has the potential to be studied through a critical perspective, with an eye on the relations of power, domination and ideology. Functionalist theories developed by german scholars such as Vermeer and Reiss, system theories of Even-Zohar and Toury, Venuti's domestication and foreignization. Can be all studied within this new framework.

Furthermore, language is the most significant feature of human beings, regarded as an integrated part of meaning, on the one hand, and

closely related to thought, on the other hand. Cook believes (2003), language is commonly used to tell the truth nevertheless, it should not be neglected that sometimes, it is also served to distort realities, in the way to socially construct people's worldview; to convince them to take a particular position towards the false facts through manipulating their feelings, ideas, beliefs and thoughts.

1.2 Statement of problem

Research on the dynamics of translation has gained momentum in recent decades. However, as Fawcett (1998) clearly puts out ideology are not always well substantiated (p. 106). In other words, the field lacks a rigid analytical framework while historical and sociological approaches are more favorable for some translation scholars, there is a group who tends to view the translation-ideology relations with a textual tilt, trying to map linguistic features. For the latter, critical discourse analysis, a form of discourse and text analysis seems like an appropriate analytical framework to study trails of ideology and power in translated texts.

Among factors that might manipulate translators' mind while producing a text is the notion of ideology transmission through text or talk. Bassnett (cited in Karoubi, 2005) stresses the need for reassessing the role of the translator by analyzing his/her intervention in the process of linguistic transfer, when she argues 'Once considered a passive,

transparent filter through which a text could and should pass without adulteration, the translation can now be seen as a process in which intervention is crucial' (cited in Karoubi, 2005).

Awareness of complexity of translation process and avoidance of the simplistic view of regarding translation as mere process of transferring words from one text to another, Álvarez & Vidal (1996) claim, will result in realizing the importance of the ideology underlying a translation(cited in Karoubi, 2005). They argue that behind every one of the translator's selections, as what to add, what to leave out, which words to choose and how to place them, 'there is a voluntary act that reveals his history and the socio-political setting that surrounds him in other words, his own culture [and ideology]'.

Alvarez and Vidal (1996) assert that behind every one of translator's selections of equivalents is a voluntary act that reveals his history and the sociopolitical milieu that surrounds him, In other words, their own culture and ideology (cited in Ataei, 2008).

Calzada-Perez believes that old linguistics –based approaches were mainly descriptive studies focusing only on textual forms and deficient in accounting for social values in translation. This way of thought resulted in developing a new trend of research called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which has its primary aim in scrutinizing ideological and

sociocultural forces that underlie a communicative exchange like translation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Assuming that media and translation both serve ideological interests and are used as tools to reinforce power relations, the present study aims to describe and explain how the Iranian principlist website Fars news (Farsnwes.com) undertakes the task of translating texts from English news resources. Actually this study focus on news headlines specifically. The ultimate goal is to identify and categorize translational differences which appear to have ideological cause/effect.

1.4 Research Question

The present research will carry out a thorough comparative study of its selected corpus of translated texts and their corresponding source texts in order to find out the contingent translational differences and influences of ideology on translation.

What are the differences between headlines of English news texts and their Farsi translations in terms of CDA according to Van Dijk and Fairclough model?

1.5 Definition of key terms

CDA:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the main branch of discourse analysis, which can be used both as a theory and as a method in social scientific research. It is considered as one of the privileged interdisciplinary studies in which linguistic and cultural-ideological approaches to translation can be fitted (Khajeh &Khanmohammad, 2006).

Van Dijk's Model:

Van Dijk's 1998 paper, "opinions and Ideologies in the Press" provides a model based on a sociocognetive theory that regards both "shared social representations and their acquisition and use in social contexts" (p. 22). Van Dijk suggests these steps for critical analysis of a text:

(a) Examine the context of the discourse, (b) analyze which groups, power relations and conflicts are involved, (c) Look for positive and negative opinions about US and THEM, (d) Spell out the presupposed and implied, and (e) examine all formal structures that (de)emphasize polarized group opinions. (p. 61)

Fairclough's model:

Fairclough's model, first introduced in "language and power" (1989) is drawn on Michael Halliday's systemic functional grammar in its

linguistic aspect and Marxist theories in the sociological facet. His model consists of three interrelated aspects: "description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context" (1989, p. 91).

News text:

In this research, it refers to an instance of hard news or special-topic news (bell 19991) which concerns political issues.

Headlines:

According to Van Dijk (1985), the thematic function of headlines is very specific since the most important topic of the news is expressed by the headlines (p. 69). Headlines are, therefore, "important textual devices to help build the thematic structure, viz. headlines and the lead (p. 77). Some news texts may witness skewed headlining, that is, "one topic from this text, organizing only part of the information in the text, is promote to the main topic" (p. 78). Skewing the headline may be carried out by the translator due to ideological dispositions.

1.6 Significance of the study

The exercise of ideology in translation is as old as the history of translation itself. According to Fawcett (1998), 'throughout the centuries, individuals and institutions applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effect in translation' (cited in Karoubi, 2005). He

claims that 'an ideological approach to translation can be found in some of the earliest examples of translation known to us'.

According to CDA advocates, all language use, including translation, is ideological and this means that translation is always a site for ideological encounters (cited in Karoubi, 2005). Similarly, Schäffner (2003) claims that all translations are ideological since the choice of a source text and the use to which the subsequent target text is put are determined by the interests, aims, and objectives of social agents.

Agorni (2007) believes that locating systems and individuals in translation studies is a methodology-concerned effort to bridge the gap between descriptive and explanatory models of translation. According to Agorni the relationship between patterned translation behavior and the translator's distinct choice, that is the social and individual aspects of translation, could be of special interest for researchers in the field. In order to do this, both quantitative (descriptive, empirical and corpus-based research models) and qualitative methods (critical/interpretive, research on translator's agency and ideology) should better be linked (pp. 125-126).

The present study will scrutinize the underlying power relations of a text and seek to uncover the crucial impact of ruling ideology through which the translations of chosen texts are filtered. So it is very essential to

see how a text and its translations diverge in terms of vocabulary and syntax that is ideologically-laden. Supposedly social and political issues of the time would play an extremely vital role in translations and undoubtedly in the process of choosing suitable equivalent by translators. Studying the beliefs and thoughts of the Fars news agency, the researcher is trying to manifest the basic thought underlying each word that is being chosen by translators and also to present a careful manifestation of current news agencies' impact in rendering different versions of same original text.

1.7 limitations and delimitations

The ideology dominating over social practices including translation is benefited through legitimatization of its own goal and benefits and de-legitimization of others. Considering the political situation of Iran and its Islamic government in Middle East region and specifically in world in recent years, this study principally focuses on the subtleties in translated news texts which are and were caused by the way of thought imposed by the ruling government.

The data collected for examination were limited to the well-known Iranian website Fars. There were some rationales behind the selection of Fars. Firstly, in terms of values and interests, this website has indorsed a political view which, compared with Iranian reformist group, has a

sharper contrast with western ideas. Secondly, reformist websites have been subject to frequent blockings and that made access to those websites a difficult task. Thus, Fars was selected as the single source of the corpus for this study.

Selection of translated material has undergone certain limitations. Firstly, it was limited to headlines with explicit discrepencies between ST and TT translations. Thus, a piece of title such as fall of an airbus in southern France was excluded from this corpus, for its translation was not considered that much controversial according to CDA model of analysis. Secondly, the researcher tried best to include texts which witness almost the sharpest contrast of values and interests between the west and Iran. These included headlines such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, U.S. invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran-U.S. relations, Iran nuclear program etc.

Despite working within the CDA framework, the present research was not to adopt a view similar to those pioneers of this current field such as Fairclough and Van Dijk regarding CDA as a means to unravel social structures, ideologies and hierarchies (capitalism, racism and asymmetrical power relations) deemed as unacceptable.

Adopting Van Dijk and Fairclough's framework (1999) to analyze news translations and their original texts, the researcher of the study focuses on both lexis and syntax of the materials to uncover the