



Tarbiat Moallem University of Tehran

**Ideology and Translation of
Political Texts:
A Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in
English Translation Studies**

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In the Name of God



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Dedicated to:

My Family with LOVE

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Abstract

Translation as a culture-based phenomenon, which involves both linguistic and social aspects, has been investigated from various perspectives. The present CDA-based study is an attempt to probe the manipulation of ideologies in translations of political texts. A CDA approach, based on Fairclough (1989), van Dijk (2004) and Farahzad (2007), was adopted to conduct this research. Three English political books alongside their corresponding translations in Persian were critically analyzed both at micro and macro levels. At micro-level, lexical features based on van Dijk's model (2004) and grammatical features based on Fairclough's (1989) framework were analyzed. This was followed by the analysis of macro features (based on Farahzad, 2007) such as notes, prefaces and footnotes in the translated books for the purpose of revealing the translation network's diverse world-views and ideologies which are normally different from those of the original authors. The results show that translators make use of certain grammatical and lexical strategies for the sake of ideological ploy, i.e. the basic strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. In other words, since translation by its nature is a site of ideological clashes, the translator tries to pursue the interests of the power network in the context of *self*. The findings are interpreted to have

implications for syllabus designers as well as translation students and teachers.

Key Terms: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Strategy, Ideology, Negative Other-presentation and Positive Self-presentation.

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Chapter One

1.1. Overview

Undoubtedly, in the era of communication and dialogue among civilizations, translation occupies an important role in transferring different ideas among different nations. Translation as a communicative event, which involves the social use of language, can never be studied without taking its contextual and socio-cultural aspects into account.

In addition, since translation involves texts with a specific communicative function, Schäffner (2004) asserts that modern Translation Studies is no longer concerned with examining whether a translation has been "faithful" to the source text. Instead, the focus is on social, cultural, and communicative practices, on the cultural and ideological significance of translating, on the external policies of translations, and on the relationship between translation behavior and socio-cultural factors. In other words, she believes that "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" (p.136).

Furthermore, regardless of the fact that there have been many different approaches to and definitions of the concept of ideology, which

are reflected in the literature, ideology finds its clearest articulation in language. In other words, language is the primary domain and the material form of ideology (Fairclough, 1989); thus, ideology exerts its influence on language. Consequently translation may be considered a means by which, on the one hand, discourse, which is the use of language as a form of social practice (Fairclough, *ibid.*), is reflected, and on the other hand, ideology is transmitted and sometimes imposed in subtle ways.

Hence, Hatim and Mason (1997) emphasize that translation activity can never be divorced from its socio-cultural context. And according to these authors translation approaches and strategies employed by translators are likely to have ideological consequences in the socio-cultural context in which translation takes place. Thus, translation may not be viewed as a neutral undertaking; rather it is, in itself, an ideological activity.

Thanks to recent studies in the field of translation and critical discourse studies, it has been indicated that formal variations in any given text would certainly bring about, among other things, particular ideological consequences. On the other hand, people tend to consider the text as the true reflections of realities and fact, and have a propensity to see only what meets the eyes. Critical analysis's of the texts, however, attempts to create a sensitivity and consciousness about the latent

invisible fabrication, misinformation, manipulation, misdirection and misinterpretation exercised by some writers [translators] and speakers (van Dijk, 1997).

Thus, Critical discourse Analysis could be used as a powerful device for deconstructing the translated texts for finding out translators' diverse hidden ideologies, attitudes and world-views from those of the original writers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Considering translation as a communicative event in which the socio-cultural and ideological trends of the translator's social context are manifested, translators not only transmit the source text's original ideological aspects, but also they may leave some ideological traces of their own. Hence, in the process of translating any given text, not only semantic meaning, but also ideological meanings are produced by translators. In other words, the target text reflects the translator's surrounding socio-ideological factors of his or her context and its values, beliefs and attitudes. It needs to be pointed out that in transmitting ideological aspects of a source text, divergences, alterations and discrepancies are inevitable due to some socio-cultural constraints of the translator's society, and can bring out different ideological consequences. How and to what extent such ideological traits may be represented and

analyzed within the framework of critical discourse analysis would be the main concern of this study.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the present study was to identify, and describe ideological aspects manifested in Persian translations of three English political source texts, namely *Turbulent Iran* by Eldon Griffiths (2006), *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* by Nikki R. Keddie (2003), and *The Iran-Iraq war and the first gulf war* by Ralph King and Efraim Karesh (2006), in terms of critical discourse analysis. This study was an effort to investigate to what extent the translated texts have changed the ideological features present in the original source texts. Thus, it tried to reveal ideological consequences induced due to alterations at the level of lexis and grammar, and find out any probable divergences, discrepancies, and deviations in the translated texts, which are reflections of different world-views and ideologies.

1.4. Significance and Justification of the Study

In the field of translation studies, delicate aspects of meaning such as ideological consequences involved in alterations in the target text or deviations from the source text have received little attention. On the other

hand, there is no considerable number of translation studies based on critical discourse analysis and the relationship between ideology and translation, i.e. the influence that ideology wields upon Persian translations of English texts regarding Iranian issues. Such a deficiency of research in the field, by itself, justifies any investigation in the subject in question.

The outcomes of the present research in the area of text analysis and in uncovering the ideological implications of divergences of translated texts from original ones may be presented to the field of pedagogy, and are expected to contribute to the field of teaching translation.

1.5. Research Questions

The present study aimed to investigate the answers to the following questions:

RQ1- Does the ideological position of the political texts change as a result of modifications made during the process of translation?

RQ2- Is the ideology behind a translated text revealed through the use of certain lexical patterns (e.g. hyperbole, polarization, euphemism and vagueness) and grammatical structures (e.g. active vs. passive and positive vs. negative sentences, actional vs. relational verbs,

nominalization and the degree of completeness) in the process of translating political English texts into Persian?

1.6. Null Hypotheses

Considering the above- mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses were proposed:

NH 1- The ideological position of the political texts does not change as a result of modifications made during the process of translation.

NH 2- The ideology behind a translated text is not revealed through the use of certain lexical patterns (e.g. hyperbole, polarization, euphemism and vagueness) and grammatical structures in the process of translating political English texts into Persian.

1.7. Definition of the Key Terms:

Critical Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk (1988a) points out that CDA is concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social,

economic, political, and historical contexts.

Accordingly, Fairclough (1995) provided the following definition for CDA:

"By 'critical' discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony" (pp. 132-3).

Discursive Strategy

According to van Dijk (1998a), discursive strategy refers to the mental or interactional dynamic of construction of meanings that explain what the social actors are doing by using language in concrete situation. This concept of dynamic focus serves to explain phenomena that occur at the level of discourse, for example how arguments are constructed and how language of difference is organized (see Wodak 1996).

Euphemism

Euphemism, in van Dijk's (2004) view, is a rhetorical figure by which negative opinions about others are often alleviated as a result of the positive self-presentation strategy and avoidance of negative impression formation. As an example, the translator uses *هواداران اصلاحات* for *reformists*.

Ideology

Van Dijk (1996) proposed a definition for ideology as follows:

"Ideology is assumed to specifically organize and monitor one form of social shared mental representation, in other words, the organized evaluative beliefs—traditionally called 'attitudes'—shared by social groups" (p. 7).

Hyperbole

According to van Dijk (2004), hyperboles are semantic rhetorical devices for enhancing and exaggerating meaning. In fact, by using especial metaphors especially in the strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation we may expect that bad actions or properties of others be expressed in hyperbolic terms, and vice versa. For instance, *سیلی* instead of *many*.