CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES: TRANSLATION, RECONTEXTUALIZATION, IDEOLOGY

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Abstract: This paper explores the role that critical discourse-analytical concepts such as *recontextualization, strategy* and *ideology* might play in theorizing translation practice. It also relates *translation-as-recontextualization* to the sociological concepts of *field* and *agency-structure dialectic.* Translations may function at once in the cultural and the political field, and may thus be part of political strategies of resistance and (de)legitimation. Social actors' strategies for action are however inherently constrained by the structural properties of the recontextualizing field, understood as a field of forces, of contests for different forms of (cultural, economic, political) capital. There is, in any context, an agency-structure dialectic that will govern the way in which a text is recontextualized from one cultural context into another, as well as particular relations between fields (for instance, the cultural field may be heavily ideologized and politicized, or relatively independent from the political field). These structural properties will affect translation practices and will be manifest in textual features of translated texts.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, political field, recontextualization, strategy, translation studies

In this paper I am trying to explore the role that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, as originally defined in Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2003, 2006, etc.) might play in understanding and theorizing recent developments in Translation Studies and the practice of translation as such. I will try to elucidate the explanatory role that CDA concepts like *recontextualization, strategy* and *ideology* can play in understanding translation practices and I will also I propose to relate *translation-as-recontextualization* to theoretical concepts that CDA has drawn upon, namely Bourdieu's (1991) sociological concept of *field* and, more widely, the '*agency-structure* dialectic' that underlies social life according to Giddens's (1984, 1987) sociological theory.

I am suggesting a view of translated texts as *recontextualizations of source-language texts in new social and cultural contexts***.** For literary translations, the new context is primarily a cultural field but it is also likely to be a political field as well, in which the text will fulfil functions and goals (including political goals) that can be quite different from the functions and goals it served in the source-culture and the original context. If we adopt a standard (Gricean) *pragmatic* perspective on texts, we will see that these differences can arise from the different *intentions* that underlie the production and use of a text in the target-culture and context, and from differences in the process of reception and interpretation by the new *audience.* Whatever significances are intended by text-producers or inferred by audiences, these will be based on features of the (translated) text, and interpreted in relation to a social, cultural, political context. For instance, a translator may choose to translate a particular text and intend the translation to function as an act of protest and resistance against the political establishment, but these subversive intentions may be relatively alien to the source-language text. For their part, audiences may read subversive intentions in a particular translation although, again, those exact intentions may not have been intended by the original author (or may not be easily attributed to the original text). In these cases, it is text producers and text receptors that attribute illocutionary intentions to texts in relation to their own strategies of action, background knowledge or worldview.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies share the assumption that textual features need to be related to the social and ideological contexts of text production and

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reception. Translators work in particular socio-political contexts and produce texts for specific purposes and specific audiences. Translations, in other words, reveal the impact of discursive, social and ideological constraints, norms and conventions. In the target-language, the translation might in fact be used to fulfil a communicative purpose or function that is quite distinct from the original function of the source text. The added value, so to speak, will be in close relation to the new context, the purposes that translators and other agents (who use the translation or for whom it is done) pursue and their overall political goals. Thus, particular textual features of translated texts have to be related to the wider social, political, cultural context of their production and reception, and the various choices that were made by the translator can be interpreted (at least tentatively) in terms of the wider goals and strategies pursued by agents in the cultural and political field, and in terms of the norms and constraints operating in these fields.

This latter aspect links Translation Studies to CDA, whose explicit aim is to make 'the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power which underlie them' more visible (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258). In CDA this is usually done on the basis of discourse in one language and one culture. In Translation Studies, the relevance of the wider social, political, cultural context applies both to the source-text and to the target-text. The concepts of *intertextuality*, *interdiscursivity*, *recontextualization*, etc., which play a prominent role in CDA, are especially appropriate to Translation Studies, as both approaches aim to reveal the mediated connections between properties of text on the one hand and socio-political-cultural processes on the other. A text can reinforce, subvert or in other words transform and modify the social order, and the relationship between texts and the social world is mediated by the way in which the text combines or articulates different discourses, genres, styles (Fairclough 1992, 2000, 2003). CDA is *critical* in the sense that it aims to show non-obvious ways in which language (semiosis, more generally) is involved in social relations of power and domination.

One of CDA's main theoretical claims is that the connection between texts and the social world is *'interdiscursively' mediated*, i.e. mediated by the way in which texts (as elements of individual events and products of human agency) articulate together various socially available resources. The way in which diverse discourses, genres and styles are articulated together as part of a network of practices or field, e.g. education or politics, constitutes an *order of discourse*. Social change can be seen as the restructuring of existing networks of social practices or fields, part of which is the restructuring of orders of discourse, For instance, discourses and genres of management are now being 'recontextualized' within other fields such as education, health, government. Let us think of the increased salience of promotional, advertising discourses that are being recontextualized within discourses on higher education, a manifestation of what Fairclough (1995a) calls the 'marketization' of such discourses, itself a symptom of the 'colonization' of the 'lifeworld' by the economy and the state (Habermas 1984). The crucial point here is that social change manifests itself in the restructuring of the order of discourse associated with these fields. The hybrid discourse of a university brochure, trying to 'sell' the university to prospective students-as-customers, reflects the wider social trend of commodification of areas that used to be relatively free from market pressures.

CDA uses the concept of 'recontextualization' to designate the de-location of a practice from its original context and its re-location within another – including the movement of discourses across practices, e.g. from political practice to media practice. Particular social fields and practices have their own principles or logic according to which they recontextualize other practices and other texts. For instance, a TV news bulletin represents real events in accordance with a certain set of principles, which determines what selections and choices are

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made (which events are present or absent, foregrounded or backgrounded); how events are ordered in the process of representation; what is added in this process – explanations, legitimizing arguments, evaluations (Fairclough 2003: 139). In previous papers (Ieţcu 2006a, 2006b), I argued that what CDA calls the 'principle' or 'logic' of recontextualization is in fact closely related to the *purpose* or *goal* pursued by social agents as part of their plan of action. By purpose and goal I understand both the communicative purpose of a text (in the pragmatic sense of illocutionary force) but also political goals, part of wider political strategies, pursued by means of language. But the recontextualizing field already has of course its own 'logic', its own structural properties, that determine how elements from elsewhere will be appropriated, which is why it is more accurate to say that the 'logic' or 'principle' of recontextualization is in fact a sort of '*agency-structure dialectic'* (in the sense theorized by Giddens 1984, 1987). Agents act in fields that have pre-determined structural properties and constraints, yet also enjoy a certain amount of freedom (more or less, depending on particular contexts) to change the structural properties of the field.

Essentially, recontextualization is seen in CDA as a colonisation/ appropriation dialectic (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999), which implies that recontextualized strategies, discourses, genres, etc. may be substantially transformed through appropriation within the field of strategic conflict (over various forms of power, symbolic capital, etc.) of the recontextualizing context. It is through recontextualizations of texts in new contexts, by agents having specific purposes and goals, that the possibility of 'ideological' appropriation arises. The original text, that is, might come to serve functions and purposes that are more or less different from those it served in the original context. Similarly, in the case of translated texts, the target-text might, in the new context, differ in terms of general, pragmatic communicative purpose or, more specifically, in terms of political purpose, from the source-text in the original context.

Ideology is defined in CDA in relation to the concept of power. The term ideology is not used on this view to designate only formal political ideologies (liberalism, socialism, etc.), but *representations of the world which contribute to establishing, maintaining or changing social relations of power or domination* (Fairclough 1992: 87, 2003: 9). On the CDA view, ideological representations are most effective in reinforcing a certain distribution of power relations when they appear to those involved to be 'common sense', i.e. *naturalized*, taken-for-granted assumptions. Ideologies, thus understood, are generated, maintained, or, on the contrary, contested, as part of struggles for various forms of power.

CDA practitioners seek to investigate how unequal relations of power are inscribed in and mediated through particular instances of language use. Critical linguists show, for instance, how different linguistic representations of one and the same event can mediate different interpretations of and different attitudes to the event represented, and argue that such linguistic choices are fairly systematically related to specific interests, ideological positions and power relations. The same, of course, applies to the choices made by translators from various alternatives available: what may look like an uninspired translation or even a mistranslation may be in fact the result of the political and ideological constraints in which translations were produced and received. Any translation is inherently linked to a strategy, as goal-directed behaviour, whether this is a political strategy linked to power, or a strategy that aims to achieve some other form of symbolic capital (cultural, artistic, etc.). It is because texts function as parts of strategies of different sorts that they can become ideological, to the extent that they attempt to reinforce or subvert some power set-up. The very choice of the source text, as well as the use to which the translation is put, as well as particular textual features of the translated text can be related to the interests, aims and objectives of social agents, and by extension to ideological agendas, in the sense defined above.

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Schäffner suggests that translations can function as part of wider strategic functions of political language, which she identifies as: *coercion*, *resistance*, *dissimulation* and *(de)legitimation*. First, translations can function as part of strategies of coercion, as power can be exercised through controlling access to information (e.g. the selection of source texts to be made available in translation may be severely restricted in relation to a certain political agenda). Secondly, translations can function as part of strategies of resistance, opposition and protest, as translators themselves may be active in selecting subversive texts and they can also resist dominant translation practices and impose new practices and norms. Thirdly, translations can be part of strategies of dissimulation: those in power may not wish the public to come into contact with political ideas from other cultural spaces and might engage in control of information through selective and inaccurate official translations, through censorship, etc. Finally, translations can contribute to strategies of legitimisation and delegitimisation of certain political ideas and ideologies, by abusing and distorting texts in relation to a pre-defined agenda (Schäffner 2004: 145).

Basically, I suggest, translations ought to be viewed as functioning in *fields,* in Bourdieu's (1991) sense (see also Ieţcu-Fairclough 2008 for a discussion of strategies of legitimation in the political field). Fields (e.g. the political, but also the cultural field) are, in Bourdieu's view, fields of forces and of struggles aimed at transforming the relations which give the field its structure at any given moment. A field is, according to Bourdieu, an 'autonomous universe, a kind of arena in which people play a game which has certain rules, rules which are different from those of the games that are played in the adjacent space' (Bourdieu 1991: 215). Each field is characterized by specific forms of struggle for maintaining or altering the distribution of various forms of capital specific to that field (political, economic, cultural, social, symbolic). To variable degrees, and in certain societies and at certain times more than others, translations of literary texts can function simultaneously in the cultural and political field.

For instance, a literary translation may function primarily in the cultural field but also, given the interactions between the cultural field and other fields (the social, political, economic fields), it will play a part in these other fields as well. Therefore, one of the questions that can be asked is what field is a given text primarily recontextualized into? If a text is recontextualized into the cultural field, is this field more or less independent from political power, or is it heavily politicized and therefore governed by extraneous norms? To what extent is the hegemony of particular ideologies and political values visible in the translated text and determining the range of choices that translators can make? How does the recontextualized text relate to different positions within the cultural and political fields, and to the strategies of different groups of actors? Is, for instance, the translated text appropriated in pursuit of pre-existing strategic goals of certain groups of actors (e.g. strategies of resistance and protest)?

It is also very important to reflect on the differences in the structure of the same field (the political field or the cultural field) in different countries and in one and the same country in different historical periods. Depending on these geographical and historical differences, the same field will contain different positions and different strategic possibilities for various categories of agents. It would for instance be interesting to compare the relative significance and 'weight' of translators and translations within the cultural field before and after 1989 in Romania, and also to compare the situation in Romania with other Western and Eastern-European countries. Translations (and of course, particular types of translations, of particular authors or works and not others, etc.) may, at any given time and place, be more central or more peripheral in the cultural field, and the field itself can be relatively isolated or can

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interact powerfully with other fields. It is partly through their place and role in the wider order of discourse, and in an entire network of practices and fields that texts can have a greater or smaller impact on society and culture.

As far as translated texts are concerned, a CDA approach would highlight possible differences between the orders of discourse of the source and target-culture (e.g. what other discourses and genres exist in the two cultures, are the two cultures equally rich and varied?), therefore the different relational significance of the (translated) text in the two cultures. It is a fact that new genres, discourses and styles often first appear in a culture via translation (e.g. Eastern European advertising discourse and its associated genres were modelled in post-communism on their western counterparts). A culture in the process of development and of transition may be more open to input from outside and more tolerant towards 'strange', unfamiliar genres and texts. At times of social change, translations may thus move from the periphery to the centre of a socio-cultural system (Schäffner 2004: 140). The same is true for times of stagnation and censorship, as during communism, when again translations played a crucial part and were used to convey political and cultural messages that could not be easily conveyed through the production of new original texts. Translations can therefore contribute to changing and inovating the order of discourse and its dynamics, by supplanting foreign texts for the local penury of cultural products, and by providing new templates for text production.

To conclude, I have suggested that translations, as recontextualized texts, ought to be related to contexts and considered as part of strategies of action (of agents within those contexts). More exactly, agents and strategies exist in fields, understood as fields of forces and contests – contests for different forms of capital (cultural, economic, political, etc.), aimed at altering the structural properties of the field. Fields may be very differently structured (e.g. the cultural field may have a very different structure from the political field) and the same field will be structured very differently at different times in different societies. To be more precise, there is, in any context, an agency-structure dialectic that will govern the way in which a text is recontextualized from one cultural context into another. The field of practices in the target-culture will have certain well-defined structural properties (including an order of discourse) that will facilitate or hinder the appropriation of the source-language text (e.g. it may be a heavily ideologized cultural field that will make it impossible, through censorship and surveillance, to translate and publish a text that aims to subvert the existing social-political order). The causal effect of these structural properties of the political and cultural fields of target-culture will be also evident in features of the translated texts (e.g. in the choices and selections operated by translators). On the other hand, agents in the target-culture will have their own purposes and goals, and will be able, in principle, to assert their own freedom and creativity. They will not necessarily succumb to the structural constraints of the field (and reinforce its constraints through their translations) but they might often succeed in subverting and transforming those structural constraints.

Translations will be more peripheral or more central within the cultural field, depending on what other texts (discourses, genres) are available within the order of discourse of a given society at a certain time. They can be relatively isolated and insignificant in terms of social impact if the cultural field is isolated from other fields, but they can achieve considerable impact in social and historical contexts where the cultural field interacts strongly with other fields, especially with the political field. A functionalist and critical perspective on translation will best account for the different types of social action that are achieved by means of translations and by their subsequent use by social actors and for the possibility of embedding translated texts within strategies of action that are of a political and ideological nature. The

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possibility of ideological appropriation arises precisely from differences in contexts (structural properties of fields) and differences in social actors' goals and strategies of action in pursuit of those goals.

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