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A discourse analysis approach to English language translation

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how discourse analysis enriches translation studies by treating translation as language in use situated within social, cultural, and ideological contexts. Drawing on key discourse traditions—text linguistics, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)—and on translation-oriented models (notably Hatim & Mason, Neubert & Shreve, Trosborg, House, and Munday), the study maps analytic tools for pre-translational text analysis, register and metafunctional comparison, shift identification, and quality assessment. Through applied analyses of John F. Kennedy's famous exhortation and an Arabic–English account of Ramadan practices, the paper demonstrates how register (field, tenor, mode) and Hallidayan metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual) reveal pragmatic and ideological shifts that occur in translation—such as changes in politeness strategies, argumentation patterns, and the reframing of religious specificity into broader cultural terms. The discussion highlights the translator's agency and the role of intertextuality in producing target texts that are culturally appropriate yet potentially ideologically reframed. The paper concludes that integrating close SFL-based textual analysis with broader CDA perspectives offers a robust, context-sensitive methodology for translation research and pedagogy, and calls for further empirical work across more genres, languages, and multimodal texts to deepen understanding of discourse-driven translation practices.

KEYWORDS: discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, discourse analysis approach, ideology

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1. Introduction

Communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries is a common definition of translation. This procedure transforms a source text (ST) into a target text (TT). The language used is where the ST and TT diverge most. But depending on the goal of the translation, the target audience for the TT, and other elements like genre conventions or ideological influences, the translator may also make additions, deletions, structural modifications, and other alterations during the translation process (Skopos, Vermeer 1996). As instances of language in use, translators work with texts whose linguistic structure and content are determined by their particular communication objectives. A subfield of applied linguistics called discourse analysis, which studies language in use, offers resources for examining these writings. This essay presents important ideas and techniques from discourse analysis while emphasizing how they apply to translation studies. The definition of discourse is given at the very beginning, followed by illustrations of the use of discourse analysis techniques in translation studies and recommendations for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Discourse in Applied Linguistics

The study of language as it is used, whether orally or in writing, is known as "discourse," and it is closely related to applied linguistics. Time, the setting, culture, and particular communication objectives all influence the language that is used, which is always imbedded in a social context. Discourse analysis demands consideration of the actual circumstance, the individuals involved, and the larger sociocultural context, in contrast to classical structural linguistics, which studies language as an abstract system.

There is no universally accepted definition of "discourse" in the humanities. Even though the term is widely used in disciplines including the humanities, social sciences, and media, Van Dijk (1997: 1) refers to it as "essentially fuzzy." Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 14) concur, pointing out that discourse is now a major theoretical and empirical focus in many fields. The variety of definitions and analytical techniques reflects this fuzziness. While "text" refers to written communication, "discourse" is also used strictly to denote verbal interaction, such as teacher-student or doctor-patient conversation. However, to further complicate matters, the terms "discourse" and "text" are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to anything longer than a single sentence. In a broader sense, "discourse" is a term that encompasses both writing and speech and emphasizes common elements found in both text types, such as genre characteristics (e.g., recipe instructions), specific authors (e.g., Barack Obama's discourse), specialized fields (e.g., education discourse), or shared themes and ideologies (e.g., feminism or far-right discourse). Broadly speaking, discourse encompasses a variety of forms and genres, such as scholarly articles, pamphlets, letters, transcripts, audio or video recordings, and internet communication that combines written and spoken language. This sociolinguistics-influenced viewpoint views individual texts as examples of discourse.

Building on Foucault's work (e.g., 1972), some academics define discourse as the process by which knowledge is arranged, debated, and performed in institutions. Ideologies, which are networks of related concepts, are formed by "discourses," which are "conventional ways of talking that both shape and are shaped by conventional ways of thinking" (Johnstone 2002: 3). Ideologies aid in the distribution of power in society. In this case, discourse analysis goes beyond words to reveal belief systems, ingrained habits, social positions, and power relationships. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as a social practice, places a strong emphasis on this wider perspective. In CDA, "discourse" can refer to "signification as part of the social process," according to Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 81), who propose the name "semiosis" to describe this broader meaning of discourse. As a result, discourse analysis incorporates a variety of semiotic modalities, including body language and images in addition to language (ibid). According to this viewpoint, "discourse" refers to much more than merely spoken language.

2.2 Approaches to Discourse Analysis

How academics examine discourse is influenced by their particular research goals and the definition of "discourse" they choose. Jaworski and Coupland (1999:14) stress that discourse is really about language use and call for a "broad and inclusive" definition of it. Discourse analysis basically looks at how texts are utilized in context and how they are structured. According to Van Dijk (2008:2), discourse analysis should be viewed as a larger subject of scholarly investigation rather than as a single technique. To this end, he suggests the title Discourse Studies. The most widely used phrase is still "discourse analysis," and scholars frequently use "methods of discourse analysis." Depending on the research emphasis, a variety of approaches are used in this discipline. Titscher et al. (2000), for example, examine twelve distinct approaches to text

and discourse analysis, such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), functional pragmatics, content analysis, and ethnomethodological approaches. *The Discourse Reader* (Jaworski and Coupland 1999) also examines important discourse studies traditions, and journals such as *Discourse Studies and Discourse & Society* continue to highlight techniques and strategies.

The primary question for a discourse analyst is, as stated by Johnstone (2002: 8), "Why is this text structured in this precise way? Why not in a different way? Why are these particular words in this particular order? These inquiries focus on a text's discursive and formal elements, as well as its social context and underlying motives. Other issues are posed from the standpoint of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), including: "What does the structure of a single text tell about bigger discourses? How do discourse and literature depict or uphold power relations and social hierarchies?

Since real-world discourse examples frequently rely on ideas like cohesiveness, coherence, speech acts, and rhetorical aim, studies have concentrated on the structural elements of texts. Text linguistics, pragmatics, systemic functional linguistics, stylistics, and rhetoric are some of the areas of Applied Linguistics from which these concepts are derived. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), on the other hand, uses ideas from sociology, critical theory, political science, and cultural studies to analyze discourse as both text and discussion embedded in social practices. These themes include identity, power, ideology, and hegemony.

The instruments and techniques of text linguistics and discourse analysis sometimes overlap because texts are particular examples of discourse. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) defined a text as a "communicative occurrence," reflecting the idea that texts are forms of language in action. They contend that in order for a text to be deemed communicative, it must satisfy seven requirements. The text cannot serve as communication if any are absent. These seven criteria include cohesion which is the order in which the text's surface elements are connected; coherence which is the way in which the text's underlying ideas or meanings make sense and are pertinent; Intentionality which is the producer's desire for the language to be unified and logical in order to accomplish a particular objective; acceptability is the acknowledgement by the recipient that the content is logical, pertinent, and helpful; informativity is the extent to which the text's content is novel, unusual, or well-known; situationality is the degree to which the text is pertinent to the setting in which it is found; intertextuality js the way in which knowledge of other texts influences one's comprehension of the text.

Intentionality and acceptability are concerned with the users (producers and recipients), whereas cohesion and coherence concentrate on the text's actual structure. Each of the seven standards influences the others. Discourse and intertextuality are particularly related because intertextuality shows how a text connects to earlier writings through genre or theme connections (such as environmental discourse). norms (e.g., user manuals or employment adverts).

Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which sees language as a social semiotic system, is a major source of influence for another important area of discourse analysis. Halliday focuses on language as communication—how individuals use language to construct meaning in certain social and cultural circumstances. An author's language decisions reflect their meaning. Like the idea of situationality, the language and textual characteristics are derived from the context in which they are utilized.

Central to this model are the concepts of discourse, genre, and register. Discourse happens through conventional genres, with texts as specific examples of those genres. Genres are defined by their overall communicative purpose, making them more general than register features. Register connects the context of a situation to language variation, described through three dimensions which are, field (what's happening, the subject matter or event); tenor (who is involved and their interpersonal roles); mode (the form of communication, such as spoken or written).

These three (field, tenor, and mode) make up a text's register and are equivalent to three meta-functions in language: Ideational function (field) is the ways in which language conveys meaning and reflects our perception of the outside world (e.g., transitivity, certain vocabulary, etc.), The way language expresses interpersonal relationships, including formality and status (e.g., pronouns, modality), is known as interpersonal function (tenor). The way language arranges the text itself, including coherence, thematic structure, and text types like informative or argumentative, is known as the textual function (mode).

Since social practices shape power and ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), described as a "problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement"
(Fairclough et al. 2011: 357), focuses on uncovering how discourse reproduces power and social inequality. In Fairclough's CDA model, discourse analysis includes two parts: (a) interdiscursive analysis and (b) language analysis (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 85). Interdiscursive analysis looks at the genres, discourses, and

styles being used. Here, genres are "semiotic ways of acting and interacting," discourses are "ways of representing the world," and styles are "semiotic aspects of social identities" (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 82).

2.3 Discourse Analysis in Translation Studies

As a communicative act that transcends linguistic and cultural barriers and entails creating a text for an audience from a different culture, translation usually involves two texts in two different languages, both of which reflect language used in context. When viewed in this light, translation is a form of language in use. Discourse analysis ideas and techniques have therefore been useful in Translation Studies, especially for academics who approach the field from a linguistic standpoint. Discourse analysis has been used by these scholars as a toolkit to investigate the structure and meaning of texts. There are various ways that discourse analysis is incorporated into translation studies. There are very few studies that provide detailed, fully built discourse analysis models, notably those by Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997), Trosborg (1997, 2002), House (1977, 1997), and Munday (2012b). Although certain differences, these models incorporate important ideas like discourse, register, genre, and text and are based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Another noteworthy example is the model developed by Neubert and Shreve (1992), which draws inspiration from de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). In addition to creating models, other academics have employed discourse analysis tools to uncover culturally specific genre conventions, conduct thorough analyses of source texts prior to translation, assess the quality and appropriateness of source and target texts, and uncover underlying ideologies and attitudes in translations.

2.3.1 Translation-oriented Discourse Analytical Models

The framework for text linguistics created by de Beaugrande and Dressler
(1981), which centers on seven standards of textuality, serves as the foundation for Neubert and Shreve's (1992) translation theory. They are talking about the idea of "text" instead of "discourse." They describe translation as a process that is initiated by a source text and culminates in the construction of a target text; in other words, translation is the process of creating a target text based on a source text. The main unit of translation is the text itself (Neubert and Shreve 1992: 43).

According to Neubert and Shreve (1992: 37), translation is the process of moving or displacing texts in order to recontextualize the original text in a different linguistic and cultural context. The seven textuality requirements must be met by the source and target texts for a translation to be successful. These criteria aid in the analysis of the ST and the assessment of the TT's caliber and applicability.

Translators must modify the TT in accordance with the different sociocultural contexts in which the source and target texts are found. In certain situations, such as technical manuals, the situational context stays constant, but in other situations, like political speeches, it completely changes. Intertextuality is highlighted as being especially important for translators among the seven standards (Neubert and Shreve 1992: 117). According to Neubert and Shreve (1992: 118), they provide the idea of "double intertextuality," in which the translation not only replicates the source text but also establishes new intertextual connections within the target language and culture.

The ultimate objective of the translator is to create a work in the target language that feels genuine and appropriate for the target audience's culture. Additionally, the writers emphasize The function of translation in transmitting and even changing cultural genre conventions. According to Neubert and Shreve (1992: 123), translation thus turns into a type of "mediated intertextuality."

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is the foundation of Hatim and Mason's work as well as that of Trosborg, House, and Munday. According to these researchers, the text serves as the fundamental building block of discourse analysis since it is a particular, tangible example of language use, but "discourse" refers to more general, recurrent linguistic patterns associated with certain social groups and sociocultural environments.

Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997) created a thorough analytical framework that incorporates aspects of speech act theory, politeness theory, and textuality standards with Halliday's SFL model. Their objective was to create a cohesive framework that could take into consideration the many approaches used in interpreting and translation. In a broader sense, they describe "discourse" as speech or writing that expresses the opinions of social groups on particular sociocultural topics, such racist or bureaucratic discourse (Hatim and Mason 1997: 216).

Examining field, tenor, and mode as they are articulated through ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions in both source and target texts is a fundamental part of their methodology. They use real-world examples, such as instances of cultural differences in genre conventions, to illustrate this discourse analysis paradigm. Argumentative texts in Arabic and English are contrasted in one important example. Arabic tends toward through-argumentation, whereas English tends to favor counter-argumentation structures. For example, if "of course" is translated directly into Arabic, it could be misunderstood since, in English, it indicates concession, but in Arabic or related languages, it frequently introduces a supporting point (Hatim and Mason 1997: 152).

They also examine the impact of cultural and ideological inequalities on translation in their 1997 work. A Spanish text on ancient Mexicans translated into English is one example. Key components of intentionality, such as lexical choices, coherence, transitivity, and presupposition, were the focus of their investigation. They discovered that the translation's cumulative language changes resulted in a target text with a markedly altered ideological position. The English translation presented history more as a passive observer than the original Spanish text, which presented it as a question of personal commitment (Hatim and Mason 1997: 158). Scholars like as Trosborg and House have utilized Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a framework for translator training and quality evaluation. Occasionally, it is coupled with a comparative study of text types and genres.

2.3.2 Pre-translational Source Text Analysis

Trosborg (2002) describes a pre-translation text analysis methodology that is mainly meant for training. Her method makes extensive use of Swales' genre analysis (e.g. Swales 1990) and Halliday's register analysis. A genre, according to Swales, is a collection of communicative events that have similar objectives and exhibit structural, stylistic, content, and audience characteristics (Swales 1990: 58). Trosborg's approach is comprehensive, covering both intra-textual characteristics and extra-textual aspects (such as genre and context).

She describes the communication context using the terms field, tenor, and mode. She also analyzes the text's meaning construction using Halliday's three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. She illustrates how each metafunction is represented in linguistic features using a particular source text as an example: textual meaning through coherence and thematic progression; interpersonal meaning through formality or sentence complexity; and ideational meaning through lexical chains or metaphors.

Trosborg's framework is based on SFL, however it is not exclusive to it. She also incorporates ideas from frame semantics, text typology, semantics, and speech act theory. She makes it clear that rather than strictly adhering to one theory, her approach is eclectic, seeking to use any theoretical resources that improve comprehension of the text (Trosborg 2002: 10). Her primary instructional objective is to provide pupils with the necessary analytical tools. to understand the original text completely. Because of this in-depth knowledge, translators can decide how best to preserve or modify the ST to suit the target text's unique communication goal (Trosborg 2002: 9).

By demonstrating how discourse analysis can improve translation instruction, other research likewise draw attention to didactic goals (e.g. Kim 2007; Colina 1997). Comparing genres has been crucial in this situation. Translators must acknowledge and take into consideration variations in genre norms between languages and cultures since genres are culturally specific and serve as traditional communicative events.

2.3.3 Translation Shifts Analysis

Researchers have looked at additional particular textual elements in addition to genres and genre rules, frequently using descriptive methods that emphasize the influence of cultural variations on translation. These studies address a number of topics, including rhetorical methods, lexical repetition, the use of speech acts (e.g., requests, apologies), cross-cultural politeness strategies (e.g., House 1998), and discourse markers (e.g., House 2015 on connecting devices). Trosborg (1997) has examples of this kind of research.

The identification of patterns in actual translation is the subject of some of this descriptive effort. procedures. For example, scholars have investigated how transitivity changes can modify the ideational meaning of the text (Calzada Pérez 2001) or how coherence and cohesiveness change during translation (Blum-Kulka 2004). For instance, bilingual remarks from the European Parliament in both Spanish and English were examined by Calzada-Pérez (2001). She discovered cases where non-material (like mental) processes in the target text were translated as material processes in the source text. One example of a change in the way meaning is built between the two forms was the translation of the Spanish word castigar ('to punish'), which

refers to a material action, into an English mental process:

Spanish Source text: … en dos regiones especialmente castigadas con otras dos reestructuraciones …
English Target text: … in two regions that have already suffered particularly heavy from …

Calzada-Pérez notes that although the translations in her corpus typically do not precisely adhere to the transitivity patterns of the original text, they frequently sound natural. Mason (2004) investigated transitivity shifts in a similar vein by contrasting the English, French, and Spanish translations of European Parliament speeches and articles from the UNESCO Courier. He discovered transitivity shifts in both datasets, but there was a significant difference: UNESCO Courier translations demonstrated greater flexibility, whereas translations of speeches from the European Parliament tended to preserve the transitivity structures of the original texts more closely, in contrast to Calzada-Pérez's findings.

Mason explains this discrepancy by pointing out that the substance is different: journalistic writing permits greater latitude to guarantee readability and accessibility, whereas political speeches require cautious treatment because of their delicate nature. These subtle variations among studies imply that further empirical research is required—across different kinds of texts, genres, languages, and communicative contexts—to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacy of discourse's functioning in translation.

2.3.4 Translation Quality Assessment

One of the first to emphasize the value of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) for evaluating translation was House (1977), which was revised in 1997. quality. In order to compare source and target texts methodically, her methodology integrates the notion of genre and Halliday's register analysis, particularly the dimensions of field, tenor, and mode. After a thorough study to create a register profile for the source text (ST), the genre and communicative function of the text are determined. The target text (TT) is subsequently subjected to the same analysis, and any inconsistencies or translation problems are found by comparing the two profiles.

This comparison is used to assess the quality of the translation and categorize it as either overt or covert. According to House (1997: 31), equivalency is the primary indicator of translation quality. Her initial model required that ST and TT be strictly aligned. However, in the updated version, the translation brief and the cultural context influencing translation decisions are given more weight, and overt and covert translations are handled more loosely as points on a spectrum.

Equivalence is intended mainly at the genre and text function levels in covert translation, which is described as "a translation which enjoys the status of a source text in the target culture" (House 1997: 69). This frequently necessitates changing textual and register components to conform to target language discourse standards and cultural norms.

2.3.5 Uncovering Attitudes and Ideologies Conveyed in Translation

Since each text is situated inside a distinct discursive, socio-historical, political, ideological, and institutional context, the social aspects of discourse have become a greater focus of current translation studies. Hatim and Mason (1997) examine the ways in which ideology and translator agency impact the translation process, as was previously said. This focus is further developed in their more recent work. According to Hatim (2009: 37), for example, discourse viewpoint, genre conformance, textual cohesiveness, and register-based appropriateness should all be considered as layers of "socio-textual practice." Because speakers use discourse to express their opinions, writings can be used to spread ideologies and hierarchies of power. In the words of Hatim (2009: 49), "textual features align with discursive practices and jointly shape society and culture." These textual characteristics reflect interpersonal (like mood and modality), ideational (like transitivity and passivization), and structural (like mode and the exclusion of agency) decisions.

By examining language markers of intervention and shifts in evaluative position, Munday (2012b) further investigates the role of translation agency. By adding Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005), which builds on Halliday's interpersonal metafunction to examine attitude, the degree of that attitude (graduation), and the speaker's alignment or disengagement from statements (engagement), he broadens his discourse analytical model. Munday's 2015 work examines how engagement and graduation markers might disclose a translation or interpreter's location within a text, whereas Munday's (2012b) primary focus is on attitudinal characteristics (Munday 2015: 406). By examining how modifications to reporting verbs might alter the meaning of political writings, he illustrates this point. For example, using the Spanish verb afirmar to translate the English verb "claim" suggests affirmation rather than skepticism and creates a more

neutral or even positive tone (Munday 2015: 414). Munday contends that this approach identifies regions with significant evaluative significance and helps uncover the values a translator may have incorporated into a text. Rosa (2013) and Manfredi (2018) have also used appraisal theory in their translation studies, specifically in their examination of literary and news translation.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been used into certain translation studies research. For example, Baumgarten (2009) examines various English versions of Hitler's Mein Kampf using corpus linguistics and Fairclough's CDA model. The same methodology is used by Daghigh et al. (2018), who apply a variety of linguistic tools from CDA frameworks to a corpus of Persian translations of English opinion pieces. They create a categorization of translators' manipulative tactics and related methods. They say this typology can help researchers understand how translators modify texts to fit the target audience's socio-political expectations (Daghigh et al. 2018: 198).

2.4 Future Studies

This paper has shown that various forms of discourse analysis have been employed in translation research for multiple purposes. Linguistically oriented scholars, in particular, have used it to examine how texts are structured and how meaning is conveyed. However, Munday (2012a: 152) critiques Hatim and Mason's work, noting that while they address many concepts, it is unclear whether their framework functions as a practical, applicable model. Rather, he suggests that their concepts could be more useful as a list of factors to take into account while doing translation analysis. There are now more chances to better integrate the two disciplines as both discourse analysis and translation studies have advanced. This development is presented in a special edition of *Target* (Munday and Zhang 2015). With the field's growing emphasis on power, ideology, and agency, discourse analysis and CDA have the potential to uncover hidden attitudes and ideologies in translations in the future. Critical evaluation of the idea of "discourse" and the applicability of particular techniques can also be aided by examining a variety of text genres, including multimodal texts. Combining SFL-based close text analysis with more general CDA viewpoints, according to Zhang and Pan (2015: 387), can provide a more thorough grasp of the ways in which various discourse models support one another in translation studies. In the end, combining conventional linguistic methods with social understandings can help us better comprehend discourse and translation as intricate, situation-specific processes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Hatim and Mason's Model

Hatim and Mason's discourse analytical model is an important contribution to translation studies because it combines linguistic, cultural, and social aspects of language (Hatim & Mason, 1990; 1997). Building on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework (1978), their approach goes beyond just looking at language structure—it highlights how language works within social contexts and real-life situations.

The main idea behind their model is that translation isn't just about swapping words from one language to another. Instead, it's a complex communicative act deeply rooted in specific cultural and social settings. Translation should consider how language creates meaning in particular situations and relationships. So, the model treats the text as a real instance of language use, while discourse refers to the broader patterns that reflect social norms and cultural practices (Hatim & Mason, 1997).

A key part of their framework is register analysis, which looks at the context shaping language use. Register is made up of three elements:

Field: What the text is about (the subject or topic)
Tenor: The relationships between people communicating (their roles and status)
Mode: The way communication happens (spoken, written, formal, informal) (Halliday, 1978; Hatim & Mason, 1997)

Hatim and Mason also incorporate Halliday's three metafunctions of language— ideational (expressing ideas and experiences), interpersonal (managing social relationships), and textual (organizing the text)—showing how these functions differ between languages and cultures. For example, a polite phrase in English may not have a direct equivalent in Arabic, so translators need to adjust these nuances carefully.

Their model views translation as an interpretative process that involves balancing the source and target cultures. It highlights that differences in ideology, genre conventions, and communication styles often require translators to adapt the text. Hatim and Mason (1997) illustrate this with examples comparing English

and Arabic argumentative writing styles, which differ in how they structure arguments—English texts often use counter-arguments, while Arabic ones prefer continuous argumentation. This affects how translations should be approached to keep the original meaning intact.

Their framework also draws on theories like speech act and politeness theory to help analyze subtle pragmatic and social functions in texts. This equips translators to preserve important interpersonal elements in their translations (Hatim & Mason, 1990).

Overall, Hatim and Mason's model advances translation studies by providing a systematic and context-aware method. It emphasizes the translator's active role in navigating linguistic and cultural complexities to produce translations that are not only accurate but also culturally appropriate (Munday, 2016).

3.2 Applying Hatim and Mason's Model to Kennedy's Famous Quote and Its Arabic Translation

John F. Kennedy's iconic statement, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country,"is a striking example of persuasive political language loaded with ideological, interpersonal, and textual meaning. The Arabic translation, "**نأ كنكمي اذام لأسا لب ،كل مدقي نأ كدلبل نكمي اذام لأست ال كدلبل مدقت**," thoughtfully captures the original's power while adapting it to fit Arabic linguistic and cultural norms.

1. Register Analysis

Hatim and Mason's model emphasizes examining the register—the context that shapes language use—in both the source and target texts.

Field: The theme here is civic responsibility within a nationalistic and democratic context. It encourages individuals to contribute actively to their country rather than expect favors.

Tenor: The relationship between Kennedy and his audience is formal and authoritative. As the U.S. president, he speaks with a sense of moral urgency and motivation. The Arabic translation mirrors this formal tone, aligning with how political speech is often elevated and commanding in Arabic-speaking contexts.

Mode: Kennedy's statement was originally spoken, designed to be memorable and persuasive, using rhythm and balanced phrasing. The Arabic translation keeps this rhythm and parallelism, especially with the "**لأسا لب ...لأست ال**" structure, preserving the rhetorical flow.

2. Metafunctional Analysis

Hatim and Mason use Halliday's three metafunctions to explore how meaning is conveyed and negotiated in translation.

Ideational: Both texts convey the idea that citizens should prioritize their own contribution over expecting help. The Arabic translation succeeds in keeping this key message intact.

Interpersonal: Differences arise here. The English uses a polite negative imperative, "Ask not…," which gently encourages. In Arabic, the commands "**لأست ال**" and "**لأسا**" sound more direct and forceful, which fits Arabic political rhetoric's more authoritative style. Also, the Arabic verb "**مدقت**" (to give or offer) implies sacrifice and service, adding emotional depth that may not be as strong in English.

Textual: The structure of opposites and parallelism is carefully preserved, maintaining the memorable and emphatic quality of the original. (Abdelrahman et al., 2026)

3. Pragmatic and Ideological Considerations

Hatim and Mason remind us that translation is about balancing cultural differences and communication styles, which can lead to shifts in tone or meaning.

Pragmatic shifts: The Arabic imperative form is more direct and urgent compared to the softer English version, reflecting a cultural preference in Arabic political speech for clear moral commands.

Ideological shifts: Kennedy's original promotes democratic citizenship and personal responsibility. The Arabic version keeps this but frames it in a way that resonates with Arabic political cultures, where national service often implies sacrifice and honor. The word choice "**مدقت**" highlights this shift, emphasizing deeper cultural values of duty. This case perfectly shows how Hatim and Mason's model helps translators manage the complex cultural and linguistic differences between languages, ensuring the translation is both faithful and culturally meaningful.

2. Discourse Analysis of Ramadan Traditions: Comparing the Arabic Original and the English Translation

When we apply Hatim and Mason’s Discourse Analytical Model to the translation of the Arabic text about Ramadan, it reveals how cultural and ideological elements can shift during the translation process.

رمضان هو شهر الصيام والتقوى، Original Arabic Text (Excerpt from a cultural article): “حيث يجتمع
المسلمون بعد غروب الشمس لتناول الإفطار الجماعي الذي يعزز الروابط العائلية والاجتماعية. يُعتبر
هذا الشهر فرصة للتأمل الروحي، والتطهر من الذنوب، ولإظهار التسامح والمحبة بين
الناس. العادات مثل التراويح وتبادل التمر والقهوة تعكس روح التضامن والتكافل في المجتمع.”

English Translation: “Ramadan is the month of fasting and piety, during which Muslims gather after sunset to break their fast together, strengthening family and social bonds. This month serves as an opportunity for spiritual reflection, purification from sins, and promoting tolerance and love among people. Traditions such as Taraweeh prayers and sharing dates and coffee symbolize solidarity and social support within the community.”

2.1. Metafunctional Analysis

Using Hatim and Mason’s adaptation of Halliday’s three metafunctions— ideational, interpersonal, and textual—we can see how meaning is built and shifts in translation.

Ideational Function (Field) The Arabic text presents Ramadan as a deeply religious and communal time focused on spiritual reflection and personal devotion. It emphasizes religious practices like fasting and Taraweeh prayers, along with social rituals like gathering for iftar and sharing food, which highlight community solidarity. The English version keeps Ramadan’s religious and spiritual significance but softens the religious focus slightly. It frames practices in broader terms like “spiritual reflection” and “purification,” making the message more accessible to a global audience. The translation also stresses universal values such as “tolerance” and “love,” appealing beyond the Islamic context. Effect: The core meaning is preserved, but the translation generalizes some religious details to make the message more inclusive and relatable worldwide.

Interpersonal Function (Tenor) The Arabic original is clearly meant for a Muslim audience familiar with Ramadan’s customs and spiritual meaning. Its tone is warm, reverent, and celebratory, reflecting shared cultural and religious values. The English translation, by contrast, adopts a neutral and informative tone that welcomes readers who might not share that background. It aims to educate rather than assume familiarity, emphasizing values that cross cultural boundaries. Effect: The tone shifts from an insider, devotional voice to an educational, inclusive one aimed at a wider, diverse audience.

Textual Function (Mode) The Arabic text is rich in emotive and spiritual language, conveying Ramadan’s sacredness with culturally resonant terms like “الصيام” (fasting) and “التراويح” (Taraweeh prayers). This creates a narrative that connects deeply with Muslim readers. The English translation favors clarity and explanation, breaking down cultural references so they are understandable to those unfamiliar with Islamic practices. As a result, the emotional intensity is softened in favor of accessibility. Effect: The translation shifts from an emotionally charged narrative to a clear, descriptive style, making the information easier to digest for non-Muslim readers.

2.2. Register Analysis

Register refers to how language varies based on context—covering field (topic), tenor (relationship), and mode (communication form). Analyzing these helps us see how the translation adapts culturally.

Field (Topic) The Arabic text centers on Ramadan as a religious and social event, deeply tied to Islamic faith and community values, focusing on fasting, communal iftar, and specific rituals like Taraweeh prayers. The English translation broadens the focus slightly, presenting Ramadan not only as a religious duty but also as a cultural practice that promotes universal themes like spiritual reflection and social solidarity. This helps make the message accessible to readers unfamiliar with Islamic traditions.

Tenor (Relationship) The original Arabic speaks to an insider Muslim audience with shared religious understanding, using a tone that’s intimate, proud, and reverent. The English version shifts to a more neutral and inclusive tone, aiming at both Muslims and non-Muslims. It emphasizes shared human values such as tolerance and love, fostering cultural understanding.

Mode (Communication Style) The Arabic text is narrative and emotive, full of cultural resonance that evokes a strong sense of community and spirituality. The English translation takes on an expository, descriptive style, aiming to explain the traditions clearly for a wider audience, including those with little prior knowledge of Ramadan.

3. Ideological and Cultural Shifts

The Arabic version strongly ties Ramadan to faith, worship, and Muslim communal identity, emphasizing religious duties and spiritual growth.

The English translation reframes Ramadan with a broader, intercultural focus, highlighting values like love, tolerance, and community support. While it doesn't remove religious meaning entirely, it presents Ramadan as a universally relatable cultural event.

This results in a shift from a specific religious identity to a more general cultural inclusiveness, making Ramadan's message accessible beyond the Muslim world.

Conclusion

This research has effectively demonstrated how Hatim and Mason's discourse analytical model serves as a powerful framework for examining translation as an intricate act of cultural and linguistic negotiation. By integrating systemic functional linguistics with sociocultural insights, the model guides translators to analyze register elements—field, tenor, and mode—and metafunctions— ideational, interpersonal, and textual—allowing a thorough understanding of both source and target texts in context. The practical analyses of Kennedy's iconic political statement and its Arabic translation, alongside the discourse surrounding Ramadan traditions, illustrate the model's utility in real-world translation scenarios. These case studies highlight how translation involves not only linguistic transfer but also careful adaptation to cultural norms, ideological nuances, and rhetorical conventions. For instance, shifts in grammatical mood and lexical choices in Kennedy's translation reflect differences in politeness strategies and cultural conceptions of duty, while the Ramadan text translation showcases how religious and social meanings are reframed to reach broader audiences. Overall, this study confirms that applying discourse analysis through Hatim and Mason's model enables translators to uncover deep-seated cultural meanings and communicative intentions. It moves translation beyond mere textual equivalence to a context-sensitive practice that respects the social, ideological, and interpersonal dimensions embedded in language use. This approach thus enriches translation studies by providing a rigorous, adaptable methodology that bridges theory with the complexities of actual translation processes.

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