

Review of Wang and Munday (2021) Advances in Discourse Analysis of Translation and Interpreting: Linking Linguistic Approaches with Socio-cultural Interpretation

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Abstract

Evidence that our research has become increasingly interdisciplinary is mounting. In Translation and Interpreting Studies (T&I), the cross-fertilisation of linguistics and sociology through the use of discourse analysis methods at micro- and macro levels has enabled our researchers to examine the nuanced understanding of the role of our translators/interpreters as social agents in cultural and ideological mediation. The book under review enriches our understanding of the immense potential of discourse analysis methods in translation studies and beyond. The informative volume captures the advances in discourse analysis in translation and interpreting studies and explores the interconnectedness between linguistic choices, communicative goals and socio-cultural contexts. It serves to bridge the gap in the mostly Eurocentric landscape by concentrating on language-specific issues when translating between European languages and non-European languages. It is intended for interested readers, researchers, scholars and practitioners who engage in communicative, social, and cultural discursive practices.

Keywords: translation; interpretation; discourse analysis; book review

Reviewing Wang and Munday (2021)ⁱ

The ‘sociological turn’ of translation and interpreting (T&I) studies (see **Wolf, 2006; Angelelli, 2012**) has witnessed the ever-expanding application of discourse analysis methods at micro- and macro levels to probe the role of translators/interpreters as social agents that constantly engaged in cultural and ideological mediation (see **Inghilleri, 2003**) embedded in communicative, social, and cultural discursive practices. In this sense, the notion of ‘discourse analysis’ refers to the ‘entire act of linguistic and cultural communication and construction and representation of identity’ (**Ibid: 1**) that deals with the ‘language use above sentence’ (see **Mason, 2015: 110**) and meaning-making in specific social and cultural contexts. However, there are very few publications that concentrate on language-specific issues, particularly in non-European languages. To bridge the existing gap, the informative volume captures the advances in discourse analysis in translation and interpreting studies in a Chinese-specific context. In particular, it explores the interconnectedness between linguistic choices, communicative goals and socio-cultural contexts.

With an overall aim to investigate how Chinese political ideology is negotiated and represented in the Western socio-cultural context through the agency of institutional translators, interpreters and the public media, the collaborative volume consists of 11 chapters authored by 16 contributors on four thematic explorations: I. uncovering positioning and ideology in interpreting and translation (see **Wang & Munday, 2021: Chapters 1 to 4**), II. linking linguistic approach with socio-cultural interpretation (see **Ibid: Chapters 5 to 6**), III. discourse analysis into news translation (see **Ibid: Chapters 7 to 9**), and IV. analysis of multimodal and intersemiotic discourse in translation (see **Ibid: Chapters 10 and 11**). Each chapter lends a unique angle of a specific theme or case in translating political and ideological texts. These themes include: representing Chinese core political concepts in the Belt and Road Initiative; interpreting linguistic manipulation and discourse reconstruction in World Economic Forum; meta-discursive reconstruction of fact, truth, and reality through the use of linguistic markers (e.g. in fact, actually, indeed, and as a matter of fact) in China-Japan Relations; decision-making and cognitive approach to political, conceptual, and meta-narrative in the China–US Disaster-Relief Joint Military Exercise; the use of first-person plural pronoun ‘we’ in Chinese Government Report; the gatekeeping function served by the institutional interpreter at government press conferences; stance mediation in political news discourses; representation of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region protest (2014) in Western media; reframing South China Sea Dispute through English translations in Xinhua news website; multimodal resources in the translations of public notices in

Macao Special Administrative Region; and representation of identity in dubbed Italian multicultural sitcoms.

Theoretically, the edited book incorporates Halliday's systematic functional reframing strategies in the narrative theory. Methodologically, this volume features a wide array of discourse-analytical methods, including systemic-functional analysis, pragmatic and conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis and corpus-based discourse analysis (Wang, 2019: 625).

It is important to underscore that the present volume is more than a mere collection of case studies and corpus-based data. With a sincere commitment to cross-fertilising and harvesting from the learnings of existing studies in discursive practices, the book brings together a mindful selection of finely crafted topics: the issue of agency, linguistic manipulation and representation of identity, power, and choice, interpreters' cognitive decision-making process, the institutional gatekeeping, the attitudinal deviation and the stance re-instantiation, based on a wealth of data and empirical findings through contrastive discourse analysis of the highly sensitive political discourse. The riveting volume provides us with a refreshing outlook on the use of a wide array of analytical methods and conventions in T&I studies. Written in a modest, truthful, and considerate style, the discourse-minded volume illuminates several difficulties in conducting analyses in translated and interpreted political and public discourses.

The main contributions of the volume are two-fold. The first is its unique emphasis on language-specific issues (e.g. Chinese and English) in various types of political and ideological mediation (e.g. government press conferences, news and TV media, public notice, and military interpreting) represented in diverse geographic locations (e.g. United States, United Kingdom, China Mainland, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and Macao Special Administrative Region) with considerations for different dialects and language variations (e.g. Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese) in both mono-modal, intra-semiotic and multimodal, intersemiotic approaches. For example, in Chapter 6, Li and Zhang analysed how institutional interpreters in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (People's Republic of China) fulfil their gatekeeping duties when interpreting face-threat questions posed by journalists at the Chinese foreign minister's press conferences (2016-2018) through their linguistic choices. The SFL-informed critical discourse analysis of interpersonal shifts reveals that the interpreter dismisses the concept of interpreters being 'a mere conduit with extreme personal non-involvement' (Roy, 2002: 348), as evidenced by his or her gatekeeping efforts, such as withholding, modifying, and supplementing the interpersonal meanings in the source text.

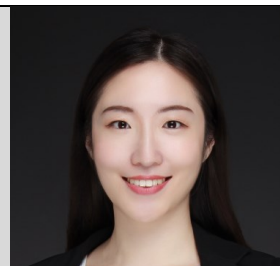
The second contribution of the present book is its interdisciplinary approach to conceptual and methodological issues at the interface of translation and interpreting studies, discourse analysis, and linguistic and multimodal studies. For example, in Chapter 10, Chen examined the verbal realisation of the appellative function when translating multimodal public notices in Macao, drawing on the photograph and cartoon image data and visual social semiotics model developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The results unveil that interpersonal functions have been achieved through features such as act and gaze, social distance and intimacy, horizontal angle and involvement, vertical angle, power, and modality. It is thus recommended that illustrators and designers resort to visual social semiotics as a useful tool to achieve appellative functions in multimodal public communication.

Important issues discussed in the book point to the crucial function of translation and interpretation as part of the strategic use of political language, as it poses urgent challenges for scholars in a world that is 'more global and more fragmented' (see Chilton, 2004: xii). As I read along the thematic discussions in each part of this book, I was intrigued by several intellectual debates: In what way can socio-political beliefs be represented in the same manner as originally intended to different target readerships varying in socio-economic status, educational background, and linguistic and cultural expectations? Are there any generally acceptable institutional translation standards that can operate across multiple geographic locations, even in the same country, regardless of ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences? Much has been said about spoken languages, but what about sign language readership? Will the multimodal resources available in the public sector be sufficient, accessible, and inclusive enough to provide culturally responsive solutions to special interest groups (e.g. the deaf and hard-of-hearing)? Having analysed the linguistic and attitudinal nuances embedded in the socio-political discourses, what inferences can we make from these discursive practices marked by various communicative goals, and what are the implications for future pedagogical activities?

Overall, this insightful and compelling volume offers plenty of inspiration and advice for going analytically into the translated and interpreted discourses. On the one hand, it has achieved its objective by providing a comprehensive and practical guide on the potential of discourse analysis methods in translation and interpreting studies and beyond. On the other hand, it provides us with helpful reminders about caring for the nuanced ideological negotiation in sensitive political discourses. Considering the book's informative strengths and contributions, it should be highly recommended for readers interested in discourse studies, translation and

interpreting studies, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics in Chinese and English.

Ran is a PhD candidate at UNSW Sydney, Australia. She is a Level 1 (Advanced) Interpreter/Translator accredited by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (P.R.China). Before commencing her PhD journey, she accumulated many years of professional experience as a staff interpreter serving diplomatic and human resources capacities in world-class research universities (e.g. Shanghai Jiao Tong University) and Fortune Global 500 Company (e.g. Tencent Technology). Inspired by her family serving in the judiciary as a judge and an attorney, she is interested in the interdisciplinary approach to practice-informed research in public service interpreting, court interpreting, and interpreter education.



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Endnotes

ⁱ Wang and Munday (2021). *Advances in Discourse Analysis of Translation and Interpreting: Linking Linguistic Approaches with Socio-cultural Interpretation*. xii+227 pp. Oxon/New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-367-42175-5 (hbk) | 978-0-367-82244-6 (ebk)