

**Hatim Basil & Mason Ian. *Discourse and the translator. Language in Social Life Series.* Longman, 1990, 258 pages.**

*Discourse and the Translator* is a book for people interested in the linguistic aspects of translation, mainly the possibilities that Discourse Analysis can bring to translation. Translation received a new approach with the analysis of pragmatic, semiotic, social, cultural and psychological dimensions of translation. All this is presented to support Hatim and Mason's main idea, that is, to relate discourse process to the practical work of the translator.

At first, *Discourse and the Translator* presents a review of traditional issues in translation studies. Then the authors make a summary of linguistic studies of translation. After that, the book presents some aspects of register analysis, language as discourse, intertextuality, intentionality, and the three dimensions of context: communicative, pragmatic, and semiotic; and how translations are affected by them. The book includes three chapters about text analysis with emphasis on text types, text structure, and discourse structure.

The most important aspect of the book is the linkage between discourse analysis and translation. Discourse Analysis is presented with emphasis on Halliday and Hasan's concepts, Austin's speech act theory, and Grice's cooperative principles. The authors apply these ideas to translation, giving examples in different languages.

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The book shows that text interpretation can be a difficulty in translation. Every text is made of a sequence of rethorical purposes, which are related to the text content. A text has only one predominant rethorical purpose, but other subsidiary functions have their own importance. The translator should not disregard some important secondary purposes of the text because "the text official function can be manipulated".

A text can also reflect ideology, and the implications of expressions of ideology for translation are significant. The ideology implications can be in the area of genre, social relations or other instruments of power. Translators have to be aware of the social context in which the text is embedded to keep the ideological force of its words.

In the last chapter, the translator is defined as a mediator between the producer of a source text and whoever are its target language receivers. Hatim and Mason see translators as people who know two languages and also two cultures. The translator's task is to extract from the source text its intended meaning, using concepts from: pragmatics, semantics, phonology, grammar, discourse analysis and others. Translators have to preserve the intended meaning and the rethorical purpose of the source text in the target text.

The translator is also a mediator in the sense of information processing. He/she reads the text, decodes the intended meaning and rethorical purpose of the source text. The output of his / her reading will be the input of the translation process, that is, to re-encode the message in the target text. However, the translator has to be

careful not to transfer to the target text his/her own cultural and ideological view of the text.

The book has eleven chapters. Each chapter is divided into subheadings which make the book didactic to be used in a translation program and easy to be consulted. Some previous knowledge of linguistics and of theory of translation can help the reader to understand the concepts presented in the book. At the end of the book, there is a Glossary of Terms that supplies the reader with basic definitions. The book also has a subject-index and the bibliography.

Can a translator produce a better translation after studying theory of translation? This question remains without

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an answer and many books have tried to define models of translation. *Discourse and the Translator* was not written to teach people how to translate, or to present a new model of translation. *Discourse and the Translator* is addressed to translators, interpreters, teachers and students interested in the relation between Discourse Analysis and Translation.

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