Chapter 4
# Discourse Analysis in Translation Courses:
## The Question of Ideology and Culture

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## ABSTRACT

*One of the primary functions of a translator is to mediate not only between languages but also between cultures. As ideology is one of the crucial cultural constraints, it is essential to teach students that selection of translation strategy is always either implicitly or explicitly affected by the translator's ideology. Thus, the main aim of this chapter is to illustrate the importance of introducing critical discourse analysis as a powerful tool for ideological analysis in the translation classroom. By understanding how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in and through discourses, future translators will be able to better operate on different levels during text (re)production and translation of a message. The authors outline the course in which the students were first presented advertising slogans in English, which were later analyzed in the classroom.*

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of culture and ideology for translation is undeniable. The prevalence of cultural translation in modern translation studies (Bassnet & Lefevere, 1990; Prunč, 2012; Snell-Hornby, 2006) verifies that translation is not only a linguistic but also considerably and primarily a culture-transferring activity. Text production, as well as text reception, always depends on the cultural background of

a communication community and according to Koller (2011) translator's task is to bridge this communicative gap (*Kommunikative Differenz*). As a culture-transferring activity, translation automatically undergoes the influence of ideology, a crucial part of any culture. Fawcett (2001) claims that,

*With the spread of deconstruction and cultural studies in the academy, the subject of ideology, and more specifically the ideology of power relations,*

*became an important area of study, and claims about ideology proliferate in many fields, though they are not always well substantiated.*

Similarly, Jazbec (2013) intensifies that though text production always depends on the competences, language skills and linguistic sensibility of a reader or a translator, cultural knowledge is no less important. Unfortunately, we are often confronted with culturally dysfunctional and subjective translations. The main reason is usually a lack of translator competences and professional overload. However, in authors' opinion, insufficient knowledge about ideological conventions underlying each cultural, political or social discourse is among the most disturbing. According to Nöth (1995), ideology is not merely a system of dominant beliefs and ideas but any system of norms, values, beliefs, or in German *Weltanschauungen*, directing the social and political attitudes and actions of a group, a social class or a society as a whole. To understand ideology means to understand culture. Thus, translators should always be aware of the ideological power of any discourse if they want to comprehend and transfer a different culture.

To avoid this gap in knowledge, and carrying in mind one of the primary functions of a translator as a mediator between cultures and consequently ideologies, the authors' find it essential to teach their students that selection of translation strategy is always either implicitly or explicitly affected by the translator's ideology, constrained by the norms of the society and authoritative bodies such as publishers, institutions, clients, and governments. The focus of this essay is the results of our experience introducing ideological analysis in the translation of advertising slogans, while working with MA students from the department of Translation and Interpreting studies. The authors also wish to draw attention to the importance of ideological analysis based on Critical Discourse Analysis as a contemporary didactic tool in the educational process of future professional translators who should be well aware of their importance as intercultural communication mediators.

It seemed logical to use advertising slogans for discourse analytic exploration, as advertising is socially and culturally constructed through various discourses and acts as a mirror on society. An ability to react to clients' demands also has a practical value for students who will one day enter the market and recognize the importance of "selling" the product and the consequences, above all financial, that an insufficient translation of an advertising slogan may have.

The aim of the authors' research is to analyze students' competences and skills related to knowledge of source and target cultures; sensibility for language accuracy; and scopos of the translation and tolerance. The findings are used to explore the importance of understanding of ideological processes as one of the variables that substantially affect translation quality.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The question of ideological influences on translation has always accompanied translation studies. Christina Schäffner (2003) claims that all translations are ideological since "the choice of a source text and the use to which the subsequent target text is put are determined by the interests, aims, and objectives of social agents". The new cultural orientation in contemporary translation studies automatically includes the importance of ideology, an essential part of each culture and society that underlies each translation. Alvarez and Vidal also (1996) agree that a translator always creates "under pressure of different constraints (which Lefevere denotes as ideological, poetical and economic), typical of the culture to which he/she belongs".

Calzada-Perez (2003) states that the ideological dimension is one of the fundamentals in Critical Discourse Analysis which exposes "the ideologi-

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