

Abstract

We would like to paraphrase Schaffner who posits about the importance of discourse analysis for translator training (2002) and raise a question about discourse analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in particular, as a tool in conference interpreter learning process. This paper presents a study conducted within a theory-based module conducted at ISIT Paris, in the framework of European Masters in Conference Interpreting curriculum.

The module blends theory and practice: basic introduction into discourse analysis approaches with a special focus on CDA (Fairclough, 2010) and its presupposition and implicatory discursive categories (Van Dijk, 2005), with the practical critical analysis of discourses in students' A and B languages. The objective of this preliminary study is to ascertain students' perception of DA as a tool to learn interpreting through a survey (Hale and Napier 2012) on one hand, and target group discussion conducted during the class (Koskinen, 2008,) on the other.

Introduction

Aims of *Critical Discourse Analysis: a theory-based model in interpreter training*.

(A1) improve students' comprehension of interpreted discourse through (Critical) Discourse Analysis applied to interpreted speeches;

(A2) construct a model of discourse analysis to be used in the context of CI training;

(A3) elicit student's perception of CDA, as a theory-based model introduced in vocation training.

"Critical Discourse Analysis typically analyses news texts, political speeches, advertisement, school books, etc., exposing strategies that appear neutral on their surface but which may in fact be ideological and seek to shape the representation of events and persons for particular ends. The term "critical" therefore means (...) to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences and taken-for-granted assumptions in texts. This will allow us to reveal the kinds of power interests buried in these texts" (Machin & Mayr 2012, 4).

Critical Discourse Analysis for Interpreters module consisted of three long seminars in 2018-2019 academic year. It was obligatory for nine first year students of European Masters in Conference Interpreting at ISIT Paris that acquire note-taking, consecutive and sight translation skills. The students had the following language combinations A: EN, FR, ZH, ES, DE, B: EN, FR, IT, C: EN, RU, DE, FR, ES.

Methods and Materials

- Teun van Dijk and Patrick Charaudeau approaches to DA are used;
- CDA is introduced gradually, with increasing difficulty of analysis in practical exercises;
- Theory is combined with practice: analysis and note-taking;
- Final reflection/debate about ideology, manipulation, persuasion etc.... and interpreting is always conducted in the end of a seminar;
- Adapted video materials (and transcripts) of increased difficulty are used.

Example of exercise instruction:

Instructions for students:

- Listen to the speech. Can you identify any of Charaudeau's strategies? How did you note them down?
- Listen again(/read) and note down the strategies used to manipulate.

Results

Improvement in discourse analysis and increased "control" of the analyzed and interpreted speeches are declared by students in target-group debates.

Example of practical analysis

Sean Kelly, MEP:

Mr. President, I supported this proposal, sharing the rapporteur's belief that combating **anti-EU propaganda and disinformation [DESCRIPTION OF EVIL]** by third countries is essential – in the first place to **uphold democratic values [GLORIFICATION OF VALUES]** and a united Europe. **EU citizens cannot effectively legitimize us, and the work we do on their behalf, if they do not have access to accurate information [DESCRIPTIONS OF CAUSES OF EVIL]**.

Speaking from an Irish point of view, investing in education in order to equip the public better for critical thinking has long been a priority. As Franklin D. Roosevelt stated, democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. Given the prevalence of disinformation, stemming in particular nowadays from electronic means of dissemination such as social media, **it is imperative that we collaborate on deconstructing such propaganda [CALL TO PEOPLE]**. I therefore welcome the recommendations offered in this report.



Discussion

- Students declare swifter comprehension of discourse structure while they improve their analytic skills (both using Charaudeau and Van Dijk's approach);
- Introduced theory and practical analytic exercise seem to be difficult to acquire if disconnected from practical exercise related to interpreting. Therefore, meeting preparation and similar introductory exercises seem to motivate students to continue with intellectually more demanding analytical tasks and reflection on the usefulness of discourse analysis versus thoughtless exercising of note-taking and/or interpreting.

Conclusions

- CDA seems to improve discourse comprehension, but further verification should be conducted (students' performance during regular interpretation classes);
- To combat reluctance towards theory-based practice in vocational training: gradual introduction of theory, interactive approach and theory-based practice seemed efficient.

Don't do the analysis for the sake of analysis but to develop interpreting skills (Schaffner, 2002).