ISSN: 2792-8268

Volume: 37, Dec-2024

http://sjii.indexedresearch.org

Discursive-Communicative Model as a System of Determinants of Translation Strategy

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Abstract: Translation is a complex process influenced by linguistic, cultural, and communicative factors. This article explores the discursive-communicative model as a framework for understanding and systematizing the determinants of translation strategies. The model emphasizes the interplay between discourse, communication, and situational context in shaping translation decisions. Specific attention is given to text type, audience expectations, cultural norms, and the translator's agency. By applying this model, translators can achieve fidelity not only to the source text but also to its intended communicative function.

Keywords: discursive, communicative model, determinants, text, audience expectations, cultural norms, function, text analysis, pragmatic intent.

Introduction

The process of translation extends beyond linguistic equivalence to encompass cultural and communicative aspects of meaning transfer. As translators navigate texts, they are guided by a combination of linguistic norms, contextual factors, and intended communicative goals.

The discursive-communicative model provides a structured approach for identifying and prioritizing these determinants. This model emphasizes how discourse types (e.g., narrative, expository, persuasive) and communicative intent (e.g., informing, persuading, entertaining) influence translation strategies. By systematizing these elements, the model enables translators to make informed choices that respect both the source and target contexts.

Key Concepts in the Discursive-Communicative Model:

1. Discourse as a Framework for Text Analysis

Discourse refers to language use within a specific social, cultural, and situational context. Discourse analysis examines how texts function within their intended communicative environment. For example, political speeches employ persuasive strategies, while scientific articles focus on clarity and precision. Recognizing these patterns helps translators maintain the text's communicative purpose.

2. Communication and Pragmatic Intent

The communicative dimension considers the purpose of the text and its impact on the audience. This includes identifying whether the source text aims to inform, persuade, or entertain. Translators must adapt linguistic structures to preserve pragmatic intent. For instance, translating humor requires cultural localization to evoke similar emotional responses.

3. Translation as a Decision-Making Process

Translation involves selecting strategies that align with the source text's communicative goals and the target audience's expectations. These decisions are influenced by determinants such as:

ISSN: 2792-8268

Volume: 37, Dec-2024

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- > Text Type: Determines the level of fidelity required (e.g., legal texts demand precision, while literary texts allow more creative freedom).
- Audience Expectations: Includes cultural and linguistic norms specific to the target language.
- ➤ Contextual Constraints: Encompasses situational elements, such as time or medium of communication.

Determinants of Translation Strategy:

1. Linguistic Determinants

The structural differences between source and target languages are a primary consideration. For example, the grammatical complexity of German compound words may require multiple phrases in English. Similarly, idiomatic expressions may lack direct equivalents and necessitate paraphrasing.

2. Cultural Determinants

Cultural norms heavily influence translation strategies. A translator must consider how cultural elements, such as metaphors, proverbs, and societal conventions, will resonate with the target audience. For instance, translating a Japanese haiku into English often requires adaptation to preserve its aesthetic and cultural significance.

3. Situational and Contextual Determinants

The context in which the translation will be used shapes the translator's choices. For example, an academic paper requires formal and precise language, while a marketing campaign may prioritize creativity and appeal.

4. Audience-Related Determinants

Understanding the target audience's linguistic proficiency, cultural background, and preferences is essential.

Translators must adjust language complexity and tone to meet audience needs. For example, children's books require simpler vocabulary and more illustrations compared to adult fiction.

5. Translator's Subjectivity

The translator's expertise, biases, and creative input also act as determinants. While this element introduces variability, it can also enrich translations, especially in artistic or literary contexts.

Practical Applications of the Model:

The discursive-communicative model is highly applicable across various fields:

1. Literary Translation:

Translating novels requires attention to narrative style, character voice, and cultural nuances. The translator must balance fidelity with creative adaptation.

2. Technical and Scientific Translation:

Scientific texts prioritize accuracy, clarity, and terminological consistency. The model emphasizes the importance of maintaining the source text's informative function while adapting to target audience conventions.

3. Advertising and Marketing:

Cultural localization is critical in marketing. For example, slogans must evoke similar emotional responses in the target culture, requiring significant adaptation.

ISSN: 2792-8268

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http://sjii.indexedresearch.org

4. Legal and Administrative Translation:

Legal documents demand strict adherence to source text meaning and terminology, with little room for interpretation.

Case Studies:

1. Adapting Humor in Translation

A study of translating humor in sitcoms highlights how cultural references, wordplay, and intonation must be adapted. The discursive-communicative model guides translators in finding equivalent humorous effects in the target language.

2. Translating Scientific Articles

When translating a scientific article on climate change from English to French, the translator must balance technical accuracy with accessibility for non-specialist readers. The model suggests strategies for simplifying terminology without compromising the article's integrity.

Conclusion

The discursive-communicative model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the determinants of translation strategy. By considering linguistic, cultural, situational, and audience-related factors, this model equips translators with the tools to make informed decisions. Its emphasis on balancing source text fidelity with target audience adaptation ensures effective communication across languages and cultures. Future research could explore its application in emerging fields such as machine translation and AI-assisted workflows.

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