

**The Effects of Politics and Ideology on
the Translation of Argumentative
Political Newspaper Articles**

PhD Dissertation Theses

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1. The topic, relevance and aims of the dissertation

1.1. Topic and relevance

In several countries the interaction between Political Science and Translation Studies has created prolific new research areas and trends in the recent 15 years. As politics in Hungary was delegated to the competence of some power elites before the 1989 change of the regime, Translation Studies cannot benefit from accumulated research as such research is virtually non-existent in the Hungarian context.

In international contexts, translation may play a prominent role in and be a vital vehicle and means of communication in publishing and publicising political agendas as well as in maintaining political power. In this respect, translation itself may easily become a political tool. Translation therefore can serve the purposes of gaining, maintaining and even abusing political power in the interests of certain political groups.

One way of avoiding such misuses of translation is to create a civilian and professional counter power in Translation Studies, which can identify and pinpoint surfacing textual features possibly supporting and/or contributing to political manipulation and power abuse. Such a counter power is in fact mental power, some kind of knowledge, capacity and skill that enables translators to spot manipulative translation practices in their own and others' works.

It is hoped that the current dissertation can provide translators and translation scholars with a text linguistic analytical tool for both finding textual instances of political manipulation in translated texts and interpreting such manipulations.

1.2. Aims

The objectives of the present research are twofold: a theoretical one and an empirical one. The theoretical objective is to develop a theoretical model called Political Bias Screener for capturing and analysing ideology and political bias in

argumentative newspaper articles. The other objective is an empirical one: to provide a first testing of the Political Bias Screener on a first population of texts generating preliminary data. Such a testing is to confirm the validity and reliability of the Political Bias Screener and to show a demo version of the procedure of analysis.

2. The structure of the dissertation

After the introductory Chapter 1, theoretical Chapters 2-5 describe the theoretical foundations of the constituent models of the Political Bias Screener. Chapter 2 describes Hoey's (1994 and 2001) two Problem-Solution Models, designed to be used for problem-solution type texts. Hoey's 2001 Model is described in more detail, which is used to establish the superstructure of the argumentative source and target under scrutiny. The chapter concludes by stating in what ways the model is used as a constituent model of the Political Bias Screener.

Chapter 3 describes how research on text structure, more precisely on text comprehension and production, affected text construction and text comprehension related research both in the field of general linguistics with relevance to Translation Studies and in Translation Studies. The chapter begins with a short historical overview of the main studies on text processing in the 1970s, demonstrating research leading up to the construction of Kintsch and van Dijk's (1978) Model of Text Comprehension and Production and van Dijk's (1980) Macrostructure Model. After the introduction of the two theories, the application thereof in recent research is outlined. This is followed by the description of Translation Studies specific implications of the theories including the review of Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) research, which adapts van Dijk's (1980) Macrostructure Model for the analysis of argumentative texts and their translations. The chapter concludes by stating which aspects of Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model and in what ways is used as a constituent model of the Political Bias Screener.

Chapter 4 provides a brief overview of the relationship between text (including texts created through translation), power, ideology and politics, to be followed by a review of Translation Studies specific research on translated texts and their power, ideology and political bias related features. Since no systematic analytical tool has been developed in Translation Studies for the description of argumentative political texts and their translation with reference to power, ideology and politics related textual features, for the sake of theoretical contextualisation, this chapter provides a brief history of Critical Discourse Analysis and describes its traditions. This is followed by the foundations, theory and description of van Dijk's (1993, 1997, 2001, 2003) critical discourse analytical model and the Discourse–Society Interface. The chapter concludes by describing the Translation-centred Discourse–Society Interface Model (TDSI Model) of the Political Bias Screener developed within the scope of the present dissertation, which is a Translation Studies oriented adaptation of the van Dijkian Discourse–Society Interface for the description of the power, ideology and politics related textual features of source and target language political discourse.

Chapter 5 investigates mediatised political communication with special regard to how the media, and especially the press, can become a source of bias along the process of political mass communication including newspaper journalism and the translation of newspaper articles. This chapter centres on political reality, the presentation of political reality and bias. As a background introduction, the chapter discusses issues related to the political influence of the media, especially by political parties. This is followed by a discussion of Mazzoleni's (2002) Mediatised Political Reality Theory, which describes how objective political reality is presented in the media. Subsequently, Mazzoleni's (2002) Theory of Bias is introduced, which relates to journalists' personal political convictions and professional norms and standards of journalism. The chapter concludes by describing the Translation-centred Political Mass Communication Model developed within the present dissertation, which has been devised for the interpretation of the research results obtained with the help of the TDSI Model. As a constituent of the Political Bias Screener, the Translation-centred Political Mass Communication Model (TPMC Model) also allows for formulating implications

for the description of translator behaviour and translators' critical awareness with reference to the translation of argumentative newspaper articles.

Chapter 6 describes the analytical tool called the Political Bias Screener developed in the scope of the current dissertation. The chapter also elaborates on the constituent models of the Screener and detail their relationship.

Chapter 7 describes the research design detailing the methods of data collection, the selection criteria along which the texts submitted to analysis and the participants of the research have been selected. The chapter also introduces the translation assignment and provides a description of the application of the analytical tool. A sample analysis, where possible, is also presented. The chapter concludes with the discussion of the reliability of the analytical tool.

Chapter 8 focuses on the results of the analysis of the source and target language argumentative newspaper articles and their discussion. The research results are elaborated on along the four constituent models of the Political Bias Screener extending to the description of the properties of source and target language texts and the comparison thereof.

Chapter 9 describes the conclusions and implications of the present research, and presents possible pathways of further research.

3. Theoretical and empirical research

3.1. Theoretical research: the Political Bias Screener

The Political Bias Screener has been designed to allow for the analysis and comparison of source and target textual features with a view to the nature of political persuasion. Bánhegyi (2008) has shown that three, cognitively and, respectively, affectively operating domains realise political persuasion in argumentative political discourse: (1) logical arguments, (2) feelings and sentiments evoked by the texts and (3) psychological motivation induced by the texts. Logical arguments (sensible or sensible sounding arguments) are presented

in the **gist** of texts, i.e. the macrostructure influenced by the superstructure. Feelings and sentiments evoked by the texts and psychological motivation manifest as emotive persuasion realised mainly through choices in lexis and style and the **political message** of texts (Larson [2001], Mazzoleni [2002]), i.e. the minimum shortest meaningful summary. The Political Bias Screener has been developed to allow for the analysis of the above features of political discourse.

Functionally, the Screener operates the following way. The gists and political messages (realisations of differing lengths of the macrostructure influenced by the superstructure) of the source and target language texts are identified with the help of Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model (c.f. Chapter 3) complemented by Hoey's (2001) Problem-Solution Model (c.f. Chapter 2), with the latter model providing the superstructure constituent. As the other two domains of political persuasion – feelings and sentiments evoked and psychological motivation – are realised on the level of individual propositions, Kintsch and van Dijk's (1978) notion of **proposition** as defined in their Model of Text Comprehension and Production is used to identify such propositions.

The results obtained with the help of Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model complemented by Hoey's (2001) Problem-Solution Model (i.e. gist and political message) and the full source and target serve as input for the CDA analysis effected through the TDSI Model (c.f. Chapter 4). As the aim of the CDA analysis is to interpret and compare the textual realisations of the full texts as well as the gists and political messages of the source and target texts in their relevant social, cultural, historical, ideological and political contexts, the analysis is carried out along the four components of **Action**, **Context**, **Power** and **Ideology** of the TDSI Model. By establishing the properties of source and target texts along the above four components of the TDSI Model and pinpointing textual differences surfacing as translation shifts, and consequently interpreting such shifts with the help of the four components of the Model, the political and ideological bias of source and target texts is revealed and compared.

As the texts under scrutiny in the scope of the present dissertation are argumentative newspaper articles, i.e. mediatised political texts, the political mass communication context of the analysed texts must be taken into account so that all relevant contextual features (including political mass communication related ones) can be analysed. As the TDSI Model does not incorporate discursive political and media communication related theories that could account for and explain the reasons for journalists' and translators' potential political bias in mediated political texts, a specific political mass communication theory-based model, the TPMC Model has been incorporated in the Screener. With the TPMC Model, the research results obtained with the help of the TDSI Model are interpreted with reference to the following two issues: the presentation of political reality and bias (c.f. Chapter 5). It is explored how and why journalism and translation contributes to the presentation of political reality and to the production of politically biased texts. The TPMC model provides a political mass communication related explanation as to the behaviour of journalists and translators surfacing in source and target texts and allows the formulation of implications concerning translators' critical awareness.

Figure 1 below contains the visual representation of the Political Bias Screener. The four constituent models of the analytical tool are in a hierarchical relationship: the output of a given constituent serves as the input of the following constituent. The first constituent is the superstructure constituent, the next is the macrostructure constituent to be followed by the CDA constituent and finally by the political mass communication constituent. The output of the superstructure constituent, i.e. Hoey's (2001) Problem-Solution Model, and the full source and target texts are the input of the macrostructure constituent, that is Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model. The output of the macrostructure constituent and the full source and target texts are the input of the TDSI Model. The output of the TDSI Model is generated along four Components: **Action**, **Context**, **Power** and **Ideology**. The output of the TDSI Model is the input of the TPMC Model. More precisely, the TDSI Model components of **Action** and **Ideology** serve as input for the component of **Bias** of the TPMC Model, and the TDSI Model components of **Context** and **Power** are the input for the component

of **Reality** of the TPMC Model. In Figure 1, the input and the output have been included with reference to each analytical tool constituent.

Figure 1 also shows the focus of analysis with reference to each constituent model: Hoey's (2001) Problem-Solution Model operates on the level of **superstructure**, Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model operates on the level of **macrostructure**, the Translation-centred Discourse–Society Interface Model operates on the level of **context** including social, cultural, historical, ideological and political contexts, whereas the Translation-centred Political Mass Communication Model also works on the level of context taking account of political reality and bias.

On the right hand side of Figure 1, the outcomes of the TDSI and TPMC Models are shown. The outcome of the TDSI Model provides the political bias of source and target texts, whereas the outcome of the TPMC Model yields conclusions regarding translator behaviour and implications for translators' critical awareness.

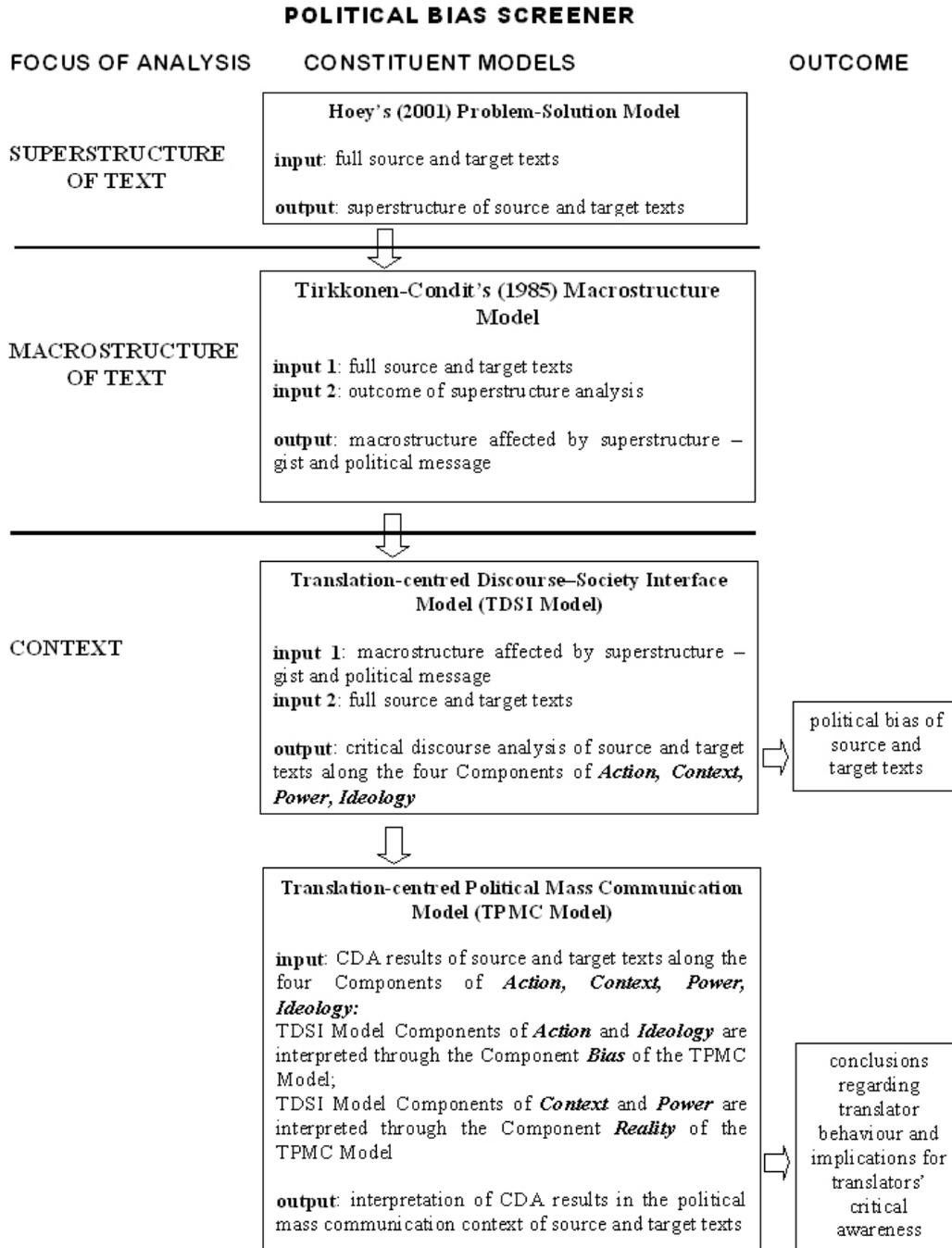


Figure 1: Visual representation of the Political Bias Screener

3.2. Empirical research: the first testing of the Political Bias Screener, validity and reliability

3.2.1. The first testing of the Political Bias Screener

For the first testing and the applicability of the Political Bias Screener, a translation assignment has been designed. As the current research seeks to explore the effects of all factors potentially resulting in bias and the (re)production of ideology in translated argumentative newspaper articles and test if these factors are analysable with the Screener, the above-mentioned translation assignment incorporates the following: two politically opposing source texts, two translators with opposing political orientations and two clients representing diverse ideologies entailing varied client expectations concerning the target texts and the respective readerships associated with the publication of these texts. In order to explore how client expectations affect translated texts, or more precisely, how translators perceive client expectations, the translation assignment has been developed to include the two major Hungarian opposing political parties, MSZP and Fidesz, as clients. As part of the translation assignment, the translators were commissioned to translate two argumentative Hungarian newspaper articles into English.

In sum, the translation assignment contains the following scenario: two articles reflecting two different and opposing political standpoints are translated by two translators, whose political commitments oppose each other, for two clients, i.e. two opposing political parties. This gives altogether 8 target texts: two translators (Translators 1 and 2) receive two source newspaper articles (*Kompenzáció* published in the Hungarian daily *Népszabadság* and *Másnap* published in the Hungarian daily *Magyar Nemzet*) to be translated for two different clients, MSZP (Client 1) and Fidesz (Client 2). The components as well as the political and ideological orientations of the components of the translation assignment are visualised in Figure 2 below.

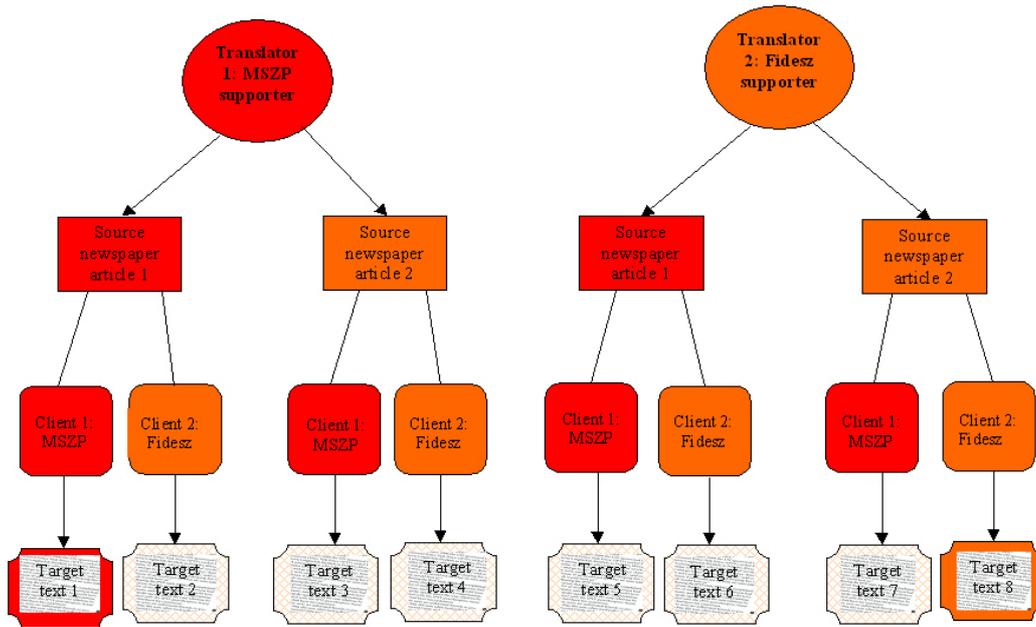


Figure 2: The eight target texts resulting from the translation assignment

3.2.2. The reliability of the constituent models of the Political Bias Screener

3.2.2.1 The reliability of the superstructure analysis

In the superstructure analysis, coding was effected, on the one part, by the writer of the present dissertation and, on the other hand, by a co-coder carefully trained in the terminology and application of Hoey's (2001) Problem-Solution Model. The two coders worked independently of each other and after effecting the analysis of the two source and the eight target language texts, they compared their findings and, in the case of disagreements, they agreed on the coding of certain problematic sentences. After the two coders independently classified the sentences of the source and target texts into the functional categories of the problem-solution structure, a reliability analysis has been performed. The classification of each sentence by the two coders was compared and a reliability value was calculated on the basis of the two coders' categorisation of the sentences in the source and target texts (is the coding of a given sentence identical for the two coders?). The congruence between the coding by the two coders was expressed in a percentage value. The value of the resulting reliability value was 83%, which can be considered as reliable since the classification of superstructure categories is

based on interpretation (Károly 2007). It can thus be concluded that the results of the superstructure analysis are reliable.

3.2.2.2 The reliability of the macrostructure analysis

The researcher and a co-coder carefully trained in the terminology and application of Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model worked independently on establishing the macrostructure affected by the superstructure of the two source and the eight target texts. After the macrostructure analyses have been completed, a reliability analysis has been performed to assess the reliability of the data provided by the two coders with reference to the macrostructures of the two source and the eight target texts. The reliability analysis has generated agreement indices, which vary between 77% and 86%. This shows that the results of the macrostructure analyses may be regarded as reliable.

3.2.2.3 The reliability of the CDA analysis

In terms of the reliability of the TDSI Model, it must be noted that there is no absolutely perfect method of excluding subjectivity or subjective interpretations in any CDA analysis. This a priori subjectivity is explained by the nature of CDA: CDA is "a socially committed scientific paradigm" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997:280) intending to establish and interpret properties of texts. Actually no interpretation of context whatsoever can be deemed absolutely objective due to the fact that for the interpretation of contextual information a "socially-based mental construct" (van Dijk 1997:16) is necessary for the researcher. CDA as analytical tool is qualitative as well as quantitative in nature: the latter feature, in turn, serves to improve reliability through the quantification of certain textual features. Therefore, the findings of the current dissertation are evaluated with this in mind.

3.2.2.4 The reliability of the political mass communication analysis

Political mass communication analysis is interpretative in nature, very much like CDA. This suggests that the results may contain subjective elements. This,

however, is counterbalanced by structure of the Political Bias Screener. In the Screener the TPMC Model is used for the interpretation of the results obtained with the help of the TDSI Model and thereby objectivity is ensured in the following way. The TDSI Model works with four components and with several aspects under each component. If the results of the TDSI Model obtained with the help of the different components and aspects of the Model point towards the same conclusion in the TPMC Model, then this, in our interpretation, seems to suggest that the research results obtained with the help of the TPMC Model are reliable. Reliability analysis, on the other hand, is unknown in the field of political mass communication analysis.

On the basis of the above and the results obtained in the analysis of source and target texts (c.f. Section 3.3), the validity of the Political Bias Screener has been confirmed.

3.3.Results

3.3.1 Superstructure

Based on the results of the superstructure analysis, it can be concluded that the target texts preserve the text-type specific functional characteristics of the problem–solution type argumentative source language discourse. This indicates that the target texts remain argumentative, which gives the reader the opportunity to agree or disagree with the arguments featured in the target texts. As a consequence, the target texts, similarly to the source texts, effect political persuasion. This indicates that the translators do not alter the superstructure of target texts in an attempt to effect ideological or political manipulation.

3.3.2 Macrostructure analysis

The results indicate that the propositional content of the macrostructures (gist and political message) of the source and target texts do not differ significantly. The results also show that translators do not alter the target texts to the extent that it

would cause a change in the macrostructure as compared to the macrostructure of the referent source texts. This indicates that translators do not alter the macrostructure of target texts in an attempt to effect ideological or political manipulation.

3.3.3 CDA analysis

The analysis has revealed that the target texts reproduce all properties of the source texts in terms of the component of **Action**. In connection with the textual features associated with the component of **Context** it can be established that there is a tendency to satisfy the political expectations of the client in the target texts. As far as textual features related to the component of **Power** are concerned, target texts seem to undermine the dominance of the ruling elite irrespective of client expectations.

As far as target textual features related to the component of **Ideology** are concerned, the following conclusions are drawn. Translators reproduce all **evaluative beliefs and opinions** of the source text once they are translating for clients who share the same ideology as the one expressed in the source text. If the client does not share the same ideology as the one surfacing in the source text, translators only partially reproduce such ideological contents. This seems to suggest that translators always keep the client and the ideology shared by the client in mind and they produce texts that ideologically suit the client. The **arguments**, on the other hand, are not manipulated by translators, however the **lexical choice** in the gists are manipulated. Lexis is selected in a way that the choice of lexis, as a rule, reflects the client's ideology. Furthermore, **stylistic features and metaphors** expressing ideology in the source text are reproduced on condition the ideology they express is identical to the ideology of the client. Otherwise, translators only partly reproduce such stylistic features and metaphors. With reference to the implicature expressed by the political message of the target texts, it is phrased in the target texts to reflect the ideology shared by the client. In a similar fashion, the **US vs. THEM distinction** is retained in target texts, however the lexical choice appearing in the referent sentences can support or

undermine the effectiveness of the ideology behind the distinction. The lexical choice in the reproduction of the US vs. THEM distinction is again suited to the client's ideology. Strange as it may seem, it is noteworthy that translators rarely include their own ideological beliefs that oppose the ideology of their actual client. As a summary, it can be concluded that the target texts reflect the political bias of the client.

3.3.4 Political mass communication analysis

The results obtained with the help of the political mass communication analysis suggest that the political mass communication setting of the target texts under scrutiny prompts translators to create target texts that politically and ideologically meet the political and ideological expectations of the actual client, which is very similar to journalists' behaviour in the same communicative context. It follows from this that, with reference to the translation of argumentative newspaper articles, translator behaviour is obviously and primarily influenced by client expectations and that the level of translators' critical awareness – according to the results of our analysis – is low.

3.4. The novelties and limitations of the results of the dissertation

The current research is unique in several ways. So far no attempt has been made to connect Translation Studies, text linguistics and political mass communication relying on the most current findings of these three research fields. The application of some of the theories used in the current dissertation are also novel: Hoey's (2001) Problem-Solution Model is applied to the text type of argumentative texts within Translation Studies and Tirkkonen-Condit's (1985) Macrostructure Model (in fact a Translation Studies specific adaptation of Kintsch and van Dijk's [1978] Model of Text Comprehension and Production and van Dijk's [1980] Macrostructure Model) is used to establish the gists and the political messages of the source and target texts.

Van Dijk's (1993, 1997, 2001, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model called the Discourse–Society Interface is connected with Translation Studies and a translation-centred adaptation of the Interface called the Translation-centred Discourse–Society Interface Model is proposed. Another novelty of the current research is the development and introduction of the Translation-centred Political Mass Communication Model specifically designed for use in Translation Studies research.

In terms of the limitations and future applicability of the findings of the current dissertation, it must be pointed out that the current research is intended as a qualitative study. The aim of the research has been to produce a discourse-specific theory and, on the basis of the theory, to develop, introduce and test a text-type specific analytical tool by way of the application of the tool in a case study. Given that the research is based on a limited number of source and target texts, the current results and findings cannot be generalized to any other text or text type than argumentative political newspaper articles, any other language pairs than Hungarian and English, any other political contexts than the Hungarian political climate of 2008 or any other translators than the two participants of the research. The results, however, are transferable and show possible tendencies to be justified by later research.

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Publications and conference presentations related to the topic of the dissertation

1 Publications

- Bánhegyi M. 2006. A kanadai politikai diskurzus vizsgálata fordítástudományi szempontból. *Fordítástudomány* Vol. VIII. No. 2. 21–38.
- Bánhegyi M. 2006. Mona Baker: Translation and Conflict. *Across Languages and Cultures*. Vol. 7. No. 2. 269–286.
- Bánhegyi M. 2007. Ch. Schaffner and H. K. Holmes (eds.): Discourse and Ideologies. *Fordítástudomány*. Vol. IX. No. 1. 125–130.
- Bánhegyi M. 2007. Myriam Salama-Carr (ed.): Translating and Interpreting Conflict. *Across Languages and Cultures*. Vol. 8. No. 2. 274–280.
- Bánhegyi M. 2008. A Translation Studies Oriented Integrative Approach to Canadian Political Discourse. *Across Languages and Cultures*. Vol. 9. No. 1. 77–107.
- Bánhegyi M. 2009. Imaginative Spaces in Canadian Political Discourse – An Integrative Approach to the Translation of Political Texts. In: Molnár J. (ed.) *Canada in the European Mind. Imaginative Spaces: Canada in the European Mind, Europe in the Canadian Mind*. Brno: Masaryk University. 17–30.
- Bánhegyi M. megjelenés alatt. Translation Studies, Power and Ideology: Text Linguistic Trends in the Analysis of Political Discourse. *Modern Filológia Szemle*.
- Bánhegyi M. megjelenés alatt. The Translator’s Ideology and the Reproduction of Superstructure. *Working Papers in Language Pedagogy*. Vol. 3.

2 Conference presentations

- Bánhegyi M. 2006. Canadian Political Discourse. *Canada in the European Mind – Europe in the Canadian Mind*. International Congress of CEACS. Debrecen, Hungary.

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