



Exploring the Role of Speaker Meaning in Translation: A Pragmatic Approach

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Abstract

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The investigation of the speaker meaning, whether in consideration of context or not, remains a prominent aspect of translation. However, the meaning or intention behind utterances is often dependent on context and the communicative intentions of speakers. The present article explores the concept of speaker meaning and pragmatics across different registers, including literary, colloquial, and conversational contexts, in order to scrutinize the translation of a number of English sentences and their Persian equivalents. To achieve this, a comparative description research method was utilized to analyze both corpora. It is crucial to note that understanding the speaker meaning can enhance the intelligibility, readability, and comprehensibility of the target text. The results demonstrate the significance of this area of study in recognizing and conveying accurate and natural meaning and creating linguistic structures through faithful and idiomatic translation.

بررسی نقش منظورگوینده در ترجمه: رویکرد منظورشناسی

بررسی منظوری گوینده، چه با در نظر گرفتن زمینه یا نه، یک جنبه برجسته در ترجمه باقی مانده است. با این حال، منظور یا نیت پشت گفته ها اغلب به زمینه و مقاصد ارتباطی گویندگان بستگی دارد. مقاله حاضر به بررسی مفهوم منظوری گوینده و منظورشناسی در زمینه های مختلف از جمله زمینه های ادبی، محاوره ای و عامیانه می پردازد تا ترجمه تعدادی از جملات انگلیسی و معادل های فارسی آنها را موشکافی کند. برای دستیابی به این هدف، از روش تحقیق توصیفی تطبیقی برای تجزیه و تحلیل هر دو مجموعه استفاده شد. توجه به این نکته ضروری است که درک منظوری گوینده می تواند درک، خوانایی و قابل فهم بودن متن مورد نظر را افزایش دهد. نتایج حاکی از اهمیت این حوزه مطالعاتی در شناخت و انتقال منظوردقیق و طبیعی و ایجاد ساختارهای زبانی از طریق ترجمه وفادار و اصطلاحی است.

واژگان کلیدی: منظورگوینده، ترجمه، قصد، منظورگرایی

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Introduction

The concept of speaker meaning is fundamental to communication as it encompasses the intended message behind an utterance. However, as Nida (1964) and Gentzler (1993) suggest, what a work conveys and what the author intends to convey are not always the same, and this can pose a challenge to translators. The ability to convey the speaker meaning accurately is a crucial aspect of translation. The current discussion in translation studies revolves around whether translators can achieve the additional meaning or intention behind the text and, if so, which approaches or procedures are most effective.

Although it is not a simple task, the evidence available, such as the use of specific words, stylistic register, and ideology, can help in identifying the author's intention. Translation scholars such as Catford (1964) and Larson (1984) consider meaning to be a unit of translation, which is concealed in the text and can be deciphered by the translator or reader. Structuralism researchers view meaning in the text as fixed and determined, and it is the translator's responsibility to convey both the primary and additional meanings accurately to avoid skewing in both pragmatic and semantic spans.

Falk (1978) argues that every time we speak, there is an intention behind our utterance, which may be implicit but is not necessarily conveyed directly by the utterance produced. In some cases, however, the utterance itself directly indicates our intention to the listener or reader.

To examine the translation of specific English sentences into Persian, the present article employs the comparative description research method to analyze both the English and Persian corpora. The results of this study highlight the salience of recognizing and transferring accurate and natural meaning while creating linguistic structures with faithful and idiomatic translation. Understanding the speaker meaning is crucial in achieving effective cross-linguistic communication, particularly in literary, colloquial, and conversational contexts, and this article contributes to the growing body of research on the topic.

Literature review

Speaker meaning is a fundamental concept in communication and translation studies. The investigation of speaker meaning has been explored in various theoretical frameworks over the years. Sperber and Wilson (2015) proposed that an adequate theory of communication requires going beyond Grice's notion of the speaker's meaning. They suggested that speaker meaning does

not possess the degree of unity or autonomy required to make it the appropriate subject of a philosophical definition or a scientific theory.

Amel (2014) investigated speaker meaning in relation to Marcelo Dascal's book, *Mashav HaRuah*. Amel used the concept of speaker meaning to gain a better understanding of the author's voice as it is heard in the book. Amel's pragmatic and hermeneutic inquiry focused on the meaning constitution of axiological concepts that were relevant to Mashav HaRuah's personality. Amel's work highlights the usefulness of speaker meaning in understanding the author's intention.

Falk (1978) defines semantics as the study of the direct, literal, and linguistic meaning of an utterance. However, speakers may convey more than one meaning when they speak, even if these additional meanings are not explicitly present in the sentences. Hurford et al. (2007) proposed that the meaning of sentences carried by words may be influenced by the speaker's will. They define "speaker meaning" as what a speaker intends to convey when using language, distinguishing it from "sentence meaning." They suggest that the gap between the two is possible to transfer a quite intelligible intention by using a sentence whose literal meaning is contradictory or nonsensical.

Davis (2005) defines speaker meaning and expression in terms of intention and indication. He distinguishes various kinds of speaker meanings and demonstrates that these definitions are in contrast to those of Grice. Davis argues that expressing a concept or other cognitive states is to provide a publicly observable indication of its occurrence in a particular way. Communication requires not only meaning but also understanding, interpretation, and expression.

Huang (2012) explored the role of speaker meaning in Chinese-English translation, emphasizing the importance of comprehending the speaker's intention in achieving effective translation. Similarly, Hatim and Mason (2017) discussed the significance of speaker meaning in literary translation, highlighting the challenges of conveying the author's intention through faithful and idiomatic translation.

Other scholars have also investigated speaker meaning in different contexts. For instance, Bach and Harnish (1979) proposed a formal theory of speaker meaning based on the notion of speaker reference. Kamp and Reyle (1993) developed a model of discourse semantics that incorporates speaker meaning as a central component. In recent years, Giora (2019) has proposed a cognitive-pragmatic approach to speaker meaning, emphasizing the role of cognitive processes in speaker meaning interpretation.

In conclusion, the literature on speaker meaning highlights its importance in understanding the author's intention and achieving effective cross-linguistic communication. The studies mentioned above demonstrate the usefulness of speaker meaning in various areas, including literary analysis, hermeneutics, and translation. These works contribute to the ongoing discussions in communication and translation studies and emphasize the need for a more detailed account of speaker meaning in these fields.

Methodology

Material

The purpose of the study was to examine the translation of a number of sentences in English and Persian versions of literary, colloquial, and conversational texts in diverse situations. To achieve this purpose, the study employed a comparative description research method, which involved analyzing both corpuses, and a corpus-based descriptive method of data collection, analysis, and discussion was selected.

The comparative description research method is a qualitative research approach that involves comparing and contrasting two or more phenomena to identify similarities and differences. In this study, the English and Persian versions of literary, colloquial, and conversational texts in diverse situations were compared to identify differences and similarities in their translation.

The corpus-based descriptive method of data collection, analysis, and discussion involves analyzing a large collection of texts, or corpus, to identify patterns and trends in language use. This method allows for a more comprehensive analysis of language use in different genres and situations and avoids any prescription, as the focus is on describing and explaining events rather than prescribing how they should be done.

Overall, the study employed a rigorous and systematic approach to examine the translation of English and Persian versions of literary, colloquial, and conversational texts in diverse situations. The comparative description research method and corpus-based descriptive method of data collection, analysis, and discussion were effective in achieving the study's purpose of providing a detailed analysis of the translation of these texts.

Results

The statement attributed to Will (1982) that everything can be expressed in every language suggests that any idea or concept can be communicated in any language, with the appropriate linguistic resources and skills. This aligns with the notion of linguistic relativity, which proposes that language shapes the way individuals perceive and think about the world.

Regarding the transferring of a speaker meaning or intention from one language to another, while it is possible to convey the basic content of a message in a different language, accurately conveying the speaker's intended meaning can be challenging due to differences in cultural and linguistic contexts. Various factors can affect how speaker meaning is detectable and procurable, including the speaker's communicative competence, the listener's interpretive skills, and the contextual factors surrounding the communication event.

To investigate these possible approaches to detecting and procuring speaker meaning, a range of theoretical and methodological frameworks have been proposed. These include Grice's theory of implicature, which emphasizes the cooperative nature of communication and the role of context in conveying meaning. Other frameworks, such as relevance theory and cognitive-pragmatic approaches, focus on the cognitive and pragmatic aspects of language use and the role of inference and context in interpreting speaker meaning.

In terms of methodological approaches, corpus linguistics has become an increasingly popular technique for analyzing language use and detecting patterns of speaker meaning in large datasets. Other methods, such as discourse analysis and conversation analysis, provide detailed insights into the communicative strategies used by speakers to convey meaning and achieve their communicative goals.

In general, the study of speaker meaning and its transfer from one language to another is a complex and multifaceted area of research that requires a nuanced understanding of language, culture, and communication. Various theoretical and methodological approaches can be employed to investigate how speaker meaning is detectable and procurable, and these approaches can provide valuable insights into the complexities of cross-linguistic communication.

1) Interlingua

Interlingua is a process of rewording or rephrasing words or sentences to enable the reader or translator to understand the speaker's intended meaning by analyzing both deep and surface linguistic structures. The goal of Interlingua is to create a common language that can facilitate cross-linguistic communication by identifying the shared linguistic structures and patterns present in different languages.

The Interlingua approach involves analyzing the underlying structures of different languages to identify the common elements that can be used to create a simplified language system. This involves identifying the deep structures, or underlying semantic and grammatical patterns, as well as the surface structures, or the specific words and phrases used in different languages.

By identifying the linguistic structures that are shared across different languages, Interlingua can facilitate communication between speakers of different languages, as they can use a simplified common language that is based on these shared structures. This approach is particularly useful in situations where there is a need for rapid and accurate communication between speakers of different languages, such as in international diplomacy or scientific research.

In Total, Interlingua is a process of rewording or rephrasing language to enable cross-linguistic communication by analyzing both deep and surface linguistic structures. By identifying the common elements present in different languages, Interlingua can facilitate communication between speakers of different languages and help to overcome linguistic barriers.

2) Intersemiotic

Intersemiotic translation is the process of transferring meaning from one semiotic system to another, such as from language to image, sound, or movement. It involves the transformation of one form of representation into another, while also preserving the essential meaning and aesthetic qualities of the original work.

In the context of intersemiotic translation, a translator can transfer the surface structure of a poem to a painting, for example, by conveying the visual imagery and emotional tone of the original work through the use of color, composition, and other visual elements. Similarly, a text can be translated into a film by transferring the narrative structure and character development of the original work into the visual and auditory elements of a film.

The process of intersemiotic translation involves a deep understanding of both the source and target semiotic systems, as well as the cultural and aesthetic contexts in which they operate. It requires a creative approach to translation, as well as a sensitivity to the nuances of both the source and target forms of representation.

Intersemiotic translation can be used to create new forms of artistic expression that combine elements from different semiotic systems, such as literature, music, and visual art. It can also be used as a tool for cultural exchange, allowing works from one culture to be translated and reinterpreted in another.

Overall, intersemiotic translation is a complex and challenging process that requires a deep understanding of both the source and target semiotic systems, as well as a creative approach to translation. It offers a unique opportunity to explore the boundaries between different forms of representation and create new works of art that combine elements from different cultural and artistic traditions.

3) Pragmatic

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that deals with the study of the use of language in context, and how speakers use language to convey meaning in specific situations. It focuses on the way people use language to communicate effectively, and how the intended meaning is conveyed beyond the literal meaning of words and sentences.

According to Yule (2006), studying language through the lens of pragmatics allows one to talk about people's intended meaning. This means that by analyzing the pragmatic aspects of language use, a translator can better understand the speaker's intended meaning and accurately convey it in the target language.

Falk (1678) also emphasizes that the study of meaning in pragmatics goes beyond the literal meaning of words and sentences. It includes aspects of meaning that are derived from linguistic performance, intentions of the speaker, shared knowledge between the speaker and listener, expectations of the participants in a conversation, and other contextual factors that relate to linguistic utterances.

In other words, pragmatics focuses on the way language is used to achieve specific goals and how meaning is created and interpreted in context. It involves analyzing the social and cultural

factors that influence language use, such as the speaker's background, the listener's expectations, and the overall context of the communication event.

By understanding the pragmatic aspects of language use, a translator can effectively convey the speaker's intended meaning in the target language and ensure that the translated text is appropriate for the target audience and context. Overall, pragmatics is a valuable tool for translators as it allows them to accurately convey the speaker's intended meaning in a specific communicative context.

4) Speech act

Speech act theory is a branch of pragmatics that focuses on the study of how speakers use language to perform certain actions, such as making requests, giving orders, or making promises. It is based on the idea that language is not only used to convey information but also to perform social actions and achieve certain goals.

In the example of a boss telling an employee "You are fired," the speech act is not just conveying information about the employee's employment status, but also performing an action that has consequences for the employee. The speech act here is an example of a directive, which is a type of speech act that aims to get the listener to do something.

Similarly, in the example of asking for salt, the speech act is not just a request for information about the listener's ability to pass the salt, but also a request for the listener to actually pass the salt. The speech act here is an example of an expressive, which is a type of speech act that expresses the speaker's feelings or attitudes.

Speech act theory emphasizes that the meaning of a linguistic utterance is not only determined by the literal meaning of the words, but also by the speaker's intended meaning and the social context in which the utterance is used. By understanding the different types of speech acts and their functions, a translator can accurately convey the speaker's intended meaning in the target language.

Overall, the study of speech acts is an important tool for translators as it allows them to understand the intentions and goals behind the language use and accurately convey the speaker's intended meaning in the target language.

5) Illocutionary force

Illocutionary force is a term used in speech act theory to refer to the speaker's intended communicative effect in producing an utterance. It refers to the intended force or impact of an utterance on the listener, beyond the literal meaning of the words used.

Falk (1978) defines illocutionary force as the speaker's communicative intention in producing an utterance. This intention can take various forms, depending on the type of speech act being performed. For example, a command has the illocutionary force of getting the listener to do something, while a request has the illocutionary force of getting the listener to provide some information or perform a certain action.

Falk also notes that illocutionary force is an aspect of pragmatics, as it is defined in terms of the speaker's intent and not the strictly linguistic meaning of sentence structure. This means that understanding illocutionary force requires an understanding of the social and contextual factors that influence language use, as well as the speaker's intended meaning.

By understanding illocutionary force, a translator can accurately convey the intended impact of an utterance in the target language, beyond its literal meaning. This is particularly important in situations where the intended effect of an utterance is important, such as in legal or diplomatic contexts.

Generally, illocutionary force is an important concept in speech act theory and pragmatics, as it helps to explain how language is used to achieve certain goals and communicate effectively in specific contexts.

6) Implication

Implicature refers to the additional meaning that is conveyed by a speaker beyond the literal meaning of the words used. This additional meaning is often inferred from context, shared knowledge, and other contextual factors.

In the example given, when B responds to A's question about liking hamburgers with "sandwich is sandwich," the implicature is that B does not have a strong opinion about hamburgers. Additionally, the speaker intends to convey the idea that all sandwiches are the same. This additional meaning is not explicitly stated but is inferred from the context and shared knowledge between the speakers.

Chomsky (1965) emphasizes that text and sentence meaning are not just comprised of surface structure but also include a deep structure. This deep structure refers to the underlying meaning and conceptual structure of a sentence, beyond its surface form.

Larson (1984) also notes that semantic structure is more universal than grammatical structure. This means that the basic units, features, and relationships of meaning are essentially the same across all languages. She suggests that the smallest semantic structure is the meaning component that groups together to form concepts. As a result, when translating, it is important to consider the deep structure and semantic meaning of a text, in addition to its surface structure. This allows the translator to accurately convey the meaning and intention of the speaker, including any implicatures that may be present. By understanding the shared knowledge and contextual factors that influence language use, a translator can effectively convey the speaker's intended meaning in the target language.

7) Multiple version translation of the same Source text

Multiple version translation of the same source text refers to the practice of having multiple translators translate the same text, resulting in different versions of the translation. This approach is often used to achieve a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the source text, as different translators may have different interpretations and understandings of the text.

Different translators may have different comprehension of the text and may achieve various additional meanings for the given sentences or the text as a whole. This is because translation is not just a mechanical process of transferring words from one language to another, but also involves understanding the cultural and linguistic nuances of both the source and target languages. By having multiple translators work on the same text, it is possible to achieve a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the source text, as each translator may bring their own unique perspective and interpretation to the translation process. This can lead to a more nuanced and detailed translation that captures the speaker's intended meaning more clearly and perspicuously.

However, it is worth noting that having multiple translations of the same text can also lead to inconsistency and confusion, especially if the translations differ significantly from each other. In order to address this, it is important to have a clear and consistent set of translation guidelines and standards to ensure that all translations are accurate and faithful to the source text.

Overall, multiple-version translations of the same source text can be a valuable tool for achieving a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the source text, but it is important to approach this practice with caution and ensure that the translations are consistent and faithful to the source text.

8) Shift

The Shift in translation refers to a change or deviation from the original source text in the process of translating it into another language. This may occur due to a variety of reasons including linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic differences between the source and target languages.

Every shift or change in the unit of translation is due to transferring the speaker's intended meaning properly to communicate with the target audience. In some cases, this may require the translator to add additional meaning or information that is not explicitly stated in the source text, in order to achieve a comprehensible meaning in the target language.

For example, a word or phrase in the source language may not have an exact equivalent in the target language, requiring the translator to use a different word or phrase that conveys a similar meaning. Similarly, cultural and pragmatic differences may require the translator to adapt the translation to the target audience, taking into account their linguistic and cultural context.

However, it is important to note that any shift or deviation from the source text should be done with caution and only when necessary to accurately convey the speaker's intended meaning. Any additional meaning or information added to the translation should be based on a clear understanding of the source text and the context in which it was produced. Overall, a shift in translation is an important aspect of the translation process that requires careful consideration and attention to detail. By understanding the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic differences between the source and target languages, translators can achieve a translation that accurately conveys the speaker's intended meaning in a way that is comprehensible to the target audience.

9) Coherence

Coherence in discourse refers to the idea that the various parts of a text or conversation fit together well and make sense as a whole. It is not just the sum of individual words or sentences, but rather the product of the relationships between them.

As Yule (2006) notes, coherence exists between people rather than in words or sentences themselves. This means that coherence is a product of the shared knowledge, expectations, and intentions of both the speaker and the listener.

In the example given, the coherence of the conversation depends on the shared knowledge and expectations of the speakers. When A says "that's the telephone" and B responds with "I'm in the bath," the listener understands that B is unable to answer the phone and that A should not expect an immediate response. This additional meaning is not explicitly stated but is inferred from the context and shared knowledge between the speakers.

Overall, coherence is an important aspect of effective communication and requires an understanding of the shared knowledge, expectations, and intentions of both the speaker and the listener. By creating a coherent discourse, speakers can convey their intended meaning more effectively and ensure that their message is understood in the way they intended.

10) Translation based on intuition

Translation based on intuition refers to the process of making translation decisions based on the translator's intuition or instinct, rather than relying solely on formal rules or tools such as dictionaries or translation software.

Sometimes a translator's intuition can suggest the exact and proper meaning that may not be easily attained through formal tools or methods. This is because translation is not a purely mechanical process, but also involves understanding the cultural and social nuances of both the source and target languages.

Wills (1982) suggests that systematic analysis and intuition need to complement each other in the translation process. This means that while formal tools and methods can be helpful in achieving a more accurate and consistent translation, the translator's intuition and personal experience can also play an important role in making translation decisions.

Intuition in translation is not an arbitrary or random process, but rather an informed decision-making process based on the translator's understanding of the context, linguistic and cultural nuances, and the speaker's intended meaning. By using their intuition, translators can make more nuanced and accurate translation decisions that capture the speaker's intended meaning more effectively.

Generally, translation based on intuition can be a valuable tool for translators, especially when formal tools and methods are not sufficient to capture the full meaning of the source text. However, it is important for translators to balance their intuition with systematic analysis and adhere to established translation standards and guidelines to ensure a consistent and accurate translation.

11) Interpretation

According to Hatim and Mason (1990), the idea of comprehension of the source text is misleading as it implies that the reader can fully understand the writer's intended meaning. They suggest that it is more accurate to say that the reader constructs an interpretation of the writer's meaning based on their own understanding and knowledge.

In their view, the reader's task is to construct a model of the speaker/writer's communicative intention that is consistent with the information provided in the text and their own knowledge about the world. This interpretation is not a passive process, but rather an active construction of meaning based on the reader's own experience, background, and knowledge.

This interpretation process is influenced by factors such as the reader's linguistic and cultural background, their knowledge of the subject matter, and their understanding of the context in which the text was produced. As a result, different readers may construct different interpretations of the same text based on their own unique perspectives and experiences.

Overall, Hatim and Mason's view emphasizes the active and interpretive nature of reading, highlighting that the reader constructs meaning based on their own understanding and knowledge. By taking into account the reader's interpretation of the text, translators can better convey the writer's intended meaning in the target language, taking into account the linguistic and cultural differences between the source and target languages.

12) Grice's Maxims

Grice's Maxims refer to a set of principles proposed by philosopher H.P. Grice that govern how speakers use language to communicate effectively in conversation. These maxims are based on the idea that speakers have a cooperative intent in conversation and that they use language to convey information that is relevant, informative, truthful, and clear.

The maxims are divided into four categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The Quantity maxims suggest that speakers should provide as much information as is necessary for the conversation, but not more than is needed. The Quality maxims require speakers to be truthful and to provide evidence for their claims. The Relation maxim means that speakers should be relevant and stay on topic, while the Manner maxims emphasize the importance of clarity, brevity, and coherence.

In Grice's view, the speaker's intention is a crucial factor in determining the meaning of an utterance, and the maxims serve as guidelines for how speakers can signal their intentions to their audience. By understanding the speaker's intention, the audience can better interpret the meaning of the utterance.

For translators, understanding the speaker's intended meaning can be useful for improving the intelligibility and comprehensibility of the target text. By taking into account the maxims of Grice's theory, translators can ensure that the translation accurately conveys the speaker's intended meaning and is clear and coherent for the target audience. This is an important factor in the translation process and can contribute to the overall quality of the translation.

Conclusion

As the primary task of a translator is to accurately convey the meaning of the source text in the target language, understanding the speaker's intended meaning is crucial. This includes both the semantic and pragmatic aspects of meaning, as well as the speaker's intention behind the words used. While words have their own individual meanings, they can also carry additional meanings based on the context and the speaker's intention. Therefore, a translator should be able to decipher these additional meanings in order to achieve an accurate and natural translation.

In addition, it is important for translators to prioritize the meaning over the aesthetic aspects of the text. While it is important to maintain the stylistic features of the source text, sacrificing the meaning for the sake of aesthetics can result in an inaccurate and confusing translation.

Understanding the speaker's intended meaning can also contribute to the intelligibility, readability, and comprehensibility of the target text in both human and machine translation. Machine translation systems that incorporate speaker meaning can produce more accurate and natural-sounding translations for a wider range of audiences.

In terms of future research, there is a need to investigate the speaker meaning in more detail, particularly in different genres and registers beyond literary texts. Researchers can also explore different aspects of speaker meaning using Halliday and Hasan's model or other related frameworks. It is also necessary to conduct more studies using a larger and different corpus of English literary works and their translation versions to further validate the findings of existing research.

In conclusion, understanding the speaker's intended meaning is a crucial factor in achieving an accurate and natural translation. Future research can continue to explore various aspects of speaker meaning to further improve the quality of translation in both human and machine translation.

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