



Discourse Analysis Applied in Audiovisual Translation

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ABSTRACT

The importance of Discourse Analysis can be seen from different perspectives. Each one contemplates distinct benefits related to applied linguistics, both for the teaching-learning of languages and for translation and interpreting, but also as a human. For this reason, in the context of the Bachelor's Degree in Languages at the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco, in which training for teaching and translation and interpretation is provided, we intend to emphasize the importance of Discourse Analysis for a Language Graduate, especially when practicing Audiovisual Translation. This work aims to identify different aspects of a real and spontaneous conversation to analyze several of the characteristics of oral discourse that are implicit in a dialogue and that can cause complications when transmitting the oral message in written form in the subtitling of audiovisual products.

Keywords: pragmatics; audiovisual products; subtitled

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El Análisis del Discurso Aplicado en la Traducción Audiovisual

RESUMEN

La importancia del Análisis del Discurso puede verse desde diferentes perspectivas. Cada una contempla distintos beneficios relacionados con la lingüística aplicada, tanto para la enseñanza-aprendizaje de lenguas como para la traducción e interpretación, pero también como ser humano. Por esta razón, en el contexto de la Licenciatura en Idiomas de la Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco, en la que se brinda formación para la docencia y la traducción e interpretación, pretendemos enfatizar la importancia del Análisis del Discurso para un Licenciado en Idiomas, especialmente cuando practica Traducción Audiovisual. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo identificar diferentes aspectos de una conversación real y espontánea para analizar varias de las características del discurso oral que están implícitas en un diálogo y que pueden provocar complicaciones a la hora de transmitir el mensaje oral de forma escrita en el subtítulo de productos audiovisuales.

Palabras clave: pragmática; productos audiovisuales; subtítulo

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of Discourse Analysis can be seen from different perspectives. Each one contemplates distinct benefits related to applied linguistics, both for the teaching-learning of languages and for translation and interpreting, but also as a human.

On the one hand, from the perspective of the human who communicates to survive, Discourse Analysis is a skill that allows us to make proper use of the language through understanding what we hear, but also what we are going to say. This is especially important for a language student and future professional in this field, since communication both in our mother tongue and in a second language and even in a foreign language must be carried out successfully.

On the other hand, from the social point of view, Discourse Analysis allows us to be able to know and recognize the elements that are not necessarily linguistic, but that are also an essential part of human communication. These elements cannot always be understood by people and can cause interference in a communicative act, which impedes the objective of language as a social tool.

Another important aspect is that Discourse Analysis as a competence demonstrates a high level of linguistic knowledge in a person who is dedicated to something related to applied linguistics. In the case of teaching, this knowledge will allow us as teachers to know profound aspects of the language we teach and, in turn, we will be able to transmit this knowledge to our students. In the case of translation or interpreting, this will allow us to be more adept at analyzing oral or written language and identifying the different messages and their connotations.

Finally, the in-depth knowledge of Discourse Analysis is what distinguishes us among people who speak two or more languages, but who have no knowledge beyond elementary conversational aspects. In other words, being able to understand much more than just what is evident in a discourse is in large part what makes us professionals in linguistics.

For this reason, in the context of the Bachelor's Degree in Languages at the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco, in which training for teaching and translation and interpretation is provided, we intend to emphasize the importance of Discourse Analysis for a Language Graduate, especially when practicing translation. It is necessary to highlight that within the degree curriculum, the aim of linguistic competence is to implement Discourse Analysis effectively (División Académica de Educación y Artes,

UJAT, 2018). Specifically, due to the complexity of audiovisual products and the mix between oral language and written language that they have, we decided to focus on Audiovisual Translation.

The analytical approach to discourse during Audiovisual Translation

According to Botella (2006), Audiovisual Translation is the modality that operates simultaneously through two communication channels: acoustic and visual. The most popular modalities are dubbing and subtitling. Chaume (2004) points out that acoustic elements can be words, paralinguistic information, soundtrack, and special effects, while visual elements can be images, written information on posters or labels. This type of translation is found in cinema, video, among other audiovisual products.

In this article, we will focus on subtitling. Miquel (2004) defines subtitling as the insertion of dialogues at the bottom of the screen, as well as other discursive and iconographic elements such as place names, labels, songs, among others. According to Chaume (2003), subtitles must coincide with the interventions on screen and respect length and time.

Although the beginnings of Audiovisual Translation date back to the beginnings of cinematography (Orrego, 2013); as a modality, it was not widely considered in research until the end of the 20th century, and it was thanks to the incorporation of television and video games that it was given the name we know today (Alsina & Herreros, 2015). In this sense, Nijland (2012) believes that, since television and cinema reach many people in all parts of the world, Audiovisual Translation plays an important role in cultural exchange and the transmission of information.

Regarding this modality, Gor (2015) considers that it is very difficult for a translator to have to work with a variety of formats and themes, in addition to the fact that the text is conditioned to the image and at the same time the translator is limited in space to add the translated text if we talk about subtitling. This complexity means that the translator must analyze many aspects more than just the language itself. And, when analyzing the language, the translator must consider discursive elements that perhaps would not be found during the translation of documents, books, among other non-audiovisual products, and that must be carefully interpreted keeping in mind that they are part of an oral discourse, not written.

According to Alanís (2015), previously translation studies focused on morphosyntactic aspects since a translation was intended to be faithful to the original text. However, starting in the 1980s, translation

studies began to focus on the text and not the language. Later, in the 90s, they began to address culture, pragmatics, communication, discourse analysis, semiotics, sociology, psychology, among other areas. This coincides with the historical moment in which, according to Alsina & Herreros (2015), Audiovisual Translation began to gain greater importance. Therefore, we could highlight the impact of this modality on the evolution of professional translation.

Murphy (2010) adds that the contemporary view of translation is based on the understanding of the complexity of the process that goes beyond absolute equivalence. In this way, the translators' efforts went from focusing on linguistic and textual elements to focusing on the understanding of culture as the main unit of a translation. In other words, the translation left behind normative and prescriptive analyzes to give way to descriptive approaches.

In this way, a translation involves a descriptive analysis of what happens in the communicative event to understand all the variants of the linguistic content. In Audiovisual Translation it is also necessary to understand the visual elements, as well as other sound elements that complement the speech.

Analysis of oral discourse in Audiovisual Translation

Language in general can be generated in different ways, but there is a main distinction: oral language and written language. In the case of oral language, it has some of its own characteristics that sometimes differ completely from the characteristics of written language, although similarities can also be found between the two with slight variations. These are usually related to the message of the discourse.

McCarthy & Carter (1994) consider that all linguistic messages must be sensitive to their receivers. However, texts that show no overt evidence of taking the receiver into account will be considered maximally monologic, and texts which depend crucially on overt receiver response, or which explicitly include assumed receiver response, will be considered maximally dialogic.

For example, dialogic elements include projected questions that the receiver might want answered, discourse markers and actual inclusion of what a second party's contributions might have been. Though, monologue discourse could contain rhetorical questions in which the receiver's reply is understood. Thereby, there are some specific aspects that could be found in both monologue and dialogue; thus, it is not simply concerned with whether one person or more than one is represented as speaking overtly, but

whether there is evidence that the discourse is considering a response by the receiver to the message as a whole and its subcomponents.

Consequently, in a dialogue, it must be considered the receiver's response or the non-linguistic aspects that can be interpreted as an answer such as gestures, hesitations, etc. Nevertheless, a monologue usually does not take the receiver's response into account to proceed with the message.

In accordance with McCarthy (1991), each of the stretches of language carry a function, which could be the force of requesting, instructing, asking, etc. In other words, a particular bit of speech (or writing) is supposed to perform a particular act. In spoken discourse, these are called speech acts.

Moreover, Coulthard (1985) thinks that speech acts are acts in which the speaker can perform: locutionary act which is the act of saying something in the full sense of say; illocutionary act which is an act performed in saying something and a perlocutionary act, the act performed by or because of saying.

Other elements of conversation that must be considered are feedback, repairs, repetitions, discourse markers, hedges, deictic language, and topic.

First, feedback is the way in which listeners show they are attending to what the speaker is saying (Paltridge, 2006a). For example:

Person: *Mmm... Yeah...*

(Use of eye contact)

(By paraphrasing what the speaker said)

In the case of an Audiovisual Translation, the translator must start from the intention of the linguistic element and not from the element itself to execute a translation and thus make the best decision when choosing a word or phrase equivalent in meaning.

Besides, repair is the way speakers correct things that are said to check the understanding of the conversation (Paltridge, 2006a).

Person 1: Because he's got *a girlfriend...*

Person 2: Oh, *a woman...*

For the translation process, this aspect is of utmost importance, since the translator must maintain the distinction between the terms and ensure that the correctness is evident within the dialogue and thus maintain the linguistic intention.

On the other hand, Thornbury (2005) says that repetitions give a sense of relevance by linking sentences.

For example:

Person 1: ...She's got an *analogue*.

Person 2: Oh you've got an *analogue* as well?

In the specific case of repetition, the translator must be careful and try to maintain an appropriate style in the target language. In the Spanish language, efforts are made to use a referent for the antecedent, usually a pronoun, to precisely avoid the repetition of a term. In the case of the given example, a construction like: "Oh, ¿tú también adquiriste uno".

Therefore, to decide whether to maintain the duplication of the word, the translator must consider aspects such as the style and naturalness of the speech and, specifically in Audiovisual Translation, also space and time.

In case of discourse markers, according to Thornbury (2005), they are linguistic devices that manage the cut-and-thrust-of-interactive-talk. For example:

Person: *Well... Yeah... I mean... You know...*

These types of linguistic elements are handled in different ways in the Spanish language, especially if the intention is to achieve a clear and concise message, which is why they are sometimes omitted from written discourse, as would be the case with subtitling. However, because it is a characteristic of oral discourse, the translator must analyze whether these elements are necessary to convey the main message and assimilate whether he has the space and time to add them to the translation.

Hedges are the expressions that the speaker uses to disagree in such a way as not to threaten the face of the other speaker (Thornbury, 2005). For example:

Person: *Yeah, but...*

In this way, the translator must be skillful in constructing the appropriate linguistic expression to maintain subtlety within the disagreement, so he must also possess the ability to distinguish the intention of these linguistic elements and not omit intentionality. In addition, he must keep in mind that in Spanish

messages that aim to be subtle or achieve "getting on someone's good side" contain detours, use softer or friendly language and sometimes the words are even phonetically modified so that they sound less harsh.

In this sense, the translation "sí, pero..." would be too direct, while options like "síp, pero..." or "o sea, sí, pero..." could achieve the expected intentionality. Again, the translator must consider aspects such as style, time, space, and contextual aspects such as the characters or speakers involved in the dialogue, their relationship, their ages, among other things in Audiovisual Translation.

On the one hand, expressions that refer to the people, things or activities in the immediate environment are considered deictic language (Thornbury, 2005). For example:

Person: *That* fire... *This* fire... *You*... *There*.

On the other hand, topic refers to stretches of talk bounded by certain topic or transactional markers (McCarty, 1991). For example:

Person 1: (Comes in holding his jacket)

Person 2: *That* look very nice, put *it* on and let's have a look at you...

In both previous cases, the translator must have the ability to analyze the speech so that he can make the written dialogue clear, since generally in oral speech these expressions are better assimilated as they are part of the spatial and temporality of the interlocutors, but in a written text it requires greater precision and, in the case of subtitling, the translator must consider whether the visual elements accompany the message in such a way that the viewer can understand the references used in the conversation.

Besides, McCarthy (1991) says that discourses have beginnings, middles, and ends. Hence, the structure of a speech is intended to be progressing. In a conversation, there is a process in which speakers perform their talking. In the case of oral conversation, opening sequences are quite common. For example:

Person 1: *Shall I tell you what happened to me yesterday?*

Person 2: Yes!

Person 1: Well, I was walking along the street...

In accordance with Paltridge (2006a), opening is the utterance that introduces the caller to the listening audience and readies the speaker for being on-air and for discussing the topic of the call, so the translator must maintain this intentionality in the translation.

Another important aspect during a conversation is turn-taking. They are ways in which we can signal that we have come to end of a turn (Paltridge, 2006a).

One example could be adjacency pairs, that according to McCarthy (1991) are parts of utterances in talk that are often mutually dependent. For example:

Person 1: *Thank you.*

Person 2: *You're welcome.*

These pairs are distinctive in each language, so the translator must be careful when translating the message of both elements together.

Finally, when the speakers mutually negotiate the end of the conversation there is a closing (Paltridge, 2006a). For example:

Person 1: *All right.*

Person 2: *Ok. I'll see you later.*

Thus, the translator must transfer this closure to the translation in such a way that it is precise and appropriate to the original style.

Oral discourse and written discourse depend on each other to a lesser or greater degree in various contexts. Both contain complex elements that require deep understanding and important referential information. And, when transcribing oral speech, it is made even more complicated by context-dependent elements of a face-to-face conversation like deictic words, topic, among other things.

Consequently, during an Audiovisual Translation exercise (especially in subtitling) where the translator must transmit an oral discourse in written form in the most natural way possible in the target language, the analysis of the discursive elements is essential to understand the meanings within of the message, which are not always semantically exposed.

METHOD

This work has the objective of identifying different aspects of a real and spontaneous conversation to analyze several of the characteristics of oral discourse which are implicit in a dialogue. These mentioned aspects correspond to the structure of a conversation and the elements that conform it. Discourse Analysis has been approached as a method, as a methodology and as an analysis technique. This "allows us to relate the semiotic complexity of discourse with the objective and subjective conditions of

production, circulation and consumption of messages" (Sayago, 2014, p. 3). This can be applied to both qualitative research and quantitative research.

In this analysis, the approach used is qualitative, since it allows research without numerical measurements, fully appreciating the elements investigated through interpretation and understanding (Cortés & Iglesias, 2004).

The selected conversation occurred in 2017 in the TV reality show of The United States *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, in which Michelle Obama was interviewed by the famous presenter Jimmy Fallon. It occurred when the cited country was in period of changes regarding its presidency. In this way, the topics pointed out in the conversation were related with the parting of the presidential family and the public and even private issues around it.

For this analysis, a transcription based on conventions determined by Paltridge (2006b) was made.

Transcription of conversation

Jimmy: Welcome uh back to the show uh I really appreciate I just want to personally say thank you for (.) being our only first lady that we had since we started late night, (.5) we've been doing bits and sketches together I don't even know,

Michelle: We have, we've done some really crazy stuff

Jimmy: Crazy stuff right I mean (.) we had potato sack race in the white house,

Michelle: That was the first thing, that was your introduction that was how he showed up at the white house,

(Public laughter)

Jimmy: I,

Michelle: First time (.) the headband,

Jimmy: and then Spandex=

Michelle: =Spandex (.5)

Jimmy: [laughs]

Michelle: was like ok.

Jimmy: I had spandex and a headband yeah and you go you got it changed

Michelle: All right I'm ready for this. I can be the first lady if this is what it entails.

Jimmy: [laughs] ok good yeah yeah.

Michelle: Sa↑ck races in the east room.

Jimmy: Uh I'm just so thankful and thank you for be your friendship and your leadership and uh and please come back on the show (.) as a citizen that is uh *welp* please,

(Public laughter)

Michelle: Oh absolutely.

Jimmy: wherever you are we will open a window.

Michelle: Let me just say you know I we didn't talk about this but I want to thank you, (.) you have been such an uh ah an ama↑zing partner (applauses) on all my initiatives, you (.5) you are funny, kind cute (cheers)

Jimmy: [laughs] thank you

Michelle: AND ↑and you have the best band in the land.

Jimmy: oh (inaudible) thank you

(Music)

Jimmy: I love you guys thank you very much

Michelle: I↑ love you guys

Jimmy: Ugh, my goodness.

Michelle: I love you guys.

Jimmy: Uh, is it getting you just emotional for you it's all goodbyes nowadays?

Michelle: ↑It is, it is. It is not so I feel like crying right now. And I didn't think that (.) it was gonna be that (.3) emotional because it's like yeah, we're ready we're good we're ready to go it's been 8 years, 8 years is enough we're packing up (.)

Jimmy: [laughs]

Michelle: but no it has been surpris↑ingly emotional for all of us in ways

Jimmy: last Friday

Michelle: we didn't expect.

Jimmy: Last Friday when you when you spoke at your event, you got choked out

Michelle: oh yeah

Jimmy: which I, I never see you, we never see you get that emotional (.5) what was it that trip you up or made you start?

Michelle: Talking about kids,

Jimmy: yeah

Michelle: talking about the future I mean kids are my heart.

Jimmy: yeah

Michelle: You know when I think about the fact that some of them are afraid, (.) you know about what's to come, (.5)

Jimmy: yeah

Michelle: you know I really what I say is I I don't want them to be afraid I want them to embrace the future and know that the world is getting better (.5) we have bumps in the road (.) we have ups and downs but I want out kids to like move forward I don't care where they come from with strength and with hope and that's, (applauses) (inaudible)

Jimmy: (inaudible) I love you for saying that. (.5) Uh speaking of emotional the speech last night from

Michelle: Oh gosh,

Jimmy: your husband the president I,

Michelle: that's another thing.

Jimmy: (inaudible) I lost it,

Michelle: yeah

Jimmy: I lost it at home I was crying on my wife's shoulder

Michelle: (inaudible) [laughs]

Jimmy: and I know that he's just the best man in the whole live world [laughs] I mean no way you can be a cooler human being than that guy, and

Michelle: (inaudible)

Jimmy: every time Maliah lost it I lost it she was,

Michelle: Oh yeah she looked over me she says "I can't believe it I'm gonna cry through the whole speech" and I was like "oh that's ok, that's alright".

Jimmy: She's so pretty she's so nice

Michelle: yeah

Jimmy: you have the ↑nicest kids and Sasha wasn't there because,

Michelle: She had a final, and it's like, you know the Obamas girl, you so↑rry.

(Public laughter)

Michelle: you take your test

Jimmy: Sorry you are going to missing it up.

Michelle: Sorry you can say goodbye later.

Jimmy: [laughs] I think that was the best example on how to be a (.) good student but also to be a good parent.

Michelle: [laughs]

Jimmy: That is uh, did you leave are you leaving something behind at the white house like are you like a secret note somewhere?

Michelle: yeah

Jimmy: That's what I would do=

Michelle: =Of course that's what you would do

Jimmy: I would totally leave

Michelle: I

Jimmy: or hide a secret note somewhere.

Michelle: I try not to base my life on what Jimmy would do.

(Public laughter)

Michelle: That's like, no we are really cleaning out and you know, um.

Jimmy: Many memories eh?

Michelle: Ye::ah.

Jimmy: What is it one room in particular you were like "I always had a good time in that room".

Michelle: Umm,

Jimmy: Like a big,

(Public laughter)

Michelle: You guys,

Jimmy: ga hey wowowowo hey wowowo hey HEY HEY HEY HEY (cheers)

Michelle: [laughs] (inaudible) Settle down settle down that's...

Jimmy: This is a family show, settle down, everybody settle down

Michelle: you guys grow up,

Jimmy: seriously

Michelle: all of you

Jimmy: I meant I meant

Michelle: Yeah Can you can you tell us... (inaudible)

Jimmy: [laughs] I came out wrong,

Michelle: yeah

Jimmy: I meant to say as far as far as a because we've been here we've shot sketches I'm just you know let's just pass together they're all great they're all great

Michelle: [laughs] yeah yeah yeah they're all great. Ok let's move on

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Firstly, one of the most important aspects that must be signed is the opening (Paltridge, 2006a), of the conversation. In this case, the first speaker, Jimmy, introduces the second one, Michelle, to the audience throughout words such as 'Welcome back', 'I really appreciate' and 'Thank you for' that indicates something that might be supposed such as previous situations. In this way, the viewer can notice that there is familiarity between both characters and therefore the language used contains casual and even humorous elements, which allows the translator to kept in mind a wide possibility of connotations during the translation of the messages.

Then, in the case of turn taking (Paltridge, 2006a), there are different aspects that can be mentioned. The first one is that there are many moments in which both characters do not finish their sentences, but each of them completes or complements what the other started to say. In oral discourse, this type of dynamic is very common and provides spontaneity and naturalness to the conversation. However, to translate the dialogue and translate it into subtitles, the translator has the difficult task of structuring the text in such a way that the interventions can be easily read by the viewer. This means that the translation depends

on the space available to the audiovisual product on the screen and the standards established to produce subtitles.

Moreover, there is a moment when Jimmy assigns the turn to Michelle by saying something that she must predict to complete the sentence (that includes personal information about Michelle that only she could know): "...Sasha wasn't there because...". Therefore, Michelle takes her turn by completing the previous sentence: "She had a final...", what is the manner of follow the conversation in this case.

Added to this, there is an example of adjacency pairs (McCarthy, 1991) in which Michelle thanks Jimmy in a complex way because she doesn't only say 'thank you' but she comments some compliments about him, therefore his answer is not a conventional 'you're welcome', it is instead of that another thanking. Then, we could find some examples of overlaps, but one of the most interesting is when Michelle wants to take the turn and she prevents Jimmy about her participation by rising intonation in the utterance 'We have'. Also, there is a part in which one overlap turns into a specific device. That is, Michelle wants to initiate the turn by saying 'Oh, absolutely' but as an overlap (that is at the same time a feedback) when Jimmy is saying "...as a citizen that is uh welp please," she can't complete her participation, therefore she takes the turn by introducing herself with a petition to talk: 'Just let me say'.

Added to the above, this conversation provides several relevant elements to be analyzed. One of this could be the Speech Acts (Coulthard, 1985). One case might be when Jimmy asks a question to Michelle in which the audience take a no conventional sense. The presenter mentions words such as 'a room' and 'a good time'. Here, Michelle says 'you guys grow up' to the audience of the show. However, it is clear that she is not ordering them to get older in a literal sense, since what she says has an illocutionary force in which she expresses her disagreement with the reaction of the public and even she informs the people about her discomfort in that situation.

Thus, there is a perlocutionary force that is asking people to be serious and not to take all things in inappropriate ways. In this case, it is obvious that the audience laughs because people there give a sexual connotation to the conversation. This situation is complemented with the participation of the live music band. The translator must assimilate all the elements around this communicative situation to build an adequate translation in which he can capture the different connotations, the expressiveness of the interlocutors, the intonation and even the power of oral discourse.

Also, one can find elements such as repairs (Paltridge, 2006a), for example when Jimmy corrects himself by restructuring a sentence (first person in plural instead of first person in singular) to include all the audience in his opinion: “I never see you, we never see you get that emotional”. And repetitions such as ‘crazy stuff’ or ‘Spandex’ that are used to follow the topic and give a sense of relevance to what sender says.

Furthermore, there are multiple linguistic devices that manage the cut-and-thrust-of-interactive-talk (Thornbury, 2005). These often appear during the unfinished participation of an interlocutor as feedback (Paltridge, 2006a), so they are elements that become complex in an Audiovisual Translation, since it implies including both participations at the same time in the text on the screen. However, given that the viewer has other ways of noticing feedback, such as eye contact, gestures, head nods, among other non-verbal elements, the translator could consider opting for omission on certain occasions.

In this way, we can notice the relevance of the response of each interlocutor to what the other says, not only with words but also with gestures, sounds, movements, among other aspects. In addition, we also see the response of a third party involved, which in this case is the public. As McCarthy & Carter (1994) point out, these aspects are characteristic of oral dialogue, so the translator must consider how to emphasize them in the text.

CONCLUSION

In this dialogue we can notice that there are multiple characteristic aspects of oral discourse that play a fundamental part of communication, but that in written discourse can be difficult to capture. These characteristics must be considered to transfer the message from one language to another, but also to transfer the message from an oral discourse to a written discourse.

Thus, the translator must analyze the speech in such a way that he considers the most important elements and manages to transmit in written form the essence of the oral conversation. For this reason, discourse analysis applied in Audiovisual Translation must be assumed as a fundamental part of the translation process.

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