

Pragmatic, Semantic, and Sociopolitical Facets in TV News Subtitling: A Critical Discourse Analysis of American Televised Interviews in *The Real News Network*

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v6i4.1879>

APA Citation: Farahi, M. (2024). Pragmatic, Semantic, and Sociopolitical Facets in TV News Subtitling: A Critical Discourse Analysis of American Televised Interviews in *The Real News Network*. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 6(4).83-104. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v6i4.1879>

Received:

21/09/2024

Accepted:

30/10/2024

Keywords:

TV news subtitling; Critical discourse analysis; Pragmatic-semantic-sociopolitical; Rendition strategies .

Abstract

Audiovisual translation has gained substantial attention over the past decade. Subtitling has played dynamic roles for all multimedia outlets, connecting narratives to a diverse global audience and allowing worldwide people to enjoy the same audiovisual experience. The study focused on an in-depth scrutiny of pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets of two televisual news interviews in *The Real News Network* (2011-2012). The first underscored the political rift within the Democratic Party as well as between the Democrats and the Republicans, while the second accentuated the presumed war on Iran trying to build a nuclear facility. The study aimed to identify the effect of conversational implicature, cohesion, coherence, deixis, ambiguity, and figurative interpretation on the conveyance of connotative meaning in context, seeking to investigate the fluently elusive nature of news statements wherein ideologically bound microscopic language is operative. Part of the analysis equally aimed to control the intricate hindrances encountered in the subtitling process. The study investigated the way cognitive, social, and ideological dimensions function in the process of subtitling TV news, adopting a critical discourse analysis method (Van Dijk, 1998). The data of the study which comprise a corpus of the interviews' script and 379 subtitles were analysed to unveil the power of the devices implemented to accurately convey the intended beliefs. The findings which showed strikingly salient specifics vis-à-vis the source and target utterances can be of riveting worth for audiovisual translators at large and news subtitling specialists in particular.

1. INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual translation (AVT), and mainly TV news subtitling, is part of a multifaceted reconceptualization process in which the target text (TT) is often ideologically manipulated to meet the dominant norms of the target society. Many studies have tackled this phenomenon using different discursive approaches like critical discourse analysis (CDA), mostly addressing the semantic facet of TV news subtitling. In this vein, pragmatic and/or sociopolitical perspectives have largely remained less-researched. The present study is an attempt to fill this research void, analyzing the threefold intricacies altogether in American TV news in light of the CDA model (Van Dijk, 1998). The study analyzes TV news subtitles to reconnoitre their representation of pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets, connotatively examining the

underlying ideologies, language, and discourse strategies in context. TV news are textual macrostructures that have numerous functions. Traditionally, they have been seen as having semantic and pragmatic functions (Bell 1991; Van Dijk 1988), although such a conception is not without its anomalous glitches (Ifantidou 2009). A fascination with the global AVT and an interest in TV news have led to investigating the three facets of subtitling American onscreen news.

The realm of AVT has recently received considerable attention. A slightly growing number of research studies on subtitling televised news are now available. The setting for this research is Morocco in which subtitling and dubbing onscreen news from French, English, or Spanish into Standard Arabic (SA) are the most common types of AVT. All subtitles shown in the Moroccan TV programs are open subtitles—rather than closed subtitles, implying that the audience cannot turn them off. The omnipresence of subtitles on the Moroccan TV screen makes it a customary trait as people are greatly adapted to watching TV programs and reading subtitles on a simultaneous basis. Subtitling does not only involve translating televised dialogue and narrative but reasonably includes the image and soundtrack. Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007) define subtitling as “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)” (p. 8). Additionally, there are two types of subtitling, i.e., intralingual and interlingual. Intralingual subtitling which refers to subtitles in the same language is frequently made for the deaf. Conversely, interlingual subtitling which is the focus of the current study involves two different languages.

In the current study, focus is shed on the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets of AVT, TV news subtitling to be specific. The topic is of paramount importance particularly when it comes to politically loaded televised interviews wherein fluently microscopic language is largely effective. The videos extracted from *The Real News Network* (TRNN) embody the use of microscopic linguistic items and discourse markers. TRNN founded by Paul Jay and Mishuk Munier in September 2003 in Toronto is a global news channel based in Baltimore, Maryland, covering both national and international news (www.therealnews.com). Emphasis is equally shed on the hindrances encountered by the subtitler while rendering these ideologically seated items and markers. Various queries are raised as to whether the subtitler has kept the source text's (ST) intended meaning or has somehow misrepresented it, modifying

it to reframe the target addresses' beliefs. A misinterpretation of the intended meaning which might be triggered by an inappropriate use of the rendition strategy would automatically lead to a change in the viewer's perception of the subtitled topic, yielding a different meaning and a different understanding of the source script items. The videos under concern tackle the US government's concerns about the political rift within the Democratic Party (DP) and Iran's attempt to construct nuclear weapons. Analysis is shed on the elusive and ideological nature of TV news statements.

The general aim is to improve comprehension of the tripartite underpinnings of media discourse and its complexity, determining the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets represented in the TV news subtitles and the accompanying discourse techniques implemented. The study, thus, examines how various TV news subtitlers use language and discursive markers to reproduce ideological standpoints, and how these ideologies are linguistically constructed. The current study contributes to the field of media studies, investigating how TV news uses language and discourse to shape public opinion. In CDA, the approach is critical as it is both linguistically bound and socially seated. Transcending the mere portrayal of language and formal features of discourse, CDA seeks to examine the relations between ideology, language, and society. CDA fills the breach between linguistic microstructures and macrostructures, unveiling hegemony relations and hidden sociopolitical moves in the source script. That being said, the study seeks to answer two research questions. First, what are the strategies implemented by the subtitler to render the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets into the subtitled SA TV news version? Second, are there any hindrances encountered while rendering the ST English items into the TT? If there are any, what are these hindrances? The research study hypothesizes that the improper rendition of the three facets in onscreen subtitling does not affect the target audience's utmost comprehension of the connotative meaning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Media discourse refers to the language and communication implemented in numerous forms of media such as TV news programs, newspapers, and social media networks, covering the language style and descriptions used by media outlets to disseminate various forms of content to the target audience. Being created by media professionals or journalists, media discourse is mostly constructed to shape public opinion on a given issue. Van Dijk (2019) examined the way media discourse was implemented in the coverage of the Syrian war. The study found that media discourse was influenced not only by politicians and military structures but also by the media industry itself, concluding that the media industry should take an active role in creating a more effective communication process. Adopting a CDA approach, Kalsi

(2017) investigated US national newspapers' representations of the discursive construction of the war in Iraq, involving contextual, textual, and historical-diachronic analyses. The findings showed that media offer a narrow range of discursive possibilities that delimit the parameters of discourse.

AVT is a branch of translation studies pertinent to audiovisual products, transferring the global meaning of an ST into a new one that is equal to the first but in another language (Perego & Taylor, 2012). AVT occurs through two key channels, that is, the visual channel which includes subtitles, captions, and commentaries, and the auditory channel which encompasses music, noise, and silence. The most popular types of AVT are dubbing and subtitling. Dubbing replaces the source language soundtrack with a target language soundtrack. Subtitling, on the other hand, keeps the original soundtrack, superimposing a translation on the visual image of the TV program (Pedersen, 2011, p. 4). Other types of AVT include voice-over, which is performed by a speaker who reads a script during a show; simultaneous subtitling, which is performed during a live show by a re-speaker; simultaneous interpretation, which involves a pair of interpreters who translate the message simultaneously; audio commentary, which is a comment added to a soundtrack by one or more speakers adding information to the audience; multilingual diffusion, which is an option of choosing languages on a TV menu; captions, which provide further explanations on screen like places, dates, names, and years; displays, which consist of newspapers titles, road signs, and posters (De Linde & Kay, 2009, p. 2).

The importance of TV news subtitling is self-evident as it is considered an effective tool by which news information is diffused beyond national boundaries. Although the relationship between televised news and translation studies has been relatively limited (Scammell, 2016), many scholars have attempted to set the ground for investigating the subject from various angles. Bielsa (2016) also posits that news translation requires the “thoroughgoing modification of texts in order to make them suitable for new audiences” (p. 200). The adaptation of TV news is affected by the type and original representation of the information delivered, given that news originates in one source culture and is re-arrogated and renovated in a different target culture (Orgad, 2012, as cited in Bielsa, 2016, p. 200). In the field of TV news, the connotative meaning is tackled with respect to the selection of proper words and phrases in a way that preserves the intended meaning, taking into account the subtitler's background, censorship, norms, and beliefs of the target audience. Alternatively, foreign TV

news subtitling can be challenging if the discourse is already ideologically oriented, resulting in different interpretations of the authentic intended meaning.

Unlike other typologies of translation, subtitles are depicted as ‘transient’ as they follow the image and disappear shortly after having read them, without allowing to re-read them again. Subtitles are also considered ‘polysemiotic’ since they use both visual and spatial bounds. Subtitles are classified according to five parameters. Linguistic parameters include intralingual subtitles, interlingual subtitles, and bilingual subtitles. Temporal parameters can be pre-prepared subtitles, i.e., offline subtitling or real-time subtitles, i.e., human-made/machine-translated subtitling. Technical parameters are composed of open subtitles and closed subtitles. Methods of projecting subtitles which can be mechanical, photochemical, optical, laser, or electronic. Distribution format which involves cinema, TV, DVD, or Internet (Pedersen, 2011).

Baker (1992) has defined pragmatics as “the study of language in use: of meaning as generated by specific participants in specific communicative situations, rather than meaning as generated by an abstract system of linguistic relations” (p. 302). AVT acts as an explanatory tool of the language in use as it tackles various languages to which it restates what has been said or written in the source material (Hickey, 1998, p. 46). Therefore, it is thought that pragmatics and AVT share common features. Pragmatics is regarded as “a division of semiotics” and AVT is viewed as “a kind of semiotic interpretation” (Hassan, 2011, p. 13). Pragmatic, semantic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and cross-cultural aspects are essential in AVT to render an effective interpretation of the writer’s intended meaning in the ST for the target audience (Hatim & Mason, 1990, as cited in Dicerto, 2018, p. 52).

A pragmatic approach to AVT examines the rules and principles governing the use of language over and above the rules of syntax or morphology, and what makes some uses of language more appropriate than others in communicative situations. Speech acts, deixis, rhetorical structure, presupposition, conversational implicature, and the management of reference in discourse are some pragmatic aspects mostly studied in subtitling. Grice (1975) gives additional information derived from inferences, i.e., ‘implicature’, distinguishing conventional implicature from conversational implicature. Conventional implicature is derived from the meanings of particular expressions. Conversational implicature is derived from pragmatic principles like the conversational maxims and the cooperative principle. According to the cooperative principle and the maxims, if the presenter’s comment looks irrelevant, the listener will seek to build a set of inferences to make it relevant or at least cooperative (Green 1989, p. 91).

Deictic features have also been subject to extensive treatment in referential semantics and pragmatics (Levinson 2004). In addition to the person, time and place deixis of the speaker, Levinson (1983) adds the discourse deixis defined as “the point [wherein] the speaker is currently at” and the social deixis understood as the “the speaker’s social status and rank” (p. 64). Following Lyons (1977) and Fillmore (1997), Levinson (2004) adds social deixis which covers the encoding of social distinctions that are relative to participant roles and discourse deixis which involves the encoding of reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located. The deictic centre is generally “located within the context of utterance by the speaker” (Brown & Yule 1983, p. 52), shifting in a conversation as the speakers take turns. While deixis is understood as a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon, previous studies have tackled the linguistic forms through which it is expressed, mainly connectives, subordinators, verbal tenses, and adverbs, to name but a few.

Pertinent to this analysis is the use of cohesion and coherence as characteristics of the written as well as the spoken discourse. According to Baker (1992), “cohesion is the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text, and coherence is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text” (p. 218). Connectives are closely related to the formation of cohesion and coherence. Pander Maat and Sanders (2006) define connectives as one-word items or fixed-word combinations that express the relation between clauses, sentences, or utterances. According to Hoey (1991), “cohesion is a property of the text and [...] coherence is a facet of the reader’s evaluation of a text” (p. 12). Put differently, cohesion is viewed as objective, whereas coherence is regarded as subjective. The judgments of the former are somewhat fixed, while those of the latter may vary from addressee to addressee. The relationship between cohesion and coherence can be further illustrated by the following example: “A cat entered the classroom. Thus, I activated it and switched it off.” The example is cohesive by the presence of the connective ‘thus’, but it is not coherent. How can you activate a cat and switch it off?

AVT hindrances are the concern of all subtitlers, either novice or professional. The term ‘rendition strategy’ refers to a method or procedure used by translators to solve a particular problem. Baker (1992) proposed eight translation strategies, i.e., superordinate, neutral/less expressive words, cultural substitution, loan words, paraphrasing using related words, paraphrasing using unrelated words, omission, and compensation. According to Ghazala (1995), translation problems can be related to sound, lexis, grammar, or style. The author introduced three main categories of translation strategies, that is, literal (word-for-word and

one-to-one), free (bound and loose), and direct translation strategies. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) also proposed seven rendition strategies, namely, borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. According to Assis Rosa (2001), reduction in subtitling which is equally a common strategy is triggered by several reasons. First, reduction may result from the change of channel, medium, or code such as the change from spoken register to written register. Accordingly, spoken features of the ST are often deleted. Second, reduction may be caused by the selection criteria of subtitling such as the need for text density due to time and space constraints—typically limited to a maximum of two lines.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Televised foreign TV news mostly serves an agenda-driven cause, attempting to influence or convince the audience with specific ideas and facts that are framed from their original sources (Fawcett, 1997, p. 108). Consequently, translators entrusted with rendering such news must systematically deconstruct the language intricacies of the original source material and adapt them to meet the linguistic and social conventions of the target audience. The current paper aims to explore two primary points. First, it seeks to unravel the elusive nature of TV news in which microscopic language is operative, unveiling pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets. Second, it aims to underscore the predominantly employed translation strategies and frequently encountered hindrances in the process of subtitling TV news.

The current study focused on onscreen news because TV has a vital role in public information processing. The research design adopted is a qualitative CDA. CDA can uncover hidden bias and manipulation in communication. A corpus of TV news scripts and 379 subtitles streamed on the TRNN TV channel are analyzed.¹ The research is dedicated to focusing on a textual corpus of the news subtitles that revolve around the rift within the DP and the American–Iranian conflict, specifically Iran attempting to build a nuclear facility. The representation of such topics by the presenter and the interviewees under concern reflects a sort of ideological conception, identifying different discourses and positions. Certain methodical procedures are applied to critically analyse the corpus data. The first procedure is collecting

¹ - The Real News Network. (2011, Nov 6). *The Emperor Has No Clothes* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7ZLiwyGZJQ>

- The Real News Network. (2012, Jan 12). Why Did Defense Secretary Edward Leon Panetta Say Iran Not Building Nukes? [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJy7MneOH1g&t=48s>

and transcribing news subtitles from the channel, focusing on the underlying facets represented in the subtitles. The second procedure is analyzing the subtitles based on the concepts addressed through converging a linguistic description, a discourse analysis, and an interpretation of the connotative meaning. The third procedure is listing the implications of the tripartite facets in foreign news subtitling.

Van Dijk's (1998) model which highlights the cognitive, social, and ideological dimensions of discourse is adopted as a theoretical framework. The model examines the interaction between cognitive structures and social structures in the process of discourse production, interpretation, and comprehension. It is a comprehensive framework that combines insights from cognitive psychology, linguistics, and social sciences to examine how language and discourse shape cognition, social structures, and ideologies. Cognitive processes such as inference, presupposition, and implicature are crucial in understanding how meaning is derived from linguistic expressions. The social dimension focuses on the role of social context, including the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts. It also stresses the role of social structures—such as race, gender, class, and institutional settings—in influencing the production and interpretation of discourse. The ideological dimension emphasizes how language contributes to the construction and dissemination of resistance against dominant ideologies, beliefs, values, and representations. Discourse can reflect hegemonic ideologies, strengthen cultural norms, and shape public opinion. It explores how ideologies are entrenched in discourse through numerous microstructure linguistic strategies, i.e., re/framing, presuppositions, persuasive techniques, and lexical choices. The microstructure strategies emphasize the linguistic components used to transfer the macrostructure's representations.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Although onscreen subtitles are practically short in length, they are pointers to guide the attention of the audience. They give the viewer whose perspective must be taken into account an idea or a summary of what the story is about in a mesmerizing way. To make an effective rendition of the ST items, the subtitler should translate the connotative meaning of some given items and structures to help transfer the cognitive, social, and ideological dimensions inherent in politically loaded TV news discourse. What follows is a panoramic critical analysis of the subtitles in light of the conveyed pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets and the encountered technical hindrances amid the process of subtitling.

4.1. The Pragmatic Facet in Televised News

It has been argued that although the news media present reality ‘as it is’, news presenters, editors, or subtitlers most of the time construct a subjective picture of that reality. This is accomplished by selecting and organizing information in a way that makes sense to them and their audiences, framing and guiding their thoughts. Therefore, news translation would be considered at least in this sense a subjective representation of the world. TV discourse is politically and ideologically seated. Unlike the science language which is characterised by its technicality and the language used in cartoons which is incarnated by its comicality, TV news language is politically defined. For example, the statements given by the Secretary of Defense L. E. Panetta are an interesting case study to highlight the ideological dimension of TV discourse. News presenters or interviewees eclectically select their words, using microscopes before they would say anything to the public. This suggests in the long run that between lines is what the reader, the listener or the viewer is left with to comprehensively grasp the full picture. Without grasping what is not explicitly stated, the fully understood connotation of the utterance would be unanimously incomplete or misinterpreted. This entails that the subtitler has to conduct previous deep research of the subtitled audio-visual materials.

The first video under concern tackles the splits within the DP. In the USA, there are two dominant contemporary political parties which are, to use the video terms, the centre-right to right-wing which constitutes the Republican Party (RP)—also known as the Grand Old Party (GOP)—and the centre-left being the range of left-wing ideologies which constitutes the DP. Within the DP, there is also a division which constitutes two other wings, a center-left which is the progressive and an extremist side. The latter consists of proponents who are so close to the republican conception and policy. Norman Solomon who is an American journalist and media critic tries to defend the outlook of the DP to which he belongs, providing a critical view of his opponents within the DP, i.e., extremist side. According to him, the fact that the DP has its own set of affluent as well as common people that stand in the opposite direction or at the end of the ‘spectrum’ produced this political split. The working class needs social security, jobs, and health care; as for the rich, they are not in need of state aid at least at this level.

Norman Solomon criticises Obama’s policies, implying that the latter compromises too much and that he is not strong enough to hold the democratic conception or ideology but rather shifts repeatedly in both directions. According to him, he crosses the ‘borderline’ between the Democratic and the Republican conception. In contrast, the Republicans do not compromise as their beliefs are somehow fixed. The interviewee tries to defend the outlook of the DP, providing a critical view of his opponents within the DP who have ideas that slightly intersect

with the RP conception. Thus, all the words which are used in this context are not at random but rather stand for ideologically loaded discourse.

The subtitler must then be aware of these facts while translating. The language which is used by the Democrat is not neutral, given his discourse is produced from an ideological standpoint, that of the progressive Democrats. One of the main difficulties is the subtitling of some utterances that have implicit meanings. That is to say, the intended meaning is the unsaid. Translating the title of the first TV news interview “The Emperor Has No Clothes” should not be interpreted at the literal level, that is, a person scantily clad. Thus, the title should not be translated as [ʔal 'imbra:tʰo:r bidu:ni malabis ʔaw 'jibh ʕa:rin] but rather as [ʔa'rraʔi:s bidu:ni ʔafka:r]. The task of the TV news subtitler is to provide a translation of the connotative meaning, finding proper semantic equivalence of some terms such as ‘the emperor’ subtitled as [ʔa'rraʔi:s] and not as [ʔal 'imbra:tʰo:r].

Consider this sentence as well “We have to fight for progressive principles or this country will continue to move rightward” plainly translated as [... ʔaw satastʰami'rro ha:ðihi ʔal bila:d fi: ʔal i'ttiza:hi naħwa ʔal jami:ni]. The subtitle is literally correct but it does not render the intended meaning. It is possible to translate it differently by means of interpreting the implicit message which is encoded [... ʔaw satastʰami'rro ha:ðihi ʔal bila:d naħwa taba'nni ʔal xitʰa:b ʔal zumho:ri]. The second translation is much more acceptable as it matches the pragmatic facet, rendering the connotative meaning using H. P. Grice’s pragmatic theory of conversational implicature. Implicature which is a term coined by Grice refers to what is suggested or implied in an utterance even if it is not openly expressed. Conversational implicature is one of the four maxims, referring to the extra meaning implied within discourse (Grice, 1975, p. 56). The pragmatic facet of the intended meaning is also represented in this instance “This country is not about Wall Street” translated as [ʔi'nna ha:ðihi ə'ddawla lajsat li'wa:l stri:t]. This highlights the fact that Wall Street stands against the interests of the proletariat, the common people. Thus, the following subtitling would sound much more appropriate to the target audience [ʔi'nna ha:ðihi ə'ddawla lajsat lil zumho:ri'jji:na].

In the quotation below, the ideas are uttered in a coherent way to exert an effect on the target audience. This can be interpreted as an attempt to evoke the idea that the Democrats are seriously determined to help the common people find practical solutions for societal problems. It is no wonder that the progressive Democrat has organized his speech in a certain cohesive and coherent way:

We have seen **however** a way in which the administration has accommodated itself to the wall of the right-wing [...] **And then after** moving in that direction, moves in that direction again and again **while** the right-wing Republican wall moves not at all. And **so this** dynamic of continuing to enable the rightward move of the frame of discourse and political debate **has I think been very** damaging for progressive possibilities. **That's why** I often quote Paul Walston [...] who said that he wanted to fight for and represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party. **And I certainly** intend in Congress to fight for and represent the progressive wing [...]. **We have to** fight for progressive principles **or** this country will continue **to move rightward**. (TRNN, Nov 6, 2011, Scene 01:34–02:33).

The interviewee used many deictic tools to make his speech coherent and cohesive (the items in bold). The deictic elements relate the utterance to a particular time, place, speaker, and discourse context. The source items need thus to be aptly rendered and properly subtitled to help convey the identical intended meaning. By mentioning “the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party”, he underlines the fact that the DP has a wing which does not uphold the Democratic principles and progressive conception. Nonetheless, the interviewee stipulates that the Democratic wing agrees with the Republicans solely in certain crisscrossing policies.

4.2. The Semantic Facet in News Broadcast

Semantics which is the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences deals with the interpretation of linguistic items as used by agents within particular contexts or circumstances. However, in conventional semantic analysis, there is always that tenacious attempt to focus on what the words, phrases, or sentences literally typify, instead of what the speaker might want them to mean on a given topic (Yule, 2010, p. 112). In the current CDA qualitative study, the connotatively interpreted semantic facet of the subtitled items and utterances equally rendered interesting data. First, the title “The Emperor Has No Clothes” is a metaphor. It can be read as an allusion to a fairy tale translated into over 100 languages by the Danish author Hans Christian Anderson. It is about a vain emperor who gets exposed before his subjects. He cares only about his clothes and his appearance and asks to have a cloth which is invisible to anyone who is not apt for his position. No one could admit that the emperor has no clothes; otherwise, he might be considered not fit for his position. However, a child inadvertently revealed that the emperor is undressed. The idea refers to the fact that the majority of people ignore absolute truth and immerse in collective ignorance, even if all the blatant circumstances show otherwise.

TV news titles are actually textual macrostructures that have numerous functions. They have been previously seen as having semantic and pragmatic functions (Bell 1991; Van Dijk 1988). In this context, the title can be used to stand for a situation in which the majority are somehow unable to criticize given facts because others think they are good or right the way they are. They may even know the truth but still ignore it and claim the contrary. “The Emperor Has No Clothes” reflects the idea that the president lacks or even has no ideas pertinent to the political rift within the DP or between the Democrats and the Republicans. Hence, it is translated using figurative interpretation as [ʔa'rraʔi:s bidu:ni ʔafka:r ʔaw tanqos^oohu ʔafka:r] to sidestep semantic ambiguity. Semantic ambiguity arises when an utterance can have two or more different meanings due to the syntactic structure of the utterance. Semantic ambiguity is when a person, a televised news presenter or interviewee in this case, makes a microstructurally ambiguous statement, impeding the ST meaning and equally befuddling the target audience. Nevertheless, semantic ambiguity is intentionally used in this specific instance to undermine the stance of the political opponent, the DP to be specific.

The interviewee used the item “Wall Street” to stand for the businessmen and the “Main Street” to stand for the common people or the working class. Both are used as metaphors to embody thematic meaning, being one of the seven types of meaning instigated by Geoffrey Leech (1981). Thematic meaning is a conception that is communicated by the way a speaker organizes the message, in terms of focus and emphasis, helping the audience to fully grasp the message and its implications on a proper basis. Likewise, the interviewee used the term “wall” as a metaphor to highlight the political stability of the Republicans, implying the idea that the wall does not move at all like the Republicans’ policy over time. At this point, the interviewee endorses the DP conception, reinforcing the position where the Democrats stand in complete disagreement with the Republicans, and equally stand against those Democrats who are near to hold the policies and beliefs advocated by the Republicans, i.e., the extremist side.

Social meaning is a meaning transferred by a piece of language in the social context of its use. The decoding of that meaning is highly dependent on the knowledge of stylistics and other linguistic variations. The social meaning is pertinent to the situation wherein an utterance is used. Stylistic variation embodies social variation, implying that styles help the addressee to know about the period, field, and status of the discourse. Some words are similar to others concerning their conceptual meaning, but they have miscellaneous stylistic meanings. For instance, ‘North Bay’ stands for a sub-region of the San Francisco Bay in California, a hamlet in Oneida County in New York, and a village in Racine County in Wisconsin. In the absence

of target language unambiguous equivalents and for the sake of preserving the cultural load of the ST items, the social/stylistic meaning of some proper nouns used by the interviewee—people, locations, and organizations—are unswervingly subtitled by means of borrowing and transliteration, viz. Norman Solomon, Paul Jay, Golden Gate, North Bay, Main Street, and Wall Street. Transliteration is the practice of transcribing an item written in one orthographic system into another orthographic system. Transliteration across languages having the same orthography is unimportant. However, the task becomes more challenging when the language pairs use different orthographies, as is the case in the current study. The issue of transliteration from English to languages using other alphabets, SA to be specific, is a source of many challenges for subtitlers.

4.3. The Sociopolitical Facet in Onscreen Subtitling

The use of specific words which are politically loaded with hidden meanings is one of the main characteristics of this facet. News writers, reporters, or journalists sometimes build up a subjective picture of what they are discussing. The nature and importance of the topic tackled is what forces a presenter and an interviewee to select a certain jargon. At the onset of the second video under study, the presenter says, “We hear even more sabre-rattling from Israel”. ‘Sabre-rattling’ is fully significant and politically loaded. Why not simply say threats from Israel? This would not have the same effect as the previous item intended to intimidate rather than simply threaten Iran not to build a nuclear facility. But there seems to be a kind of contradiction in Panetta’s statement on the topic. The question that has to be brought up here would be why an attack on Iran is being discussed when we know that Iran is not building nuclear weapons. The use of the word ‘sabre-rattling’ instead of threats and the contradiction noted in Panetta’s statement all highlight the hidden diplomatic intentions of the Americans and Israelis as to what is assumed to be Iran’s nuclear capability.

Subtitling this video into SA and retaining the same politically loaded meaning of the items depends on the translation strategy and approach chosen by the subtitler. The item ‘threats’ would sound semantically and politically inappropriate by the news presenter, compared to the item “sabre-rattling” which is ideologically defined. An effective semantic connection between the original text item and the subtitled version requires keeping that ideological load of the word. The item would be discharged of that sociopolitical load if not well tackled first at the semantic level, evading a shift in the general intended meaning of the subtitled word or expression. This is an interesting case to underscore the elusive nature of televised news statements, highlighting the political subtlety and ideological flexibility of the

new language. All this propaganda is created to ‘sabre-rattle’ Iran not to build a nuclear weapon. Or else, the US government would be forced to launch a war against it.

The investigative journalist, Gareth Porter, is in an ideologically bound position, upgrading the interests of the US. The American administration looks softer with Iran but at the same time shows that it cares for Israel, willing to support it. The whole process is a kind of calculation of interests. That is what makes TV news subtitling more demanding because the subtitler has to keep the sociopolitical intended meaning of the rendered items or utterances intact. The task rested on the shoulder of the subtitler is a stiffly hard one. If not properly rendered, that is, misrepresented, the target viewer or addressee would grasp the situation differently. The presenter Gareth Porter tried to enlighten the audience about the reasons behind the US threatening Iran not to develop a nuclear weapon. All the propaganda that is raised aims at ‘sabre-rattling’ Iran which is trying to just develop a nuclear capability, according to their statements in the video under concern.

Strikingly important is the way Panetta put it when asked about their reaction if Iran crossed ‘the red line’. If Iran tries to develop a nuclear weapon, Israel will automatically launch an attack. Panetta states, “We would have to be prepared to protect our forces in that situation” and “We will defend our forces, our troops”. He did not plainly state that they would support Israel in their war against Iran. The US troops and forces are there training and getting ready along with those of Israel. If Israel goes to war against Iran, the US government will “defend its forces”. However, Panetta did not say that they were going to take part in the war. Publicly made onscreen political statements which are highly elusive and diplomatic in nature cannot be properly translated using direct literal linguistic expressions. The rendition of such elusive microscopic items and utterances which are sociopolitically defined entails that subtitlers are well-versed and hold unprejudiced positions, as well.

Another conspicuously remarkable instance to shed light on the sociopolitical facet would be “exactly and more to the point not strong enough in support of Israel, of course”. If we attentively scrutinize this quotation, two interpretations might be deduced. The first is that the investigative journalist could be an RP proponent. In other words, he intends to undermine the position of the US president. This leads us to the second interpretation of the president himself, as is put by the presenter “he looks so soft on Iran”. The use of the word ‘soft’ shows that he is not launching a war against Iran in the short run. Here becomes blatantly clear the responsibility rested on the shoulders of the subtitler. If Panetta’s or Gareth’s utterances are

mistakenly interpreted and subtitled, this would conjure up miscellaneous false phantasmagorias in the mind of the viewer. The abovementioned examples stand as an epitome of the frequent use of microscopic and ideologically loaded language that needs chary and meticulous attention on the part of the subtitler, keeping faithful to the ideological connotations of the statements made.

4.4. Televisual News Subtitling Hindrances

The technical side of the work is of paramount importance. The subtitling of televised news triggers various technical impediments and barriers. Despite the benefits provided by the free subtitling programs, numerous difficulties still arise. One of the most frequent difficulties encountered in subtitling TV news is timing and synchronization. The standards of subtitling allow for the use of only a predefined number of letters or lines in the same subtitle, a maximum of two lines to be specific. Nevertheless, more than this amount of letters or lines in the same subtitle is occasionally transcended. Dividing the entire sentence would create problems for viewers, mainly issues of simultaneous harmonization. What is usually noted in TV news subtitling is the use of long multi-clause sentences wherein sub-clauses are highly employed. Long strings of incomplete phrases and verbless clauses equally make the subtitler's job much more challenging. One of the most common issues encountered in subtitling TV news is the use of such long utterances. For the subtitler, this creates problems of faithful rendition and predefined measures. The two videos under investigation are full of those instances in which long sentences are profoundly used.

One of the main difficulties encountered is the use of abundantly continuous and connected speech. It is very hard to synchronise the subtitle with the image it embodies. A part of this difficulty is that the subtitler fills the screen with long sentences, or adopts reduction and ellipsis of unnecessary items in the utterance to surmount the issue. Part of the difficulties faced is when translating a stream of ideas which are full of hesitations and disrupted speech, or are accompanied by gestures and body language. These also need to be properly subtitled to help convey the same ST meaning. The technical aspect of subtitling is important to the overall coherence of subtitles. The latter is often distorted regardless of the assistance provided by digitized tools. With the ongoing development of new subtitling techs, several free subtitling programs are made available for the same purpose. Nonetheless, the human touch is irreplaceable in surmounting such specific hindrances. Understanding subtitle placement onscreen, timing rules for reading speed, integrating sound effects, and target language cues are some other issues encountered.

One of the most striking difficulties encountered in the two videos is the subtitling of acronyms and abbreviations. Should the subtitler render them using the initials of the English version or should he look for appropriate correspondences in the target language (SA)? This is mostly solved when the target language has equivalently pre-set parallels. If, on the other hand, parallels do not exist, the subtitler has to search for suitable counterparts, creating a proper acronym in the SA. The challenge lies in the choice of the accurate initials. Light is shed on two cases in the first video, i.e., N.P.T. standing for Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty and IAEA standing for The International Atomic Energy Agency. The N.P.T. is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, seeking to achieve nuclear disarmament. Opened for signature in 1968, the treaty entered into force in 1970. The IAEA is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, inhibiting its use for any military purposes. It was established as an autonomous organization in July 1957. The first acronym is subtitled as [m. ħ. ʔ. s. n.]. The second acronym is subtitled as [w. d. tʰ. ð.].

Correspondingly, one common issue encountered in the videos is the translation of proper nouns. The untranslatability of some of these nouns was overcome through the use of transliteration. The latter is the practice of transcribing a word or text written in one writing system into another writing system. Technically, transliteration across languages having the same orthography is unimportant; however, the task becomes more challenging when the language pairs use different orthographies (English and SA). The problem of transliteration from English to languages using different alphabets is a source of much discomfort. Here are some examples: [ði: 'ri:əl nu:z], [pəl 'dʒeɪ], [feɪs ði: 'neɪ.ʃənz], ['gæɪ.əθ 'pɔ:r.tə], and [pə'ni:təh]. Transliteration is opted for to render all these proper nouns. The problem lies in how some of these items might be pronounced in the TT. In the first instance [ði: 'ri:əl nu:z], we cannot but just notice that the definite article “the” is transliterated with the sound “ð” and not with “d” creating a different meaning that mistakenly might lead to thinking of an auxiliary verb, as is the case in most subtitled cinematographic movies. In the example [pəl 'dʒeɪ], the challenge lies in “Jay” plainly transliterated as ['dʒeɪ] to avoid creating unnecessary false inferences on the part of the onlooker. Therefore, even proper nouns must be rendered or transliterated appropriately to avoid misinterpretations.

One of the frequent issues bumped into during the subtitling of the videos relates to the use of repetition, knowing that repetition is highly avoidable in subtitling. The omission of repeated additional linguistic expressions occasionally makes the meaning unclear or

incomprehensible. For spatial and temporal constraints, various strategies such as deletion, modulation, or semantic equivalence are implemented to render the ST meaning using a minimum of words. “We will defend our forces, our troops” is subtitled as [sanuda:fiʃu ʃan zunu:dina:]. “In what appears to be a bit of a campaign by the White House” is subtitled as [fi:ma: jað'haru ʃala ʔa'nnaħu min ʒa:nibi oʊ'ba.mə]. “But he doesn't talk about the legitimacy of it; he doesn't talk about the legality of it” is subtitled as [la:ki'nnaħu lam jataħa'ddaθ ʃan ʃarʃi'jjatihi ʔaw ʃan qa:nu:ni'jjatihi]. The three examples highlight the omission of all the unnecessary repeated expressions and the use of semantic equivalence. Keeping faithful to the original ST frequently culminates in unsolicited long sentences.

It is also clear that one of the major difficulties faced in TV news subtitling occurs at the sociopolitical level wherein ideological framing is triggered at the lexical level. The subtitler's choice of specific words or expressions rather than others would indeed shape the audience's thinking, and frame the way they would approach a topic or create a shift in their perception of that topic. Indeed, one of the major problems of subtitling onscreen news is a phenomenon known as a shift in meaning. It is practically a shift in perspective through linguistic manipulation and reconstruction. One could argue that lexical shifts in news subtitling reshape the message through shifting the meaning from one direction to another. The mistranslation of ideologically loaded terms would create shifts in the intended meanings. All likelihoods are provided for the subtitler to create those shifts and reframe thoughts mainly from/to a source language that is not copiously understood.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The research study presents valuable insights into the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets and technicalities deemed vital in televisual news subtitling. The findings highlight the significant role of unbiased lexical choices in shaping ideological discourse presented to the target audience through news subtitles. The results of the qualitative CDA typify that the American presenters and interviewees in the selected TV streaming channel employ various cognitive and discursive strategies to convey specific ideological standpoints and conceptions. Numerous parts of speech and syntactic structures play a significant role in shaping and reframing the depiction of the sociopolitical facet. The prevalence of prearranged given items or utterances which highlight negative aspects are properly rendered in the TT, attending to the connotative meaning in its context.

The role that the ST items play in re/shaping the portrayal of onscreen news topics is noteworthy, intentionally using certain structures to influence viewers' perceptions and

attitudes towards specific issues and to reframe their understanding of critical events, i.e., the political rift within the DP or the nuclear facility construction in Iran. The strategic use of microscopic linguistic items permits the televised news presenters and the interviewees to frame events in a way that aligns with their ideological stance. The study findings showcase that the choice of an oriented technical jargon can meaningfully influence the way news events can be perceived by the target viewers. Examining these partial linguistic choices allows subtitlers to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying cognitive, social, and ideological dimensions promulgated by different TV news channels. It equally allows them to be critically aware of the impact of the language used in media. The study findings also indicate the typical use of both simple declarative structures and complex utterances. The latter is partly in line with Van Dijk's (1988) analysis of news discourse, implying that televised news interviews are usually structured in a more complex mode and do not profoundly rely on simple structures.

As far as the first research question is concerned, i.e., the strategies implemented by the subtitler to render the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets into the subtitled SA TV news version, the results revealed that the frequently adopted translation strategies to render the tripartite facets into the SA were conversational implicature, omission, deictic elements, semantic equivalence, coherence and cohesion, and transliteration. The adopted strategies shall lead to a full unbiased understanding of the ST message by the target audience. Concerning the second research question, i.e., the hindrances encountered while rendering the ST English items into the TT, it was found that long complex sentences, interrupted speech, hesitations, acronyms, abbreviations, and proper nouns are some of the obstacles faced in the subtitling process. The use of the aforementioned strategies helped the subtitler to surmount the difficulties, properly rendering the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets inherent in the TV news interviews under concern. Based on the highlighted findings, the research hypothesis that the improper rendition of the three facets in subtitling TV news does not affect the target audience's utmost comprehension of the connotative meaning was thus rejected, epitomizing that they are of critical value in the aggregate understanding of the ST implication.

Overall, the findings revealed significant inconsistencies and hampering technicalities, while attempting to ensure that the target addressees succinctly grasp the source material in its contextual connotative modus. The findings of the current qualitative research study have significant implications for subtitlers in fully understanding media discourse and its impact on the re/shaping of public opinion and social dynamics mainly in the SA context. Accurate televised subtitling of media discourse entails a number of procedures. First, a blend of

linguistic and technical savvy is mandatory. Second, the expertise of experienced subtitlers is essential in rendering subtitles that are faithful and unbiased. Third, indispensable mastery of language and familiarity with both source and target cultures to make the subtitled content relatable is vital. Fourth, subtitlers should be 'neutral' as regards the conveyance of the source incidents. Fifth, subtitlers have to keep up pace with the political changes on the ground to effusively render the ST connotative message in its context.

6. CONCLUSION

The research study aimed to investigate the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets depicted in televisual news subtitling, using Van Dijk's (1998) theoretical framework. The research study findings shed light on the intentional linguistic and discursive patterns employed by the presenters and the interviewees to re/frame the target audience perceptions. The proper use of rendition strategies helped retain these aspects, constructing a TT narrative in alignment with the ideological stance of the source material. The conclusions drawn from this qualitative CDA study highlight the deliberate use of linguistic patterns to shape and reinforce specific ideological standpoints. The strategies align with Van Dijk's (1998) framework, highlighting the cognitive, social, and ideological dimensions of discourse analysis. The study epitomizes the power of language and discourse in re/shaping ideological perception in media representations.

TV news subtitling is a demanding task as it is ideologically seated. The whole process is a real endeavour to the full interpretation of the intended meaning of the topics under concern. Media discourse and more specifically onscreen foreign news interviews tend to employ microscopically diplomatic and microstructurally linguistic utterances to make public statements on given critical issues. Therefore, subtitlers are invited to heed these facts in their renditions. A simple un/intentional misconception of the ST utterances would ultimately frame the perception of the target audience in a biased manner. TV news subtitling embodies a captivating yet undervalued domain within translation studies. Professional subtitling imposes a profound scrutiny of all the dimensions inherent in media discourse. Political discourse is the domain wherein ideological beliefs are prevalent, with politicians unremittingly trying to influence the cognizance of the source and/or target recipient. The findings of this study, which can be informative for audiovisual translators at large, can be of practical importance to televisual news subtitling specialists in particular.

The outright generalizability of the present study findings to other contexts can be crippled by two main limitations. The first noteworthy limitation of this research study relates

to its sole focus on qualitative data to find answers to the raised questions. The second significant limitation of the current study pertains to its reliance on merely two televised news interviews. The two limitations highlight the need for further research, adopting mixed methodologies that mix both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering techniques to comprehensively tackle the pragmatic, semantic, and sociopolitical facets raised in the present qualitative CDA study. Future research can equally rely on a larger sample size in terms of the number of onscreen news interviews to fully investigate the interplay among the tripartite facets in TV news subtitling.

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