

## KRISZTINA MAGYAR

KRISZTINA KÁROLY. *ASPECTS OF COHESION AND COHERENCE IN TRANSLATION. THE CASE OF HUNGARIAN—ENGLISH NEWS TRANSLATION*. AMSTERDAM / PHILADELPHIA: JOHN BENJAMINS, 2017. XIII, 269. ISBN 978 90 272 5881 6

*Aspects of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation* by Krisztina Károly addresses an issue pertaining to translational discourse production. Using a text-linguistic approach, the author explores what she terms “discourse level translation strategies” and how these strategies contribute toward recreating coherence in target texts. In the focus of the study is news translation, and the Hungarian–English language pair.

According to Károly, the problem with previous approaches to discourse level translation strategies is that they have a narrow focus: the investigations display a preoccupation either with one single cohesive device (reference, lexical repetition, etc.), or with one single so-called “component of coherence” (thematic structure, cohesion, etc.). Thus, they provide no information about “*how discourse level translation strategies really work*” (1, italics by the author). Károly contends that there exists little empirical evidence as regards the relationship between “the various (linguistic and non-linguistic) means of creating coherence ... in text” (1), and we do not know how changes made to one means affect the others, and, as a consequence, overall textual quality. Therefore, she argues for the need of a more complex approach to translational discourse. Such an approach should, among other things, be capable of accounting for language-pair-specific, so-called “shifts of coherence” in translational discourse and the translation strategies which are responsible for such shifts. Károly’s study is a report on the first testing of an analytical model devised specifically for this purpose. With the help of the *Complex Translational Discourse Analysis Model*, the summary sections of twenty news articles translated into English were compared with their Hungarian originals within the framework of a research project that terminated a couple of years ago. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were used.

The monograph consists of eight chapters, followed by seven appendices. The introductory chapter discusses the main aims of the study and formulates the research questions. The author is interested in whether it is possible to apply the methods devised for the study of original, that is, not translated, texts to the analysis of translated ones. Furthermore, the author asks, can one detect shifts of coherence in the English translations of news stories “with regard to the cohesive,

rhetorical and generic structures that characterize them?” (3) If shifts of coherence do occur, what consequences does this have for overall textual meaning? And lastly, what can we say about the translation universals – that is, “the validity of the explicitation and the repetition avoidance hypotheses” (3) in the light of the investigation proposed?

Chapter 2 makes an attempt to clarify the key concepts of translational discourse and its production, the concepts of genre, cohesion and coherence, as well as what the author means by “discourse level phenomena” and “discourse level translation strategies”. One section is devoted to the presentation of the *Complex Translational Discourse Analysis Model*.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology of the study. It explains why news translation was used to test the model. News translation is discussed as a special form of discourse production and the characteristic features of the genre of the news story are in turn presented. The chapter also describes the corpus examined. The chapters that follow report on the actual analyses with regard to the target language reproduction of cohesive, topical, rhetorical and generic structure in translation.

Chapter 4 deals with shifts of cohesion in translational discourse and consequent shifts of meaning. The main types of cohesive devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion) are investigated. The chapter ends with a discussion of the relevant translation universals “to demonstrate the extent to which the current corpus justifies their validity” (105). Chapter 5 discusses “the text-organising role of lexical repetition” and “the target language recreation of repetition structure” (139), and, again, concludes with an investigation of the translation universals.

Chapter 6 deals with topical structure and its reproduction in translational news discourse. The analysis in this chapter also details “the potential connections and interactions between topical and generic (event) structure” (157). Chapter 7 proposes a method which makes possible a genre-oriented exploration of the rhetorical structure of translational discourse. Then it discusses the consequences for generic structure and for overall textual meaning of the shifts of rhetorical structure that occur in translation.

The concluding chapter summarises the results of the investigation and after evaluating the *Complex Translational Discourse Analysis Model*, formulates “the descriptive and explanatory hypotheses that its application generates for the study of text and translation” (206). One such hypothesis, which admittedly still needs testing and verification, is that shift of coherence, as a phenomenon special to translation, may be regarded as a translation universal. To conclude the chapter, the author puts the research enterprise in perspective by explaining what insights it

provides for the respective fields of Discourse Analysis, Genre Analysis, Translation Studies and, within the latter, target text-oriented translation research, research on translation universals, translation strategy research, and research investigating the Hungarian–English language pair. The monograph also indicates lines of future research.

The volume is recommended primarily to translation researchers, but also to practising translators and students in translator training programmes. The author contends that raising future translators' awareness of text-building strategies might increase the likelihood that they will produce target texts that are "sufficiently cohesive, rhetorically/structurally well formed (abiding by the norms of the genre), logically and mentally processable, i.e., interpretable and coherent for the target audience" (225). An enhanced discourse competence will ultimately make it possible for them to be more observant both of source and target language norms and to produce functionally adequate target texts. Overall, the research questions and the results of the investigations presented in the book can highlight certain problems that translators might not be aware of when preparing their translations.

This being said, I have a couple of critical remarks to offer. First, a more focussed discussion of coherence would have been welcome. Reiterated attempts to clarify the concept are made in the chapters that introduce the study and lay its theoretical foundations, which makes that section of the book slightly frustrating to read. The author discusses coherence on pages 4 and 5, takes it up again on pages 18 and 19, eventually producing a more lengthy discussion on pages 34 to 40. Furthermore, her treatment of the concept appears to be curiously disabled by the insights she recruits from the extensive literature on the topic. Károly postulates the existence of so-called "components" of coherence which are "identifiable (and are thus objectively describable) in discourse structure" (1). One such component, according to the author, is cohesion. This suggests that the author subsumes the latter under coherence instead of keeping the two apart. As a consequence, coherence for the author is both a property of text, so a given, and the "result of the cognitive processes taking place in the receiver's mind" (4). The reader of the study is invited to conceptualise the impossible: that coherence is both objective and subjective, both absolute and relative. To complicate matters further, in Chapter 2 the author asserts that she understands the concepts of cohesion and coherence in the sense that Nils Erik Enkvist understood them. But Enkvist, as the author herself acknowledges, "makes a sharp distinction between the notions of cohesion and coherence":

[c]ohesion is the term for overt [grammatically describable] links on the textual surface [...], whereas coherence is the quality that makes a text conform to a consistent world picture and is therefore summarizable and interpretable. (Enkvist, quoted by Károly, 38)

How can, then, cohesion be a “component” of coherence, and, at the same time, be entirely distinct from it? How far can the human imagination be stretched to conceptualise such a scenario?