

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Knowledge transcends national divides; translators effectively carry knowledge across geographical, cultural and language barriers. In fact, they are the unsung heroes behind the global success of many writers. Admittedly, the translator's reading of the source text is 'but one among infinitely many possible readings' (Hatim and Mason 1990:11). However, the fact that readers of translated texts seldom read the original version of the writings points to a significant issue: it is the translated texts, rather than the original texts, that reach and communicate with target language audiences who otherwise would not have access to the meaning embedded in the original writing. Taking that view, it is thus unquestionable that a large number of Chinese readers are either not well-versed in English or have no access to the English version would not have the chance to read renowned Malaysian political commentator Karim Raslan's writings which are written in English and used as data in this study if they had not been translated into Chinese. In this respect, it can be said that the translator enabled this possibility.

However, despite the important role played by translators and the fact that interests in the theory and practice of translation has grown steadily throughout the 1980s and expanded tremendously and finally came into its own in the 1990s, translation has never really enjoyed the kind of recognition and respect that other professions such as medicine and engineering enjoy (Baker 1992). This is because it was perceived by many as a field that needs no formal academic training. Baker states that even professional

translators suggest that translation ‘is an art which requires aptitude, practice and general knowledge-nothing more’ (ibid: 3).

Though Baker (1992) admits that there are translators with no formal academic training in translation but have nevertheless achieved a high standard of competence, she argues that to be treated as professionals rather than as skilled or semi-skilled workers, translators need to ‘develop an ability to stand back and reflect on what they do and how they do it’ (ibid: 4). Baker notes that modern linguistic theory, especially text linguistics which study text as a communicative event and pragmatics which study language in use, can help translators ‘acquire a sound knowledge of the raw materials with which they work: to understand what language is and how it comes to function for its users’ (ibid).

1.2 Text Linguistics and the Seven Standards of Textuality

In this study, translation is seen as a process that operates on texts rather than words or sentences. As pointed out by Snell-Hornby (1985: 22), both text linguistics and translation are ‘basically concerned with the text, not as a chain of separate sentences...but as a complex, structured whole, whereby coherence, cohesion, focus and progression are of primary importance’.

A widely accepted definition of text by de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981: 3) is adopted in this study. A text is a

...COMMUNICATIVE OCCURENCE which meets seven standards of TEXTUALITY. If any of these standards is considered not to have been satisfied, the text will not be communicative. Hence, non-communicative texts are treated as non-texts.

These seven standards of textuality are: cohesion, coherence, acceptability, informativity, situationality, intentionality and intertextuality. They are seen as seven defining characteristics of a text which apply to all texts that possess communicative values (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981). Since translating a text is a journey from the source text to the target text and to translate means to induce a target text from a source text (Newmark 1988), the activity of translation and the text concerned are closely related to each other. According to Bell (1991), these seven standards of textuality have been proposed in order to answer a number of key questions the reader and also translator will need to ask about a text:

1. How do the clauses hold together? (*cohesion*)
2. How do the propositions hold together? (*coherence*)
3. Why did the speaker/writer produce this? (*intentionality*)
4. How does the reader take it? (*acceptability*)
5. What does it tell us? (*informativity*)
6. What is the text for? (*relevance*)
7. What other text does this one resemble? (*intertextuality*)

(Bell 1991:163-164)

According to de Beaugrande & Dressler, these standards are the principles which define textual communication and that they are all:

relational in character, concerned with how occurrences are connected to others: via grammatical dependencies on the surface (cohesion); via conceptual dependencies in the textual world (coherence); via the attitudes of the participants toward the text (intentionality and acceptability); via the setting (situationality); and via the mutual relevance of separate texts (intertextuality)

(1981:37)

Linguists such as Hatim & Mason (1990), Hatim (1997), and Bell (1991) who are supportive of text linguistics insist that efficient and effective textual communication must meet these seven standards of textuality (please refer to Section 2.3 for a more detailed discussion of text linguistics and translation).

1.3 Cohesion and Coherence in the Source Text and Target Text

The first two textual standards named by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), namely cohesion and coherence, are important features exhibited by a well-written text (Celce-Murcia & Olsthia 2006, Baker 1992, Hatim & Mason 1990). They facilitate interpretation of the text, be it the source or the translated, during the reading process. A text which is cohesive and coherent enables readers to interpret it with great ease; a text which is not fails to ‘make sense’ to the readers. A translated text, produced on the basis of an existing one, must demonstrate these two standards to help target text readers understand the original writing correctly (see Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of these two standards of textuality).

From the perspective of text analysis, work on cohesion has been the single most important area that has been applied to the study of translation studies (see Hatim 2004, Blum-Kulka 1986, Baker 1992). However, as stated by Hatim (2004), it is becoming increasingly more common in translation studies to assume that cohesion has to be examined in terms of underlying coherence if it is to yield any useful insights. His view is shared by Baker (1992) who is of the opinion that the main value of cohesive markers are to ‘facilitate and possibly control the interpretation of underlying semantic relations of a text’ (ibid:218). In other words, it is ‘the readers’ ability to recognize underlying semantic relations that establish the continuity of sense that actually gives texture to a

stretch of language' (ibid:219). In short, coherence needs to be maintained if communication is to be successful, as pointed out by Neubert and Shreve (1992: 93): 'Text-based translation is to establish in the target text a coherence functionally parallel to that of the source text' and 'the maintenance of coherence should be established as a criterion for adequate translation' (ibid: 99).

1.4 Background and Rationale for the Study

It is a known fact that translated texts exist and English commentaries written by renowned Malaysia political commentators for instance Farish Noor, Chandra Muzaffar and Karim Raslan have been translated from English into Chinese and they have been published in local Chinese dailies such as *Sin Chew Daily News* and *Nan Yang Siang Pao*. These writers' opinions and views pertaining to social and political developments in Malaysia and the world are hence made available to the Chinese readers. As a result, such kinds of translated texts have also developed a sizeable following among Chinese readers.

Karim Raslan's writings are chosen for this study because he has established himself as a respected commentator of current issues especially those concerning South-East Asia. In fact, this Cambridge University-educated lawyer, columnist and author is a well known analyst of Indonesia and Thai politics. His syndicated column "Writers Journal" has over 1.5 million readers across the Asia Pacific and is published weekly by *The Business Times* (Singapore), *The Star* (Malaysia), and *Sin Chew Daily* (Malaysia), *Berita Harian* (Malaysia). It is also published on an ad-hoc basis in *The Jakarta Post*, *Kedaulatan Rakyat* and *Suara Merdeka* in Indonesia; *The Nation* (Bangkok); *Phillipine*

Daily Inquirer, *South China Morning Post* and *Ming Pao* (Hong Kong), and the *Sydney Morning Herald* (YTL Community 2010)

To date, Karim has three books to his credit: *Ceritalah: Malaysia in Transition, Heroes and other Stories* and *Journeys through Southeast Asia: Ceritalah 2*. The book *Ceritalah 2* was translated into Bahasa Malaysia and was published in Mandarin in 2004 by *Sin Chew Daily*. In fact, Karim Raslan is a well-known figure in the Chinese community. As stated in the preface he wrote for the Chinese version of *Ceritalah 2*; the experience of being recognized as ‘Kalim’ when having tea in a Chinese restaurant is a pleasant surprise to him (2004: 6). Between the years 2003 and 2005, Karim Raslan contributed weekly commentaries to the local English daily *The Star*, and a copy was also sent to *Sin Chew Daily News* for translation. The translated Chinese version was published in a column named “Words from Karim” in *Sunday Sin Chew’s Sin Chew Forum*. A few of the articles used as data in this research were published before in this column. *Sin Chew Daily* is one of the most prominent newspapers in Malaysia (Jeremy 2010:58). *Sin Chew Daily* has a wide readership base in this country. According to Hwang-DBS Vickers Research (2004:2), *Sin Chew Daily* is the best selling Chinese newspaper in Peninsular Malaysia. In terms of readership, *Sin Chew Daily* ranks first for the 12-month period ended 30 June 2004, with average daily readership hitting 1,113,000 (ibid). *Karim Raslan* has been contributing commentaries to *Sin Chew Forum* again since mid-2008.

Being an avid reader of Karim Raslan’s works and a regular reader for both *the STAR* and the *Sin Chew Daily News*, the researcher discovered there were discrepancies in terms of meaning between a few of the translated version in the *Sin Chew Daily News* and the original texts published in *The Star*. This therefore highlighted significant

problems in terms of coherence in the translated texts and the fact that the target language readers are reading something different from the source language readers. It appears that some problem lies somewhere in between the translation process. Realizing the seriousness of the problem led to the desire to investigate the problem in greater detail. This gave rise to this study.

However, owing to unforeseen circumstances, the researcher did not use the articles published in *the STAR* and *Sin Chew Daily News* (for problems pertaining to initial and final selection of data, please refer to Section 5.2.1, Chapter 5, p.150). A decision was made to shift to articles in Karim Raslan's book, *Journeys Through Southeast Asia Ceritalah 2*, and its translated Chinese version, published as *Kai Lin Hai You Hua Shuo* (2004). Since Karim Raslan's book is a compilation of commentaries on political and social issues in Southeast Asia and beyond, the texts fit into the predominant rhetorical purpose of argumentative texts, that is, the texts are written with the intention to persuade and convince the readers that the claims put forward by the author are acceptable and based on logical appeals.

A careful reading of a few articles in the English source text and the Chinese translated text in the two books revealed that some serious mistakes occurred in the translated texts and some information in the ST is distorted, thus affecting the continuity and connectivity of the translated text. Bearing in mind that the TT existence depends on the ST and the fact that a source text which exists on its own 'is coherent both within the text, and between the text and the real world' (Ka Xiaoyun 2003:2), the researcher decided to conduct a contrastive study between the English original texts and the Chinese translated texts to find out the factors that have contributed to the change of meaning in the TT.

1.5 The Research Problem and the Explicitation Hypothesis

In her article *Text and Discourse* (1986), Blum-Kulka outlines a theoretical and empirical framework for the study of translation within the traditions of discourse analysis and communication studies. Blum-Kulka postulates a distinction between two types of meaning relationships at the discoursal level, namely cohesion and coherence.

Blum-Kulka (1986) claims that the process of translation often leads to shifts in both cohesion and coherence. Shifts of cohesion can occur as a result of differences in the grammatical system and register bound stylistic preferences, or as a result of a process of explicitation inherent in translation per se (ibid). Blum-Kulka (ibid:18) also states that the level of cohesion shifts in types of cohesive markers used in translation will affect the general level of the target texts' textual explicitness and shifts in terms of the explicit and implicit meaning potential of the source text.

Unlike cohesion, which is seen as an overt textual relationship and objectively detectable thus lending itself to quantitative analysis, shifts in coherence defy quantitative methods of analysis. Coherence is seen by Blum-Kulka as '*the realization(s) of the text's meaning potential*' (ibid:23; *italics original*). According to Fillmore (1981), as cited in Blum-Kulka (1986:23), this realization 'can be approached either theoretically, by postulating an "ideal reader"' or investigating empirically 'the ways a given text has been remembered or interpreted by various readers, as done in text-processing psycholinguistic research'.

In terms of coherence shifts, Blum-Kulka (ibid) argues that there is a need to distinguish between reader-focused and text-focused shifts of coherence (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.2 p.55-56 for a more detailed discussion). Reader-focused shifts of coherence 'are

linked to a change in reader audiences through translation' (ibid:24). Text-focused shifts on the other hand are linked to 'the process of translation per se (ibid). Blum-Kulka (ibid:30) notes that text-based shifts of coherence often occur as a result of particular choices made by a specific translator. She states that most serious shifts occur because 'the translator has failed to realize the functions a particular linguistic form plays in conveying indirect meanings in a given text' (ibid) and not due to the differences between two linguistic systems. A major shift in coherence has implications: it may affect the meaning potential of a text, limit the interpretive options of a text and affect the calculability of implicatures in the target text'.

Baker (1992:229) states that an adequate knowledge of the source language system is essential for a translator in order to understand what is going on in any verbal communication. This is because knowledge of the source language may affect the comprehension and interpretation of the source text. Admittedly, linguistic choices made by the translator at all linguistic levels may have a bearing on the meaning and coherence of a text. Baker (ibid:253) argues that 'even a single item, if mistranslated, can affect the way a text coheres' and cause the loss of a whole layer of meaning. Baker (1992:253) cites Blum-Kulka (1986) that this will bring about 'a shift in coherence'.

In the course of reading either a source text or a translated text, readers tend to seek an explanation of meaning or work out the meaning or significance of certain elements through interpretation. Interpretation usually requires readers to 'infer the author's assumptions, opinions or beliefs about what is or what could or should be' (Fowler & Aaron 2007: 159). Thus, mistranslation of words and structures in the source text may well affect 'the calculability of implicatures in the target text' (ibid:229). Implicature and inference is essential in maintaining the coherence of a discourse because as

suggested by Hatim & Mason, in addition to textual cohesion, implicature is ‘an essential property of the communication process’ (1990:197) and a satisfactory translation ‘must guide the target readers properly towards making appropriate inferences’ based on the target text’ (Hatim & Munday 2004:58) (for a more detailed discussion on inference and implicature, see Section 4.4.2.3.1, Chapter 4)

1.6 Text-type Model

The Text-type model as suggested by Hatim and Mason (1990, Hatim 2001) is adopted in this study because in this model context is viewed as being sufficiently broad enough to accommodate communicative use-user distinctions, pragmatic notions such as intentionality, and semiotic categories such as genre and discourse. Intertextuality ensures that the various domains of context are in constant interaction, ultimately leading to the emergence of text types (Hatim 2001:36). In this way, an utterance within a sequence of utterances would be described as a series of semiotic ‘signs’ pragmatically intended by someone to ‘communicate’ something to someone, sometime, somewhere (ibid:36). In the process, a slowly-emerging text-type focus may be identified in terms of a tendency either to ‘monitor’ or to ‘manage’ a given situation. All the 29 argumentative texts extracted from the 10 articles together with their translated versions have the rhetorical purpose of either arguing or counter-arguing a proposition (please refer to Chapter 3, section 3.3.1.3, pp.79-80) for a detailed explanation. Hence, managing or steering the situation into a direction favored by the text producer.

In this study, text is seen as a structural paragraph forming a unified whole. The text as a unit of structural paragraph proposed by Hatim and Mason (1990) sees discourse as directional – a succession of changing postures – and most importantly, the discourse is

moving and heading somewhere. The structural model that they proposed consists of three units of structure: the element, the chunk and the text (for a detailed discussion of these three units, see Section 3.5.2.1, Chapter 3).

This structural model shows how overall discourse relations evolve and how elements, chunks and text interact with each other and progress towards a purpose. This model is adopted in analyzing the data because as pointed out by Hatim & Mason (1990: 186), ‘the attitudinal or ideological drift of a text’ is patterned in the text’s textual structure. In short, text structure or the compositional plan of the text is seen as ‘the tangible units which should guide the translator’s work’ (ibid:186).

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the explicitation hypothesis put forward by Blum-Kulka (1986) on the shifts in cohesion and text-based shifts of coherence linked to the particular choices made by translators, the main research problem identified in this study is: Do shifts in cohesion and text-based coherence that occur in the translation process affect the continuity and connectivity of the target text being investigated? This key question is broken down into 14 research questions.

1. Does the use of the third person pronoun in the TT cause shifts of cohesion or coherence of the text?
2. Are there any differences in the number and types of third person pronouns being used in the TT compared to its ST?
3. How is pronominalization used in Chinese translated text compared to that used in the original English text?

4. Are adjustments made in the use of third person pronouns in the target texts reflect target-language preferences or do they conform to the source-text patterns?
5. Are there differences in the number and types of logical connectors being employed in the TT compared to its ST?
6. Does any adjustment made in the use of logical connectors affect the interpretation and rhetoric of the text?
7. Do the logical connective patterns in TT reflect the norms of the ST or do they approximate the norms of TT in the same register?
8. Does any adjustment made in the use of logical connectives in the TT affect the coherence of the text?
9. Does rechunking take place in the translated text? And if it does, does it affect the relations between ideas in the text?
10. Do text-based shifts of coherence affect the intended meaning of the text?
11. Do text-based shifts of coherence convey unintended implicatures?
12. Do text-based shifts of coherence affect the calculability of implicatures in the target text?
13. In what ways do text-based shifts of coherence affect the macro-structure of the text?
14. Do any instances of text-based shifts affect the drift of the argument being put forward by the text producer?

1.8 Research Approach

In this study, text analysis is adopted rather than the more traditional orientation of establishing static systemic contrasts of syntactical, lexical or phonological elements mainly because translation is looked upon as an act of communication: it is always text-bound dealing with text as a whole and not items in isolation.

Following Hatim & Mason's (1990) model of text types, a total of 29 stretches of structural paragraphs or 'text' units which represent the highest level of discourse

organization were identified and extracted from the 10 articles. They are used as the source texts in this study. Out of the 29 texts, 9 display the structure of counter-argument involving rebuttal of a cited thesis followed by substantiations and a conclusion. The other 20 texts display the structure of through argument which is characterized by an extensive substantiation of an initial thesis followed by a conclusion. Once the macro-structure, that is, the compositional plan of each text is decided, the second stage of analysis is carried out.

At this stage, the bottom-up approach as suggested by Baker (1992) is adopted in analyzing each text. The compositional plan of every text and its full content is presented first. The use of the third person pronoun and conjunction is compared, analyzed and shifts of cohesion involving these two cohesive devices are then identified.

This is followed by an analysis of the inappropriate and erroneous translation of words, which includes idioms, phrases, fixed expressions and clauses in the target texts. The effects these mistranslations bear on the coherence of the text is viewed within the compositional plan of each text. It should be stressed that both source text and target text are approached from a reader's point of view. (A more detailed discussion of the approach is given in section 5.3, Chapter 5).

By adopting the top-down and the bottom up approach, thus combining the macro and micro analysis, it is hoped that this research can shed some light on how decisions made at the level of word, clause or grammatical category during the course of translation affect the perceived function of all the three units, namely the element, the chunk and the text, and also its implications for the discourse as a whole.

1.9 Significance of the Study

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this study is that it contributes to the research on the study of translation on argumentative texts as a token of text type and the assertion that theory is relevant to the work of a translator. The findings in this thesis will have substantial pedagogical value for academic courses in translation especially in the teaching of argumentative texts. By exploring the relevance of text linguistics and pragmatics to translation, this study aims at illustrating how an understanding of the key areas in modern linguistic theory can guide and inform translators on some of the decisions they have to make.

In this study, due consideration is given to both macro-structure and micro analysis. By applying the two standards of textuality, namely cohesion and coherence in the analysis of the source text and target text, where the text is looked upon as a communicative event rather than a shapeless string of words and structure, the findings from this study can provide a basis to inform and guide the decisions a translator has to make in the course of translating argumentative texts.

The theoretical components used in this study will encourage students to reflect on how they translate and why translating in one way is better or more appropriate than another. In short, the analysis, discussion and the findings may encourage those who are interested in translating argumentative text to view the intertextual relations between the ST and TT in a new light and develop ‘the ability to stand back and reflect on what they do and how they do it’ (Baker 1992:4).

1.10 Limitations of the Study

As pointed earlier, this study is essentially concerned with cohesion and coherence shifts in argumentative texts which have been translated from English to Chinese. Two

standards of textuality, cohesion and coherence, that have the function of binding the text together by creating sequences of meanings are investigated.

However, among the five main cohesive devices provided by Halliday & Hasan (2001), only reference and conjunction are investigated in detail because it will be too massive a task to investigate all five devices in the 58 texts (29 ST and 29 TT) used in this study. Reference, especially the use of third person pronoun, is chosen because it is a device which allows readers to trace participants involved in an argumentative text. Since English and Chinese differ substantially in their patterns of referencing participants, the handling of pronouns in the target text deserves attention. If readers are to understand what is written, they need to be clear and sure about who is who in the text which in turn helps them to follow the developments of events in the text. The reason conjunction is chosen is simple – since conjunctions reflect the rhetoric of a text and control its interpretation, thus it must be handled with great care because its adjustment in the target text will affect both the content and the line of argumentation.

In terms of coherence shifts, the focus is on the specific linguistic choices made by the translator which have affected the meaning potential of the text. As argued by Blum-Kulka (1986: 34), in the study of such shifts, the analysis of texts should be followed by an investigation of text-effects. Blum-Kulka advocates a psycholinguistic approach to the study of translation effects with the aim of validating or refuting claims pertaining to shifts of meaning through translation. However, in this study, the analysis involving text-based shifts of coherence on the text is approached theoretically by postulating the researcher as an ‘ideal reader’ (Blum-Kulka 1986). Its effect is seen and analyzed within the compositional plan of the text involved.

One reason for choosing a single text type in this study, in this case, argumentative texts, is that the features establishing textness vary among text types. If typologically different texts are involved, the analysis of a huge representative corpus may be necessary before any reliable conclusions can be drawn. Hence, the restriction of the text base to just one type.

1.11 Thesis Outline

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis will build up the theoretical foundation upon which the research is based. The review covers relevant literature in translation studies, contrastive text linguistics, text-typologies, text structure and the two textuality standards of cohesion and coherence. Chapter 5 details the methodology and procedures taken to obtain and analyze the data. Chapter 6 presents the analysis and observations on the effects of cohesion and coherence shifts. Chapter 7 will discuss and explain the findings within the context of Chapter 6. Recommendations and suggestions for further research will be offered in the concluding section.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation and set the scene for this thesis. The research problem and research questions have introduced, the focus and type of research justified and the approach and methodology used are briefly described and justified. The thesis has been mapped out and the significance and limitations of the research have also been presented. The thesis will now move on to a detailed description of the research.