

# Applying a Multidimensional Approach in Analyzing Literary Discourse in the Translation of *Chaos of the Senses*

Saba J. Mohammad

Department of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul, Iraq

Hala Kh. Najim

Department of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul, Iraq

**Abstract**—The study investigates the application of a multidimensional framework for analyzing literary discourse with reference to translation. This approach, originated by R. de Beaugrande (1997), integrates linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions of analysis in order to convey the depth and richness of the original text, ensuring a thorough comprehension of the whole discourse. The data for this study consists of excerpts from *Chaos of the Senses*, an Arabic novel by the creative Algerian writer Ahlam Mosteghanemi, along with two of its translations. The purpose of applying this multidimensional framework is to assess its applicability to the study of literary discourse, facilitating a deeper understanding of the novel. This approach is particularly valuable in the translation of *Chaos of the Senses*, since it provides an in-depth examination of how the translators have handled elements such as metaphor, idiomatic expressions, and ideological aspects. By applying this framework, the study seeks to assess the effectiveness of translators in conveying the original's meaning, style, and social context in the target language. The research highlights the significance of a multidimensional approach for attaining a more precise and nuanced translation of literary works, focusing on the interrelation of the three dimensions in the translation process. The study concludes that the interaction between the linguistic, cognitive, and social aspects influences the fidelity of the translated text to the original literary discourse. By adopting a balanced approach and carefully handling these dimensions, the translation may maintain the original text's stylistic beauty, thematic depth, and social elements.

**Index Terms**—literary discourse, linguistic dimension, cognitive dimension, social dimension, *Chaos of the Senses*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis is a comprehensive discipline and, in fact, an interdisciplinary approach, with several academic domains contributing to its development. It encompasses a wide range of theoretical approaches. As a concept, discourse analysis seeks to examine not only the structure of language but also the way language is used to convey meaning, construct identities, and influence interactions (Schiffrin, 1994). Given its broad scope, discourse analysis provides insights into the function of language across various social, cultural, and cognitive contexts. Moreover, the nuanced nature of language, especially in literary discourse, necessitates a multidimensional approach to discourse analysis. Literary discourse is characterized by intricate language, stylistic variations, and profound cultural and social components, making it one of the most challenging types of texts to analyze and translate.

De Beaugrande (1997) emphasizes the need for a multidimensional approach to the analysis of text and discourse by integrating multiple levels of analysis, such as linguistic, cognitive, and social, to fully capture the spectrum of meaning inherent in a text. In other words, he constructs an integrated approach to analyze and comprehend the whole discourse (de Beaugrande, 1997). Accordingly, a comprehensive analysis from various perspectives must be considered to understand discourse. This framework provides a deeper understanding of how language functions in literary discourse, allowing for a more accurate and nuanced interpretation and translation of the text.

Literary discourse is one of the most challenging types of analysis, as it embodies the author's style, thoughts, and worldview. Authors express their creativity and vision through the language they select and the message they convey via discourse (Aksoy, 2017). Thus, a multidimensional approach is essential for maintaining the depth and richness of the original text. Translating literary discourse, therefore, requires not only linguistic competence but also an awareness of social and ideological differences between languages, as well as cognitive factors from both the writer's and translator's perspectives, to effectively and successfully convey the original meaning.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field that intersects with other humanities, including linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and social sciences. It is mainly concerned with systematically studying and analyzing discourses in various

contexts (Schiffrin, 1994). For instance, in linguistics, it is noted that languages cannot function effectively when sentences are contextually isolated. In sociology, significant contributions have been made to the study of conversation strategies within social interaction. In psychology, there is a focus on understanding discourse production, comprehension, and the underlying cognitive processes (van Dijk, 1985). As for literary studies, models are required to assess literary and discursive structures comprehensively. De Beaugrande (1997) notes that in the last decade of the 20th century, particularly during the 1970s, discourse analysis began to converge with various fields such as text linguistics, cognitive linguistics, sociology, and systemic functional linguistics. This convergence has viewed discourse as an interdisciplinary field of study. Similarly, Juez (2009) describes discourse analysis as a hybrid area of study that incorporates elements from across the human and social sciences. Consequently, discourse is analysed from linguistic, philosophical, cognitive, social, anthropological, literary, political, and ideological perspectives.

The diverse approaches to discourse analysis are inherently shaped by the orientation of scholars and their methods of inquiry. As a result, discourse analysis has become compartmentalized in different ways. For some scholars, the structure of the discourse is the primary focus, leading to a formal approach to discourse analysis. For others, the functional aspects of language are of greater importance, resulting in what is known as a functional approach. Meanwhile, scholars who concentrate on the social role of discourse have developed a critical approach to discourse analysis under the notion of 'social practice'. Fairclough (1992), Wodak (1989), Van Dijk (2001), and others are seminal contributors to this discipline.

#### A. De Beaugrande's (1997) Multidimensional Approach to Discourse Analysis

In 1997, Robert de Beaugrande published his book *New Foundations for a Science of Text and Discourse: Cognition, Communication, and The Freedom of Access to Knowledge and Society* in the domain of text linguistics and discourse analysis. He proposed a comprehensive framework for the study of text and discourse. De Beaugrande emphasized that language, as a system of communication, should not exist in isolation from society. He argued that people rely on their world experience and knowledge while using language during the communication process. From his perspective, a text is a "communicative event wherein linguistic, cognitive, and social actions converge, and not just as the sequence of words that were uttered or written" (de Beaugrande, 1997, p. 10). He sought to create "a multidimensional framework" to study discourse and text with precision and comprehensiveness. His contribution is to understand discourse as a whole by integrating cognitive and social aspects into the study of language (de Beaugrande, 1997). According to Jurin and Kriskvic (2017), this framework aims to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the text by conveying information associated with items, facts, utterances, and events. For de Beaugrande, a text is a comprehensive model representing a combination of interrelated facts and information that an individual has acquired as knowledge or experience. It also reflects social interaction within a given society. Therefore, he believes that his framework should involve cognitive and social actions (de Beaugrande, 1997). By integrating these three components, the framework identifies a text as communicative and forms a multidimensional approach to analyzing discourse. Based on this understanding, the present study will adopt this framework to analyze literary discourse.

#### B. Applying Discourse to Literature

Literature is fundamentally distinguished from other literary genres by its creative and aesthetic mode of expression. Most literary works reflect individuals' lifestyles, their viewpoint about the world, and their cultural beliefs and backgrounds (Canderia, 2019). Leech (2008) describes literature as the creative use of language and asserts that, until recent years, linguistics has contributed little to the study of literary texts.

From Van Dijk's (1979) perspective, literature is not just a particular collection of discourses that are distinguished by specific textual characteristics. It is also a type of speech act or communication style that attempts to depict the social context, purposes, and outcomes of such acts within the communicative context involving writers, readers, and reviewers. According to Rogers (2011), literature, as a form of discourse, functions as a social practice that indirectly interacts with the reader by shaping societal representations and engagements with the world. Fowler (1981) suggests that literature can be viewed as a social practice and maintains that the language used in literary discourse is not just as applicable to linguistic analysis as other forms of language. Most writers aim to present the world from their perspective; they construct texts in a way that influences the perceptions of their readers, whether by using linguistic devices or by subtly embedding social issues like ideologies, oppression, and power within the text.

#### C. The Translation of *Chaos of The Senses*

*Chaos of the Senses* is an Arabic novel that was written by Ahlam Mosteghanemi, a creative poet and writer from Algeria. The work was published in 1997. Among the Arab prizes that she has earned is the "Najib Mahfouz" medal for literature, which she was awarded in 1998. *Chaos of the Senses "Fawda Al-Hawas"* is the second narrative of her trilogy. It is a powerful story about love and the independence of Algeria. Two translations are available for the novel. The first, by Baria Ahmer, was published in 2004 by the American University in Cairo, and the second, by Nancy Roberts, was released in 2015 by Bloomsbury Publishing (Cherif, 2016).

### III. METHODOLOGY

The present study applies the multidimensional approach presented by de Beaugrande (1997) to the analysis of Mosteghanemi's novel *Chaos of the Senses* and its two translations. The study is comparative-qualitative in nature. The data selected are excerpts from the Arabic version of the novel to be compared with the two English translations to analyse and comprehend the novel and its translated versions based on linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions. The first translation of the novel was carried out by B. Ahmer, a Lebanese journalist, translator, and author. The second translation was done by N. Roberts, an American translator of Arabic literature.

Regarding the linguistic dimension, the analysis will focus on the linguistic phenomena of the selected texts to examine the writer's linguistic choices and structure as a part of her style and way of thinking. The analysis will be applied to both the source and target texts. The cognitive component pertains to the information and experiences the individual uses to construct their schematic frameworks about the world and society. Thus, the study aims to analyze the mental representations of the writer and the translators to determine whether the translators align with the original author on the cognitive dimension. As for the social dimension, de Beaugrande asserts that language should be connected to social practice. Under this level of analysis, ideology and gender are the main concerns. The selected data will be analysed using the three dimensions mentioned: linguistic, cognitive, and social.

The rationale for applying this multidimensional framework is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the entire discourse involved in the data analysis, i.e., the novel and its translations. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is this multidimensional approach applicable to literary discourse?
2. In what manner does the translation of *Chaos of the Senses* maintain or alter the original linguistic components found in the source text?
3. To what extent do the schemas of the translators and the original author correspond, and how do these schemas affect the reader's understanding of the novel?
4. In what manner is the social component conveyed in the translation of the novel?
5. How do the translators' handling of linguistic, cognitive, and social elements influence the overall literary discourse in the translated version of the novel?

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

##### *Sample (1): Original Text*

"لا أظن أن ناصر كان يتوقع، أنه بهذه الكلمات التي ربما غير رأيه فيها بعد ذلك، قد غير مساري في الكتابة، وأرغمني على الصمت سنتين.... سنتين كاملتين، تعلمت فيهما أن أحتقر كل أولئك الكتاب، الذين في الجرائد والمجلات واصلوا الحياة دون خجل، أمام جثمان العروبة...." ص 131

##### *Translation (1):*

I don't think that Nasser knew that with these words, which he might have later reconsidered, he had changed the course of my writing, forcing me into a two-year silence. For two entire years, I learned to despise all those writers in newspapers and magazines, who continued to live shamelessly in the face of the dead body of Arabism.... (p. 75)

##### *Translation (2):*

Little did Nasser know that, by saying these things that he may well have changed his mind about since, he would change the course of my writing and force me to keep silence for two whole years.... During those two years, I came to despise all those writers who, blithely publishing piece after piece in newspapers and magazines, shamelessly carried on with business as usual as Arabdom lay dead at their feet... (p. 69)

In comparing the Arabic text with its translations, an attempt will be made to evaluate how the two translators maintain the style and social elements of the metaphorical expression "أمام جثمان العروبة" in the original text. Linguistically, the term "العروبة" in the source language signifies the collective identity, culture, and unity of the Arab world. Translator (1) rendered the term into "Arabism", which preserves the ideological significance of the original. Translator (2) translated it as "Arabdom," a term that may not carry the same emotional resonance as "Arabism", yet still denotes the same social identity, albeit in a less powerful manner. Translator (1), in her rendering of the metaphor "dead body of Arabism," implied that the ideals associated with Arab pride and unity have vanished. Meanwhile, "Arabdom", as rendered by the translator (2), has a rather antiquated tone in English and may lack the powerful emotional or modern political connotations associated with "Arabism".

Overall, translation (1) appears to preserve the original connotations of the phrases more accurately, particularly for concepts like "Arabism". Translation (2), which shows some flexibility, often alters the emotional or ideological significance of the original language, making the criticism less pointed or less intense in comparison.

Concerning the preservation of the stylistic depth and metaphorical significance of the expression "أمام جثمان العروبة" translation (1) "in the face of the dead body of Arabism," is closer to the original text's style. By personifying "Arabism" as a dead body, the phrase conveys a powerful metaphor that is consistent with the emotive and evocative nature of the source text. The use of 'dead body' creates a vivid and dramatic image, maintaining the intensity and sense of mourning that the original text intended to convey.

Translation (2), "Arabdom lay dead," employs more abstract language that lacks the same figurative or emotional impact. The term "Arabdom" is less common and does not convey the ideological connotation present in "Arabism".

While "lay dead" might closely approximate the meaning, it lacks the visual impact and power of "dead body." This translation feels more fragmented and does not reflect the deviant style and beauty of the metaphor as effectively as the translation (1).

Translation (1) is more faithful to the style of the original writer in preserving metaphorical impact, while translation (2) simplifies and diminishes the stylistic effect. In terms of the cognitive dimension, translator (1) better captured the writer's schema. The translator preserved the structure and style of the metaphorical imagery "the dead body of Arabism," which corresponds with the author's emotional tone and conceptual framework. By doing so, the translator conveyed the author's mental representation of the decline of Arabism, along with a profound feeling of betrayal and loss. This indicates that the translator (1) has thoroughly engaged with the author's cognitive framework, maintaining both literal and emotional significance. Conversely, translation (2) deviates from the original schema, inadequately capturing the author's mental image by reducing concepts and rendering them more abstract. The shift from a personified, metaphorical depiction of "Arabism" to a more abstract and less vivid representation indicates that the translator failed to fully convey the author's mental world. Regarding the social dimension, translator (1) maintained the ideological significance by translating the expression "the dead body of Arabism." appropriately. This translation closely reflects the original author's ideological perspective, lamenting the collapse of Arab nationalism and denouncing the apathy of Arab countries.

*Sample (2): Original Text*

"هو سيد الوقت ليلاً... سيد المستحيلات، والهاتف العابر للقارات، والحزن العابر للأمسيات، والانبهار الدائم لبيل أول." ص 11

*Translation (1):*

He is the master of the night, master of the impossible, the voice that crosses continents, the sadness that pierces the evenings, the constant awe of that first night. (p. 2)

*Translation (2):*

He was a master of time, a master of impossibilities, a voice that traversed continents, a sorrow that traversed long evenings, and an eternally dazzling first night. (p. 7)

The text embodies a profound emotional and poetic analysis of love. The tone is melancholic yet introspective, creating a tapestry of feelings that relate to the inevitable distance and return between lovers. The repetition presented by the original author has been preserved by both translators, as seen in the noun "سيد," which is translated as "master." The word "الهاتف" is accurately translated as 'voice' by both translators. Linguistically, the Arabic metaphorical expressions سيد الوقت ليلاً, and سيد المستحيلات العابر للقارات are translated by translator (1) into "master of night, master of impossible, the voice that crosses continents, and the sadness that pierces the evenings" respectively. Translator (2) rendered these expressions as "a master of time, a master of impossibilities, a voice that traversed continents, and a sorrow that traversed long evenings." Both translations effectively capture the metaphors and preserve the same style and rhythmic tone in the original text. The repetition of the word "master" in the translations reinforces a mental schema of dominance, control, and mastery. Each metaphorical phrase following this word adds layers to this mental model, associating the subject with power and impossibilities. The effectiveness of this repetition in the translations relies on the translator's ability to preserve the sense of control and power in the imagery and to create a comparable mental representation in the reader's mind of the translated version similar to that created in the source text reader's mind. Considering the social dimension, both translations maintained the dominant male figure through the use of "master"; however, translator (1) more adeptly sustained the metaphorical and poetic force of the original Arabic, reinforcing the image of a powerful, almost mythical male figure.

*Sample (3) Original Text*

"بين مطار وطائرة، انجرف به الشوق اليها فلن تصدق انه استدلى على النسيان بالذاكرة. ولن تسأله عن أسباب هبوطه الاضطراري. فهي تدري، كنساء البحارة تدري، ان البحر سيسرقه منها وانه رجل الإقلاع، حتماً." ص 11

*Translation (1):*

If ever, between a plane and an airport, desire swept him back to her, she would never believe that memory had guided him to the forgotten past. She would not question his emergency landing. She knows, just as the wives of sailors know, that the sea will steal him away from her once again and that he is a man of departure, always. (p. 2)

*Translation (2):*

Yearning had swept him towards her mid-flight. Hence, she would not ask him the reasons for his forced landing. She knew, as a sailor's wife knows, that the sea would steal him away from her and that he was the man of inevitable departures. (p. 7)

Concerning the linguistic dimension, the adverb "حتماً" is rendered by translator (1) as "always", which alters the meaning in the original text. Translator (2) has made a function shift from an adverb into an adjective by translating "رجل الإقلاع حتماً" into 'the man of inevitable departures'. This translation is more accurate and closer to the meaning of the source text, as the use of the adverb "حتماً" indicates certainty or inevitably. The metaphor "man of departure" in the two translations reinforces a mental schema of dominance, control, and mastery. The power of this metaphor in the translated versions depends on how the translator successfully maintains this sense of control and power in the imagery. In terms of social dimension, the metaphor "رجل الإقلاع" effectively communicates a significant message of masculine autonomy, independence, and control within the text. It highlights the man's ability to depart whenever he pleases, reinforcing his

dominance and superiority. Regarding the translated versions, both translations successfully convey gender roles by translating the expression as "man of departure, preserving the connotation of control associated with masculinity.

*Sample (4): Original Text*

"أذكر، كان يمرّ بي أحياناً، يقضي برفقتي بعض الوقت، ثم يمضي قائلاً: " كان الله في عون هذه الأمة، نصف حكامها عملاء، والنصف الآخر مجانين " قبل أن يصحح نفسه مضيفاً " أما الأخطر... فهم العملاء المجانين!" ص 132

*Translation (1):*

I remember how he used to drop by and spend some time with me. "May God help this nation," he would say as he departed. "Half our rulers are traitors, and the other half are lunatics. The most dangerous, of course, are the lunatic traitors. (p. 75)

*Translation (2):*

Then he would take off, saying, "God help this people. Half its leaders are collaborators, and the other half are crazy." Then, as an afterthought, he'd add, 'Of course, it would be even worse if they were collaborators and crazy, too!' (p. 70)

The text reflects political tension in the Arabic regimes. The Arabic term "عملاء" carries a heavy negative connotation of betrayal and collaboration with external forces. It implies a lack of loyalty and trust, indicating accusations against rulers who are perceived as serving foreign interests. Translator (1) rendered this term into "traitors," while Translator (2) translated it into "collaborators". Although both translations carry an ideological dimension, there are subtle differences in meaning and connotation between the two terms. "traitors" possesses a much stronger negative connotation, implying a betrayal of fidelity and trust. "collaborators" often signifies individuals who cooperate with an enemy or foreign power, usually in a context where their actions are seen as betraying their group or country. This term does not inherently convey a strong moral judgment; rather, it focuses more on the act of collaboration itself. Thus, the term "traitors" is closer to the original intended meaning in its social dimension, as it strongly conveys the sense of disloyalty, while "collaborators" may be used in a more neutral context.

Similarly, the Arabic term "مجانين" has been translated into "lunatics" in translation (1) and "crazy" in translation (2). Both are common translations; however, they carry different connotations. The writer seems to express a deep concern regarding the mental health of the rulers, implying a more serious critique of their mental state. Therefore, "lunatics" aligns more closely with the original text's intent, capturing the writer's perspective on these rulers, whereas "crazy" might downplay that seriousness.

Translator (1) was closer to the writer's schema and mental representation than translator (2), as she accurately reflected the writer's original intentions and effectively conveyed the meaning and context of the Arabic text. Additionally, she captured the writer's ideological stance. This might be attributed to her Arab nationality, which likely affords her familiarity with the political situation and crises in the Arab world. In this context, Translator (1) successfully preserved the cognitive aspects, including how the narrator conveys political criticism and social commentary, indicating a strong cognitive alignment with the Arabic text.

## V. CONCLUSION

Through an in-depth analysis of Arabic texts and their translations from a discursive perspective, it becomes evident that the adopted multidimensional framework offers a comprehensive understanding of literary discourse and serves as a valuable tool for evaluating translations. Both translators have made significant efforts to preserve the linguistic elements of the original text, particularly regarding word choices and metaphorical expressions. However, Translator (1) demonstrates a closer adherence to the writer's style, particularly in terms of figurative language and symbolic depth. In the cognitive dimension, the translator's schema closely aligns with that of the writer by employing translation strategies that maintain the metaphors, symbolism, and rhythmic qualities inherent to the Arabic novel. This alignment facilitates the conveyance of the author's intent, allowing readers of the translated version to access cognitive experiences similar to those of readers of the original text. The social dimension is significantly influenced by the lexical choices made by the translators and the degree of compatibility between the translators' schema and that of the original author. Therefore, the social dimension is affected by the other two dimensions. The extent to which the translated version accurately represents the original's literary discourse is contingent upon the interaction between these linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions. By employing a balanced approach that navigates these dimensions, the translation effectively preserves the source text's stylistic beauty, thematic complexity, and social nuances. For further clarification, the table below summarises the linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions of both the original texts and the translated versions in the selected samples.

TABLE 1  
A SUMMARY OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS IN THE SOURCE TEXTS AND THE TRANSLATIONS

Sample No.	The Source Text			Translation (1)			Translation (2)		
	Linguistic Dimension	Cognitive Dimension	Social Dimension	Linguistic Dimension	Cognitive Dimension	Social Dimension	Linguistic Dimension	Cognitive Dimension	Social Dimension
1	+	+	+	+	+	+			
2	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
3	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
4	+	+	+	+	+	+			

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**Saba. J. Mohammad** is a faculty member at the Department of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul, Iraq. She has been teaching many subjects for undergraduate study, such as translation studies, discourse analysis, and English grammar. She got her M.A. degree in Translation Studies in 2012. At present, she is a Ph.D. candidate in the field of translation and linguistics.



**Hala Kh. Najim** is a professor with a Ph.D. in Linguistics. She is a faculty member at the Department of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul, Iraq. Professor Najim has made significant contributions in the field of Linguistics by publishing more than (14) research papers. She also has been teaching postgraduate study Contrastive Linguistics (Ph.D. program) and Contrastive Grammar (M.A. program) at the Department of Translation and the Department of English. She has supervised more than (31) Ph.D. and M.A. students in the domains of Translation Studies and Linguistics.