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2016-02-18
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/19591

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Manipulating Anne Frank: A comparative study of Anne Frank's diary in translation

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Abstract

This study examines how discourse shapes and depicts social objects in translation. It shows how translators' linguistic choices differ in the treatment of the same event and representation of the same social object. The study uses the transitivity analysis developed by M.A.K. Halliday and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology as analytical tools. The comparative analysis of the discourse used in various translations of the *Diary of Anne Frank* reveals significant differences in perspective across the translations producing variations in the representation, demeanour and characterisation of the young Anne Frank in each text. A critical (text and) discourse analysis reveal how these choices affect the realization of agency and power in the representation of action.

The study aims to avoid any bias that might skew the findings. None of the translations studied is therefore considered to be better than another. The trajectory of the *Anne Frank Diary* has been a complex one and, in many respects, no single text can rightfully be deemed the original. The present comparative study does not compare translations with a so-called *original* but compares a number of translations or versions of the text against each other to exemplify the changes in representation. Given the limited scope of the present study, it is not possible to examine translations into all languages and of all existing translations For the purposes of the study, five translations into three languages published over a span of some five years were selected for analysis.

Keywords: Anne Frank, CDA, translation, transitivity.