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The Devil is in the Details: Where Iranian Translator Trainees Look for Embedded Ideology in Source Discourse

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Abstract Discourse and ideology are closely intertwined constructs with significant implications for both professional and trainee translators working across diverse contexts and language pairs. This quantitative study investigates which aspects of source text discourse Iranian translator trainees examine to identify embedded ideologies during their translation process. To this end, the categories of discourse structures proposed by van Dijk (2009) were used to develop a questionnaire that was later distributed among 469 Iranian translator trainees. The construct and external validity of the data collected using this original instrument were established through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results indicated that among the nine identified categories of ideological discourse structures—as various dimensions or levels of discourse—trainees prioritized more tangible discourse levels, such as text organization, as more likely to contain ideological representations, whereas more abstract levels, such as argumentation, were considered less important.

Keywords: *Interlingual translation, Critical discourse analysis, Ideological discourse structures, Translator education, Validity*

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1. Introduction

Interest in the interplay between ideology, discourse, and translation has been on the rise since the 1990s, with the publication of Hatim and Mason's seminal work (1990) on discourse and ideology. Studies drawing on discourse analytical perspectives came to the fore, given the importance of shedding light on how translators, as readers as well as discourse (re)producers, deal with ideology in their work. The two key principles of ideological reproduction in discourse are (a) the presence or absence of information in semantic representations derived from a certain social event at issue and (b) the function of expression or suppression of information in the interests of the discourse producer (van Dijk, 1998a). The latter is part of an overall strategy of ideological communication that consists of four major moves, known as the ideological square: (1) emphasize positive things about

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Us, (2) emphasize negative things about Them, (3) de-emphasize negative things about Us, and (4) de-emphasize positive things about Them (van Dijk, 2000b). This bipolar construction of identities as the result of translators' linguistic choices through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been picking up in recent years (e.g., Abu Zaghlan et al., 2023).

Despite the well-established entanglement of ideology, power relations, and translation (Díaz-Cintas, 2012; Hatim & Mason, 1990; Munday, 2007) and despite recognition of an ideological turn in Translation Studies (Leung, 2006; Zwischenberger, 2023), translator training programs hardly seem to directly address the concept of ideology and power relations in their course syllabi and program curricula. The Iranian curriculum of the undergraduate English translator training program, which has been designed by the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, does not address the need for a course or part of a course on ideological discourse study in translation at an undergraduate level. The undergraduate English translation curriculum, the same as that of any other major, is used nationwide by all state and private universities in Iran and has undergone revision twice, once in 1970 and once in 2018. In the former, critical discourse analysis was assumed under the syllabus of such courses as Translation of Political Texts, Translation of Journalistic Texts, or even Reading Journalistic Texts in English. In these courses, trainee translators were introduced to the relevant principles for dealing with embedded ideologies in discourse during the translation of the more overtly-oriented ideological texts. In the revisited version of the curriculum in 2018, the attention to discursive practices and the importance of ideology is assumed to be considered under the syllabus of such courses as Translating English Texts in Humanities, Translating Persian Texts in Humanities, Resistance Literature, and Translating Journalistic Texts. Therefore, the undergraduate programs for translator training in Iran fail to give due attention to the critical approaches to the study of discourse, and it begs the question as to how this lack of attention to the importance of the embedded ideologies in texts of various types would pan out in terms of the eventual translation competence of the trainee translators.

Similar to other contexts, the salient role of translation in the context of Iran cannot be overemphasized; hence, the importance of attending to the nuances involved in the act of translation, including the embedded ideologies in the source and target discourse. Venuti (1998) maintains that "translation and translator training have been impeded by the prevalence of linguistics-oriented approaches that offer a truncated view of the empirical data they collect" (p. 1). This linguistic-oriented perspective of translator training curricula has underpinned the training program in Iran to a great extent (Khoshsaligheh, 2013a). Despite the ample scholarly endeavors into how ideology is mechanized in different textual as well as socio-cultural milieus, not much ink has been spilt on how ideology is perceived and approached by prospective translators studying at Iranian universities. More specifically, our concern is on how the start text is critically interpreted for its ideological instances by the prospective Iranian translators. Thus, the study is an attempt to address the following questions:

1. Where do the Iranian translator trainees most look for in ST discourse for embedded ideologies?
2. What are the distinct categories of discourse structures that Iranian translator trainees perceive to accommodate ideological representations during translation?
3. Is the achieved model of categorization of ideological discourse structures generalizable beyond the used sample to the entire target population of Iranian English translator trainees?
4. What are the most important categories of ideological discourse structures for the Iranian English translator trainees to examine for ideological representation during translation?

In what follows, a brief discussion is provided regarding the interrelations of the concepts of ideology, discourse, and translation. Then, various approaches to the critical analysis of discourses are introduced, and the theoretical underpinning of this study, that is, socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis (SCDA), is introduced, and the operating mechanisms characterizing this approach are outlined. We then proceed to present the methods followed in conducting the research and move on to present the descriptive and prescriptive results of our analysis. In the end, the results are contextualized within the broader narrative of SCDA and translator training, and conclude the study with a brief mention of the limitations and implications for future works in the conclusions section.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Socio-Cognitive Approach to Discourse Analysis

The socio-cognitive approach (SCA) to discourse analysis is predicated on the centrality of individual subjectivity and is concerned with the way understanding is constructed through the interplays between knowledge, discourse, and society (Gyollai, 2022). As a theoretical framing, the main point of focus lies in how narratives are shaped through the (mis)use of language dominance (Masroor et al., 2020). This deliberate (mis)appropriation of language resources is essentially geared towards favoring particular agendas through which We can be viewed in a more positive light than Them (Van Dijk, 2012). Given the fact that this way of language leverage is akin to the patterns of normal and everyday conversations (Van Dijk, 2012), van Dijk (2014) maintains that no text and/or talk could be taken as devoid of ideology. However, some (sub)structures could serve as stronger bedsteads for ideology than the others, hence the enumeration of some of the structures of discourse that can exhibit indications of covert ideologies (van Dijk, 2000b): (1) Meaning (Topics, Level of description, Implications and presuppositions, Local coherence, Synonymy, paraphrase, Contrast, Examples and illustrations, Disclaimers), (2) Propositional structures (Actors, Modality, Evidentiality, Hedging and vagueness, Topoi), (3) Formal structures, (4) Sentence syntax (Word order, Nominalization, Passive or active sentences, Topicalization), (5) Discourse forms, (6) Argumentation, (7) Rhetoric, and (8) Action and interaction.

As the name suggests, van Dijk's (2014) socio-cognitive approach is reliant upon a number of pillars. Firstly, the *social* aspect of discourse is concerned with the social functions that ideology can serve in different groups and societies. This facet of the theory is concerned with the societal aspect of the everyday activities individuals experience in their day-to-day lives. Secondly, the cognition aspect is built around the idea of *cognitive structures*, which is concerned with the mental representations individuals have of the phenomena in the world. Both of these social and cognitive aspects, containing ideological footprints, are only effective once they are *verbalized*, meaning they are actually applied and implemented in discursive and expressive forms.

The subliminal messages included in the verbalized content can draw on the individuals' subjectivity and, thus, manipulate the way they perceive an act in the world. This will eventually lead to the alteration of the mental models through which perception takes place (Bánhegyil, 2008). Given this subjectivity-centered nature of SCA and its interest in how discourses are constructed as the result of the interplays between one's personal knowledge and the surrounding socially shared knowledge (Gyollai, 2022), the application of the socio-cognitive approach has been demonstrated in areas such as information science research (Middleton et al., 2019), special education (Lim & Cheatham, 2021), and media studies (Ahmed & Faiq, 2023), among others. In this light, the analyses conducted through the lens of SCA have revealed how language can be utilized to gain social and economic capital, among other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

The nuances involved in the construction of ideology through discourse are of great importance for the trainee translators so they do not fall victim to the embedded biases and ideologies in the starting discourses. On the same plane, but at a micro level, the act of reading for translation (i.e., reproduction) can indeed be different from reading for mere reception (i.e., for purposes of entertainment, learning, or pleasure, to name but a few). The distinction between reading for these two purposes is best explained by Zhang (1997) in his discussion on reading transaction in translation:

> I realize that when I first read the Chinese story for my personal pleasure, I was led into an aesthetic living-through experience. But in my second reading of the same story for the purpose of translation, I had to adopt a more distanced, more efferent stance in order to search for the implied tone and mood of the work (p. 249).

As offered in the above description, the act of reading is an intricate task undertaken by the translator, which highlights the role of ideology and discourse, ever more important. This calls for a detailed look at the interplays between ideology, discourse, and translation.

2.2. Ideology, Discourse, and Translation

Modern technological developments have widened the mechanisms through which certain ideological discourses can be permeated (McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols, 2016). With this great potential comes greater demand to be able to keep up with the ever-increasing volume of materials to be translated and localized. This will inevitably entail the participation of users at various levels to meet this demand (Baños & Díaz-Cintas, 2023; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2025; Muñoz Sánchez, 2009). Therefore, it is of great necessity for translators to be aware of the ideological mechanisms at work when dealing with translation geeks; otherwise, ideological agendas can go unchecked, and certain ontological and epistemological perspectives can go rampant (Baumgarten, 2012). This emphasizes the need to tie perspectives from critical discourse studies and translation studies to be able to train competent translators.

Researchers in translation studies have picked up the initiative to adopt a critical lens to view the discourses of different types. In the context of social media, Pendri et al. (2024) analyzed the pedagogical implications of the spread of (mis)information on online platforms during periods of crisis (in this case, the COVID-91 pandemic). Drawing primarily on Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture, they suggest how teachers' experience was reverberated using online media, highlighting the problems they faced amid the pandemic crisis in terms of connection and participation issues, student and teacher flexibility, and the constant reconfiguration of regulations, among other factors. Such an account of the discourse provided by experts in any field can yield valuable insights into the potential of various discourse structures (e.g., lexical choice) to highlight a certain issue in a timely manner.

In terms of the importance of discourse analysis for translation and translator education, Schäffner (2000) asserts that some sort of analysis of the source text is an indispensable part of the translation process, which makes it imperative to teach discourse analysis courses in translator training programs. Munday (2008) considers critical discourse analysis as the link between discourse, language, translation, and the environment and states that "critical discourse analysis functions as a means of uncovering the implicit ideology in the language" (p. 48). Likewise, insisting on the substantial benefits of the ideological turn in translation studies (Leung, 2006) suggests taking advantage of the potential of CDA and other discourse-based tools for investigating ideology in translated texts.

On the flipside, focusing on the discursive representations of translators' ideological orientations, Khoshsaligheh (2013b) had ten untrained translators translate an ideologically-laden text to reveal whether the untrained translators imposed their ideological standpoints on the original text. The results suggested that translators made ideological departures at both micro and macro levels from the source text and, thus, made interventions by magnifying positive points about the groups that they favored (members of the feminist movement) and de-emphasizing positive points about the opposing group. There have also been attempts to employ the frameworks of (critical) discourse analysis in translator training programs. Khoshsaligheh (2013a), for instance, focused on the effectiveness of educational levels and gender on alertness towards discourse structures that contain ideological presuppositions on the side of translator trainees. Using van Dijk's (2009) ideological square, he suggested that the educational programs at the time were not adequate for training prospective trainee translators to develop a keen eye for ideologically-laden discourse structures.

Zlatnar Moe and Grahek Križnar (2012) drew on the socio-cognitive framework of van Dijk (2009) to shed light on the awareness of third-year translation students of the ideological orientations incorporated into the source texts that they were to translate. Their findings pointed to the positive impact of training in raising the performance of third-year students compared to the first-year students, but the lexical and syntactic choices made by the trainee translators reflected their low awareness regarding the ideologically loaded items.

Consequently, it becomes imperative to investigate ideology from multiple angles and through various frameworks to capture how the subtle ideological layers could be unraveled in different discourses. This is acknowledged in the realization of an ideological turn in Translation Studies (Leung, 2006). Such an approach to the study of ideological agendas hidden in the texts can benefit from the insights afforded by critical (ideological) discourse study, which is a cross-disciplinary field of research lying at the intersection of investigating discourses, social processes and societal institutions of power (Van Dijk,

2012), which is not a particular research method but a research perspective through which scholars of different backgrounds, using their field-specific research frameworks and methods, investigate discourse for the benefit of the oppressed and victimized (van Dijk, 2011). Gao and Zeng (2021) focused their attention on a sample of news comments, and 19 college students were recruited to comment on the news topics. By analyzing the obtained data mainly through their linguistic features, they revealed that individuals' social and ideological responses can be accessed via their comments and that critical thinking can lead to differentiations in people's ideological and social beliefs.

Considering the wealth of studies on the issue, it seems that critical/ideological discourse analysis courses must be included in English translator training programs in Iran in order to prepare prospective translators for fulfilling their social, professional, and ethical responsibilities.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The purposive sampling procedure was used for representativeness at the broader scale of Iran, as well as different types of institutions to form a representative sample of graduate and undergraduate students of English and Persian translation in the Iranian higher education system. The population comprised junior students (third year) and senior students (fourth/final year) of BA in English translation, as well as MA students in English translation. Eventually, a sample consisting of 469 male and female participants was selected, including junior BA students (n=185), senior BA students (n=186), and MA students (n=98) studying at ten universities and institutes of higher education (i.e., Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Khayyam Institute of Higher Education, Allameh Tabatabai University, University of Isfahan, Hafez Institute of Higher Education, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Imam Reza International University, Islamic Azad University, Quchan Campus, University of Birjand, Azad University, Science and Research Campus) in six provinces across Iran. They were met in person and were invited to participate in the study by responding to the questionnaire items.

3.2. Instrumentation

To address the research questions, a self-report questionnaire instrument was designed, psychometrically validated, and applied (see Appendix A). Drawing on the potentiality of discourse for accommodating implicit ideological representations of the discourse producer, a list of 49 statements was prepared, each of which described an ideological discourse structure derived from the conceptual framework of the ideological square (van Dijk, 2000b, 2009). The list was used to form the initial draft of the instrument. Each questionnaire item was an ideological discourse structure in the form of an English word or phrase alongside a definition in Persian. The items were rated on a five-point semantic scale ranging from never to always, and each option was associated with a percentage (1 [never, 0%], 2 [seldom, 25%], 3 [sometimes, 50%], 4 [often, 75%], and 5 [always, 100%]) to declare the interval equality of the options and, therefore, the interval nature of the obtained data. The participants were asked to rate the importance of each item by writing a number on a scale from 1 to 5. This scale was meant to indicate the average frequency of their reference to each discourse structure when seeking indications of the ideological representations of the discourse producer during the translation of socio-political texts into Persian.

Theoretically, the questionnaire items consisted of several sub-items as, according to van Dijk (2000b), the ideological discourse structures, being the questionnaire items, fall into several categories (e.g., rhetoric, discourse forms, argumentation). However, the theory does not make hard-and-fast distinctions between the categories of ideological discourse structures, and some of the categories overlap to some extent. In other words, some of the ideological discourse structures are part of more than one category. Therefore, multivariate statistical analysis was conducted to specify the underlying constructs in the questionnaire and clarify the empirically supported distinct categories of the ideological discourse structures.

To confirm the accuracy of the results, the statements were screened for their wording, ambiguity, adequacy, and content overlap. The inventory was subjected to review and revision by several expert scholars in discourse and translation studies, and the recommended modifications were applied. To ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, it was administered to several potential participants (pilot

stage), and according to their feedback, a number of points regarding the readability of the items and the overall layout were reconsidered and improved. As a result, a 47-item questionnaire was developed (Ideological Discourse Structure Inventory).

4.3. Procedure

4.3.1. Data Collection

After taking the necessary measures and obtaining the required permissions to administer the questionnaire, over 500 completed questionnaires were returned to the researchers. The participants were first briefed on the general aims of data collection and how their responses would be used. However, to avoid influencing their responses, the specific aims of the study were not shared. The participants were also assured of the full confidentiality of the data collected. Then, they were asked to specify the importance of each item by rating, on average, how frequently they would critically explore them in an English source text for implicit ideological representations of the text producer when they are reading a text of social or political content for the purpose of translating into Persian. Ultimately, the incomplete questionnaires were excluded, leaving the researchers with 469 completed questionnaires used for data analysis.

4.3.2. Data Analysis

For the purposes of the present study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer the research questions. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics were computed to find the most likely discourse structures for accommodating ideological representations during the translation of socio-political texts. As for the second research question, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run on SPSS 27.0 to determine the construct validity of the questionnaire and explore the number of latent variables indicating the categories.

After establishing an empirically supported categorization of the items and determining the sub-sets of the questionnaire, the internal consistency reliability of each sub-set was assessed in order to verify the reliability of the findings. The results clarify the distinct categories of discourse structures that Iranian translator trainees perceive to accommodate ideological representations during the translation of socio-political content.

To answer the third research question and confirm the generalizability of the factor structure to the entire target population, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted by LISREL 12.0. Lastly, to address the last research question, the weighted summated mean score of each of the categories was calculated and reported in descending order. That is, the mean score of every item of ideological discourse structure in the category was multiplied by their standardized factor loading coefficient obtained through confirmatory factor analysis. Subsequently, the results from all the items in each category were averaged. As a result, the weighted summated mean score of each category was computed**,** and the factors were arranged in descending order based on their mean scores.

4. Results

In this section, the results of both descriptive and interpreting statistical tests are presented, providing responses to the research questions.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

To address the first research question, the descriptive statistics of the data were computed, and the ten most highly considered discourse structures containing ideological representations in ST discourse of socio-political content, according to the participants, were determined.

Table 1 illustrates the highest-rated ideological discourse structures in addition to the discourse category of each of the structures according to the theoretical framework introduced by van Dijk (2000b). The top ten ideological discourse structures perceived by the participants with two shared ranks included twelve structures in the following descending order: Sentence Order, Lexicalization, Local Coherence,

Title & Abstract, Euphemism, Word Order, Event Order, Formality Level, Vagueness, Paraphrase & Synonym, Agency Clarity, and Passivization. As noted, the sixth place and the ninth place are shared by Word Order and Event Order, and then Paraphrase & Synonym and Agency Clarity, as the first two both score 3.69, and the second two both score 3.63 on their average rating point out of a total of 5.

Table 1
Highest Rated Discourse Structures to Explore for Ideological Representations

No.	Rank	Discourse Structures	Mean	SD	Theoretical Category
1	1	Sentence Order	3.83	1.087	Discourse Forms
2	2	Lexicalization	3.82	1.126	Style
3	3	Local Coherence	3.81	1.078	Meaning & Content
4	4	Title & Abstract	3.77	1.148	Discourse Forms
5	5	Euphemism	3.75	1.074	Rhetoric
6	6	Word Order	3.69	1.121	Sentence Syntax
7	6	Event Order	3.69	1.138	Formal Structures
8	7	Formality Level	3.68	1.126	Style; Sentence Syntax
9	8	Vagueness	3.67	1.120	Propositional Structure
10	9	Paraphrase & Synonym	3.63	1.070	Meaning & Content
11	9	Agency Clarity	3.63	1.165	Sentence Syntax
12	10	Passivization	3.56	1.181	Sentence Syntax

4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

In response to the second research question, exploratory factor analysis was run in order to psychometrically evaluate the data and explore how the variables could be summarized into a smaller set of underlying factors. Initially, to test the sampling adequacy and sphericity of the data, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were computed. In this study, the KMO value was .90, which falls within the marvelous range (Kaiser, 1974). Therefore, the result indicated that the sample is adequate and the pattern of correlations is compact. The result of Bartlett's test was highly significant (p<0.000); hence, it was appropriate to run factor analysis on the data.

To obtain the best factor solution, the criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2009) were taken into consideration, and nine factors were extracted using principal component analysis while loading values lower than 0.4 were suppressed. Later, the factor solution was rotated using Equamax with Kaiser Normalization, an orthogonal method, and the rotation offered the most reasonable factor solution. The rotated factor solution demonstrated the nine factors with high loadings at a pertinent factor. The rotated structure of the factors could explain over 54% of the total variance of the data. Having obtained an acceptable factor solution in which every variable had a significant loading on only a single factor, the nature of the factors and the pattern of their loadings were interpreted to assign a label to each factor (Table 2). The response to the second research question is also present in Table 2 where the inter-item correlation indices met the recommended threshold for acceptability (Robinson et al., 1991).

Table 2
Validity and Reliability Details of the Nine Factors and Their Indicators

Text Organization		**Rhetoric**		**Meaning and Content**	
Item	**Loading**	**Item**	**Loading**	**Item**	**Loading**
Paragraphing	.652	Irony	.708	Topics & Themes	.694
Formality Level	.580	Metaphor	.642	Situation Description	.640
Event Order	.521	Simile	.595	Local Coherence	.521

Title & Abstract/Lead	.499	Comparison	.472	Categorization	.447
		Polarization & Contrast	.441	Reasonableness	.405
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.70		Cronbach's Alpha: 0.70		Cronbach's Alpha: 0.73	
Argumentation		**Evidential Support**		**Lexical Choice**	
Item	**Loading**	**Item**	**Loading**	**Item**	**Loading**
Counterfactual	.699	Evidentiality	.683	Paraphrase & Synonym	.712
Disclaimer	.594	Topoi	.666	Repetition	.555
Litotes & Negation	.537	Explanation	.553	Word Order	.484
Victimization	.459	Consensus	.522	Hyperbole	.435
Authority	.413			Lexicalization	.409
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.67		Cronbach's Alpha: 0.69		Cronbach's Alpha: 0.61	
Generality		**Sentence**		**Unclarity**	
Item	**Loading**	**Item**	**Loading**	**Item**	**Loading**
Examples	.701	Passivization	.678	Euphemism	.746
Generalization	.647	Subordination & Coordination	.660	Fallacy	.586
Presupposition	.507	Sentence Order	.559	Vagueness	.442
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.54		Cronbach's Alpha: 0.62		Cronbach's Alpha: 0.52	

4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

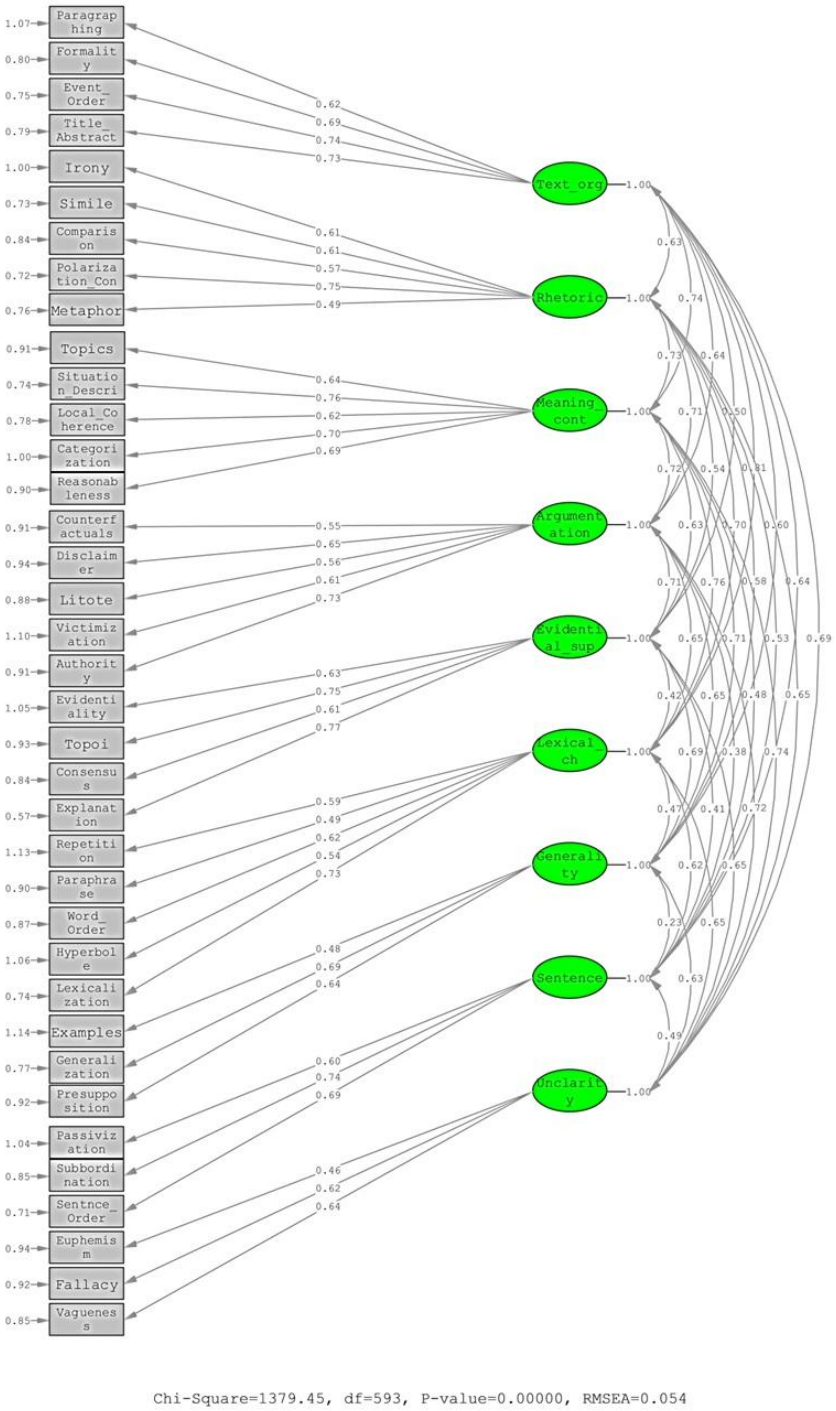
To address the third research question, CFA through structural equation modeling was conducted (Figure 1). In the previous stages, a reasonable factor solution justified based on the theoretical framework of the study was specified using EFA. Generalizability is a relevant issue in every multivariate technique; however, it is more particularly pertinent to interdependence methods since they describe a data structure that must be representative of the target population.

Considering the significance of a confirmatory perspective, CFA through structural equation modeling was conducted using LISREL 12.0. Yet, the particular purposes of this stage were to assess the generalizability of the factor solution, re-evaluate construct validity, and measure the contribution of each observable variable (i.e., ideological discourse structures) to its corresponding latent factor (i.e., discourse categories).

LISREL, a structural equation modeling software, was used for this part of the analysis, and first-order multiple factor CFA using maximum likelihood estimation was run on the factor solution, which resulted from EFA. The $\chi 2$ statistic for the model was 1379.45 (degree of freedom = 593, $p<0.000$), with the $\chi 2$ to degrees of freedom (*df*) ratio having a value of 2.32, which is less than 3.0 and, thus, indicates a perfect fit (Kline, 2023). The output produced an RMSEA value of 0.054, which falls in an acceptable range (Hooper et al., 2008). Additionally, the output value of CFI was 0.92, which indicated an acceptable fit (Tabachnick, 2019). In the same way, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was 0.96, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) was 0.95. In the end, the index values above all together adequately represented an acceptable goodness-of-fit for the factor solution in question.

Figure 1

The Proposed Categorical Model of Discourse Structures



After a relatively lengthy series of inferential multivariate statistical procedures, a hard-and-fast categorization of ideological discourse structures was achieved, and the multiple categories of ideological discourse structures introduced in the theoretical framework were determined and empirically confirmed. Through the previously mentioned statistical techniques, the internal consistency reliability (via scale reliability analysis) and construct validity (via exploratory factor analysis) of the findings were verified. Moreover, the generalizability of the findings to the entire target population was also confirmed via confirmatory factor analysis.

4.4. Descriptive Analysis of Discourse Categories

To answer the final question, the weighted summated mean score of each category was calculated. To do so, the factor variables' scores multiplied by their CFA standardized factor loading coefficients were arithmetically averaged. This procedure was conducted for each of the categories. The obtained descriptive statistics for all categories are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Ratings for the Discourse Categories

	Discourse Categories	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Text Organization	.64	3.19	2.3183	.53486	.286	-.318	-.493
2	Sentence	.63	3.15	2.2711	.55108	.304	-.439	-.257
3	Meaning & Content	.62	3.10	2.1365	.49914	.249	-.369	-.309
4	Lexical Choice	.56	2.80	2.0114	.41561	.173	-.449	.034
5	Evidential Support	.63	3.14	1.9879	.52034	.271	-.029	-.308
6	Rhetoric	.84	2.98	1.9846	.44150	.195	.056	-.603
7	Generality	.56	2.82	1.8552	.46498	.216	.077	-.316
8	Unclarity	.54	2.70	1.8371	.43036	.185	-.130	-.344
9	Argumentation	.57	2.84	1.6625	.43487	.189	.085	-.289

Table 3 shows the discourse categories to explore for implied ideologies during sociopolitical translation from the highest to the lowest according to their importance to the participants in the following order: Text Organization Level, Sentence Level, Meaning & Content Level, Lexical Choice Level, Evidential Support Level, Rhetoric Level, Generality Level, Unclarity Level, and Argumentation Level.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that Iranian translator trainees mostly focused on discourse structures at more visible levels, which lay closer to the more palpable levels of ST discourse, such as Formal Structures, Sentence Syntax, and Discourse Forms. In other words, the students tended to look for ideological representations through indicators of discourse levels, which are assumed to be the more 'concrete' building blocks of discourse. This is in line with the findings of Khoshsaligheh (2018), who, using the think-aloud protocol, suggested that trainee translators are less heedful of the more abstract levels of discourse and are more focused on the "metaphorically visible" discursive planes (p. 31). The curriculum's linguistics-oriented approach limits trainees' ability to engage with abstract ideological structures, potentially hindering their competence in handling ideologically charged texts. This aligns with broader critiques of Iranian translator training, which has been described as outdated and overly focused on linguistic theories rather than market-relevant skills by the Iranian trainee translators (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2019). On the other hand, this could be due to factors lying on the trainee translators' side. In more exact terms, while trainees' focus on tangible structures may reflect the curriculum's emphasis on linguistic accuracy, it could also stem from the immediate demands of translation tasks, where concrete elements like sentence order are easier to identify. This can especially be the case in the context of translator training, as trainee translators are starting out with the nooks and crannies of translation, especially at the early stages of their undergraduate programs.

The importance of training in cultivating trainee translators' ability to unravel the ideological positions imbued in a text has also been suggested by Zlatnar Moe and Grahek Križnar (2012) in terms of their focus on the lexical and syntactic choices made by third-year translation students in the ideological construction of their translated texts. Such choices reflect how the micro-level choices can impact the product at the macro-level, hence the interconnectedness of discourse categories (KhosraviNik, 2010). However, according to our results, the search of English translation students for ideological indications is not exclusively limited to the more visible layers of discourse, and some of the more nuanced levels of ideological incorporations enjoyed high frequencies of reference (e.g., Local Coherence under the category of Meaning & Content, or Vagueness under the category of Propositional Structure in the proposed categories (van Dijk, 1998, 2000a)).

Overall, a case could be made for the ineffectiveness of translator training courses in cultivating trainee translators' language awareness to unearth hidden ideological agendas (Khoshsaligheh, 2013a, 2013b, 2018). This concern has also been voiced with respect to translator training in the Chinese context, where Pan (2017) suggested that the seven trainee translators under study in his analysis performed sub-optimally in terms of critical source text analysis.

The Iranian translator training programs and curricula could draw on the insights yielded by such competence-based Master's-level translator training programs as the European Master's in Translation (EMT) framework, which, although indirectly, addresses the importance of dealing with the discourse structures underpinning different texts for translation (Rothwell et al., 2023). This consideration is reflected in some aspects, such as the need for trainee translators to "[t]ranslate different types of material on and for different kinds of media and target audiences, using appropriate tools and techniques" as a consideration for the development of translation competence (EMT, 2022, p. 8). This can gain particular application if workshops dedicated to CDA are held, drawing on the insights of other translator training programs (e.g., EMT, as mentioned above). This could yield practical instances of how such inspiration can be drawn to develop certain aspects of trainee translators' translation competence, on the one hand, and how the insights generated from CDA-based approaches could generate practical implications. The importance of such practice-oriented approaches has already been demonstrated through previous studies, where increased awareness of linguistic ambiguities has been suggested to improve translation performance (Liu & Chen, 2021). This could then strengthen the bridge that we sought to establish between CDA-based training and translator training in Iran and provide more fodder for discussion as to where the prioritization of discourse categories can come into play.

On that note, regarding the prioritization of discourse categories, it was revealed that trainee translators tended to explore the discourse in the following order of levels: Text Organization Level, Sentence Level, Meaning & Content Level, Lexical Choice Level, Evidential Support Level, Rhetoric Level, Generality Level, Unclarity Level, and Argumentation Level. The more abstract discourse categories, such as Argumentation, Unclarity, Generality, and, partly, Rhetoric level, for which the depth of discourse needs to be delved more deeply to reach, were rated to be explored less frequently. These results are in line with our findings above, in which we suggested that the more abstract levels of discourse are usually neglected in translators' analyses. The results also demonstrated that the average rating scores for the discourse categories were considerably low ($M \cong 2$).

As for the students' tendency to approach discourse critically, the four highest-rated categories were explored only at a frequency slightly above 'seldom' according to the rating scale used. Therefore, it is justified to conclude that prospective English and Persian translators are not so alert to the underlying ideologies in discourse during the translation of political or social texts. From the perspective of translation pedagogy, it could be argued that prospective translator trainees are not adequately trained in terms of ideological analysis to be able to delve into the deeper layers of ideological incorporations (Khoshsaligheh, 2013a). This interrelation between critical thinking and discourse structures has also been addressed by Gao and Zeng (2021), who highlighted the interconnectedness of linguistic features (in the form of idioms, the connotations of lexical items, and syntactic features) and critical thinking in reflecting ideological and social functions. Also, it is worth considering the interrelation between the micro-level and macro-level discourse segments, which necessitates paying attention to both what is and is not mentioned in the textual format (KhosraviNik, 2010).

Although myriads of studies have drawn on the socio-cognitive approach, the attempts to draw generalizable conclusions through validated quantitative measures are still on thin ice. Our study was an initial attempt at providing empirical evidence in the context of Iranian English translator education and validating the multiple categorizations of ideological discourse structures advocated by van Dijk (2009). By means of two complementary multivariate data analytical procedures (i.e., exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses), the study could determine the discourse categories as the underlying dimensions or factors.

The findings, in this regard, revealed the following points: a) congruent with the theoretical framework, ideological discourse structures were divided into several categories; b) congruent with the theoretical

framework, nine categories of ideological discourse structures were found and empirically supported; c) three of the categories were quite the same as the categories described in the theoretical framework; therefore, they were given exactly the same titles they had in the theoretical framework; d) the remaining six factors or categories were mainly the larger subdivisions of the categories in the framework, which seemed to get adequate empirical support in the study to be promoted as main categories, and as such, specified in the obtained model; e) distinctive membership of every ideological discourse structure to the one most relevant discourse category was identified and verified; f) CFA confirmed that the factor solution (i.e., categorization of ideological discourse structures) enjoyed high external validity and generalizability, and the findings may be interpreted beyond the limits of the existing sample. The findings thereof are applicable to the entire target population of Iranian junior, senior, and master's students of English translation.

Our results fit into the narrative that the influence of trainee translators' ideological orientations has been acknowledged (e.g., Khoshsaligheh, 2018; Pan, 2017), and the necessity for providing trainee translators with the required language awareness and critical perspectives has been touched upon (Zlatnar Moe & Grahek Križnar, 2012). Our study was an attempt to delve deeper into the importance of discursive practices in the realm of translation pedagogy and provides validated means for scholars and translator trainers to assess the language awareness of trainee translators.

The present study was conducted with the objective of developing a validated instrument for shedding light on discourse categories and examining the status quo in translator training courses in the context of Iran. This instrument was developed with an eye on gauging trainee traslators' perceptions regarding the channels through which they could unravel the ideological orientations implicit in the source texts. The study was conducted with a focus on third- and fourth-year translation students. This is where the study is limited in terms of the fact that we only dealt with trainee translators' perception of mediums incorporating ideological positions, and not their actual translation performance. Nevertheless, as perception precedes action and performance, the results of the study seem to provide partial evidence indicating the ineffective knowledge and awareness of the prospective English translators who are soon leaving translator training programs in Iranian universities. In this vein, the findings of this study point to another inadequacy of the program in educating qualified translators, whose awareness does not seem to have been properly raised regarding the inscription of ideologies in discourse during the act of translation. It is best if the findings of this study are cross-validated with the results of qualitative studies that investigate critical recognitions of prospective and professional translators in terms of their actual performance. Such studies could use a triangulation of introspective methods of data collection, such as think-aloud and conversation analysis, based on an assortment of purposive samples seeking depth rather than width.

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Appendix A

Ideological Discourse Structures Inventory (IDSI): English Edition

- **Instruction**

Please, indicate the frequency and degree of your attention to each of the discourse structures and devices in a start text, with journalistic or other socio-political content, during translation when seeking ideological representations of the original author. To specify how frequently you examine each of the following items in a source text, choose your answer by writing a number in the parentheses placed after each item from the scale of 1 (never; 0%), 2 (seldom; 25%), 3 (sometimes;

50%), 4 (often; 75%), to 5 (always; 100%). You can also use the back of the answer sheets for any further comments you may have regarding any of the following items.
1) **Metaphor** – a figure of speech describing a subject by indicating that on some point of comparison, it is like another which otherwise is an unrelated object (…)
2) **Comparison** – comparison of individuals, groups, events and the like (…)
3) **Passivization** – a clause in which the experiencer or object of the verb action is placed before the verb in the subject position and the agent of the action is removed or moved to the end of the predicate (…)
4) **Subordination & Coordination** – how the dependent and independent clauses are combined into compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences or only in the form of simple sentences (…)
5) **Sentence Order** – order based on which the sentences are arranged (…)
6) **Distancing** – instances in which by means of demonstrative adjectives or pronouns certain individuals or groups are differentiated from one another (…)
7) **Title Form** – size and font of typesetting the title or heading of the text (…)
8) **Dramatization** – instances in which events, characters or qualities are shown more important that they probably are (…)
9) **Euphemism** – substitution of an harmless, agreeable or inoffensive word or phrase for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant
10) **Fallacy** – instances of improper argumentation in reasoning or breach of argumentation rules and principles which often result in a misconception or faulty presumption (…)
11) **Empathy** – instances of recognizing and, to some extent, sharing feelings such as sadness or happiness that are being experienced by other individuals or groups (…)
12) **Evidentiality** – assessment of the evidence and proofs provided for an individual's or a group's statement or assertions (…)
13) **Topoi** – certain standardized or publicized notions which are typically used as ready-mades in argumentation or debates, such as refugees and other immigrants are recommended to stay in their own country – to help build it up or the importance of defending one's home country (…)
14) **Explanation** – reasons or justifications which clarify actions, behaviors, or events (…)
15) **Consensus** – instances of the display, claim or wish of consensus, general agreements or judgments arrived at by most of the people or those concerned (…)
16) **Generalization** – how single cases or examples are generalized to a wider range or scope
17) **Example & Illustration** – use of examples as support for an argumentation (…)
18) **Presupposition** – use an implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an statement or utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse (…)
19) **Irony** – a rhetorical device or technique in which words are used to convey a meaning that is the opposite of their literal meaning, or a situation in which there is a sharp inconsistency that goes beyond the simple and evident intention of actions (…)
20) **Categorization** – how individuals, groups, or events are divided, categorized or sub-categorized (…)
21) I**mplication** – conclusion which can be drawn from something in the text, although it is not explicitly stated; a likely consequence of something (…)
22) **Lexical Choice** –choice of words to convey notions, events and actions or references to individuals or groups in the text (…)
23) N**umber Offering** – use of numbers and statistics to clarify certain points (…)
24) **Reasonableness** – instances where the logicality and sensibility of an individual or group is stressed or pointed out (…)
25) **Repetition** – instances of repeating words, phrases or notions in the text
26) **Victimization** – instances where an individual or group is introduced as the victim of the decisions or actions of another individual or group (…)
27) T**opics & Themes** – topics and themes introduced and discussed in various sections of the text (…)
28) **Situation Description** – extent of offer of detailed information and the quality and degree of description of events or situations in the text (…)

29) **Local Coherence** – a sequence of propositions in discourse is locally coherent if it is about a sequence of actions, events or situations that are mutually related, for instance by relations of causality or enablement (…)
30) **Actor Description** – how actors in the discourse are introduced as members of a group or independent individuals, introduced by their names, by their professional or social position, or by their relationship with other individuals or groups (…)
31) **Simile** – a figure of speech which explicitly compares two different things by using the words, 'like' or 'as' (…)
32) **Polarization** – instances in which concepts, individuals, or groups are differentiated and introduced in contrast with each other (…)
33) **Vagueness** – quality, extent, and degree of clarity or ambiguity in terms of the content and information given in the text (…)
34) **Modality** – propositions may be modified by modalities such as, 'it is necessary that', 'it is possible that', or 'it is known that', or modality can be expressed by modal auxiliary verbs like 'may', 'might', 'must', 'should', 'can', 'cannot', 'ought to', besides by various other formal features such as verbs and tenses among others (…)
35) **Paraphrase & Synonym** – uses of synonymous words, phrases or expressions (…)
36) **Authority** – frequency and extent of making references to experts, specialists, social or religious figures or societies of authority such as international societies or mass media (…)
37) **Hyperbole** – use of exaggeration as a figure of speech which may be used to evoke feelings or to create a strong impression but is not meant to be taken literally (…)
38) **Nominalization** – an action process instead of occurring in the grammatical form of a simple sentence or a clause can occur in the reduced form of a nominalization which is an event or action process converted to a multi-word noun (…)
39) **Word Order** – order based on which the words and phrases are arranged in the sentences of the text (…)
40) **Title & Abstract** – choice of words for the title or main heading of the text as well as those for the abstract or the lead of the text (…)
41) **Agency Clarity** – clarity about the agent or the actual doer of the action of the verbs in the sentences of the text in comparison with the subject of the predicate (…)
42) **Event Order** – priority and order based on which various events or situation are arranged in the text (…)
43) **Disclaimer** – instances where responsibility for certain actions or statements are denied although supporting those actions or statements, for example 'I have nothing against x, but' (…)
44) **Paragraphing** – how the text is divided and organized into one or a number of paragraphs (…)
45) **Formality Level** – level of formality of the words and grammatical structures selected and used in the text (…)
46) **Litotes** – figure of speech in which a certain statement is expressed by denying its opposite, instead of commenting that something is attractive (or even very attractive), for instance, one might remark it is not unattractive (…)
47) **Counterfactual** – typical formula is 'what would happen, if ', used to show what would happen if certain measures were or were not taken and how those virtual situations would result (…)