

Mistranslation in Cross Cultural Communication: A Discourse Analysis on Former President Bush's Speech in 2001

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Abstract : The differences in languages play a big role in cross-cultural communication. If meanings are not translated accurately, the risk can be crucial not only on an interpersonal level, but also on the international and political levels. The use of metaphorical language by politicians can cause great confusion, often leading to statements being misconstrued. In these situations, it is the translators who struggle to put forward the intended meaning with clarity and this makes translation an important field to study and analyze when it comes to cross-cultural communication. Owing to the growing importance of language and the power of translation in politics, this research analyzes part of President Bush's speech in 2001 in which he used the word "Crusade" which caused his statement to be misconstrued. The research uses a discourse analysis of cross-cultural communication literature which provides answers supported by historical, linguistic, and communicative perspectives. The first finding indicates that the word "crusade" carries different meaning and significance in the narratives of the Western world when compared to the Middle East. The second one is that, linguistically, maintaining cultural meanings through translation is quite difficult and challenging. Third, when it comes to the cross-cultural communication perspective, the common and frequent usage of literal translation is a sign of poor strategies being followed in translation training. Based on the example of Bush's speech, this paper hopes to highlight the weak practices in translation in cross-cultural communication which are still commonly used across the world. Translation studies have to take issues such as this seriously and attempt to find a solution. In every language, there are words and phrases that have cultural, historical and social meanings that are woven into the language. Literal translation is not the solution for this problem because that strategy is unable to convey these meanings in the target language.

Keywords : crusade, metaphor, mistranslation, war in terror

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