

Ideology and Conference Interpreting: A Case Study of the Summer Davos Forum in China. By Fei Gao. London: Routledge, 2023. 192 pages. ISBN 9781032569079.

Traditionally, attention in conference interpreting and interpreting in general has been largely devoted to the cognitive aspects and/or various internal processes (e.g., note-taking and short-term memory). Only relatively recently, interpreting scholars have begun to explore the socio-political and cultural aspects, highlighting interpreting as essentially being a social activity that is mediated by agents and shaped by power and ideology in complex ways (Beaton-Thome 2013). Notably, over the recent few years, there has been growing scholarly engagement that seeks to explore how interpreting is subject to ideological mediation and reconstruction in the Chinese context (Gao 2021; Gu and Wang 2021; Hu and Meng 2018; Wang and Feng 2018) and beyond (Beaton-Thome 2013; Schäffner 2015). Often drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA) and increasingly corpus linguistics, these empirical studies represent a more critical line of research. Given the use of authentic real-world data, this line of research sets itself apart from previous studies in interpreting research (which often involve experimental studies of interpreting in a controlled setting).

Based on her doctoral research carried out at the University of Leeds, Fei Gao's monograph represents a major addition to this more critical line of research in interpreting studies. In the work, political interpreting undertaken at the Summer Davos Forum in China forms the main focus. The setting, according to the author, represents a particularly interesting "multi-voiced" site of ideological contestations. Featuring nine chapters in total, the book is well structured and clearly presented. This monograph starts with an introductory chapter, which sets the scene for the entire book and provides a useful introduction to the main ideas and concepts related to interpreters' ideological positioning in international conferences. In Chapter 2, the author presents some of the key theoretical concepts employed in the work, where relevant literature is reviewed. Notably, the key concept of ideology is explored, and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive CDA framework is highlighted as a particularly useful source of theoretical insight that combines language use, ideology, and the broader socio-political context. Various aspects relating to interpreter mediation and intervention are also discussed. The author argues that existing studies

over the past few years have culminated in a so-called “ideological turn” in the area of (conference) interpreting.

This is then followed by Chapter 3, which aims to present the methodological tools used in this work and explain the reasons why these tools can be fruitfully employed in analysing authentic bilingual interpreting data. Notably, the author discusses appraisal theory as the linguistic toolkit and corpus-based CDA as the main methodological approach. The combination of CDA and corpus linguistics promises to deliver in-depth analysis in a more objective and systematic way. In Chapter 4, the author zooms in on the data and corpus used (the 2016 Summer Davos Forum in China) and the analytical procedures that are taken at an operational level.

Having set out the main research context, methodological framework, corpus data, et cetera, Chapters 5 to 8 form the “meat” of the book, each one contributing to the data analysis from a different perspective. As the first data-analysis chapter, Chapter 5 considers the corpus data in its entirety and delivers a global analysis, aiming to map out the overall quantitative patterns that inform the more focused and granular analyses to be carried out in the subsequent chapters. Drawing on Van Dijk’s ideological square, Chapter 6 explores evaluative language through an investigation of the ideological shifts evidenced in discourse. The author focuses on two appraisal systems (attitude and graduation) as the main linguistic apparatus to help identify and understand discursive and ideological shifts in view of the “us”/“them” dichotomy. The analysis points to the fact that the speakers’ discourse is “edited” systematically, thus giving rise to a positive “us” and negative “them” discursive pattern as a result of interpreting. The chapter, to some extent, sheds light on the possible relationship between interpreters’ ideologies and their cognitive operations. In the following chapter, Chapter 7, the author looks at the engagement system of appraisal and focuses on interpreters’ interpersonal positioning vis-à-vis various ideological factors. If Chapter 6 explores evaluation “proper,” Chapter 7 is more concerned with evaluation “supra.” That is, this chapter focuses on the degree to which speakers and interpreters may have invested discursively in the propositions or arguments and the ways in which they may have invited the audience to align or disalign with the discursive positions articulated. The analysis highlights that the local linguistic shifts of engagement may cumulatively help reshape the entire ideological orientation, thus introducing ideological shifts and contributing to the reconstruction of the speakers’ (ideological)

discourse. From this perspective, beyond the interpreters' "in-group" positioning, they, for all intents and purposes, also reposition themselves and align with the speakers. This therefore points to their vital role as a key variant node of discursive positionings in a highly dynamic agentive communicative network in the interpreting process. From a fascinating and innovative paralinguistic perspective, Chapter 8 focuses on the "sound" of language, aiming to explore how the speaker's prosodic emphasis is rendered by conference interpreters. This therefore extends the boundaries of appraisal theory. This chapter draws on relevant notions, concepts, and approaches in phonetics and phonology to examine the target text's (TT) renditions of the source text's (ST) prosodic emphasis. The chapter finds that, to a significant degree, the ST prosodic emphasis "gets across" through different types of TT renditions. This suggests a cross-modal rendition type that promises to shed fresh light on how the semiotic multi-modality of interpreting data may be usefully treated as an ensemble. This chapter also significantly contributes to multimodal research in translation and interpreting studies. Last but not least, Chapter 9 summarizes the main findings and contributions of the monograph. In the chapter, the author discusses an "ideological turn" in translation and interpreting studies. Limitations and future research avenues are also discussed.

Overall, having explored interpreters' agency and discursive and ideological mediation from a range of angles, this monograph vividly showcases the ways in which ideology and political discourse may be reengineered in the process. Without doubt, this empirical study represents a breath of fresh air for interpreting studies, particularly in a critical and interdisciplinary way. Given the highly contextualized nature of the discussion and the focus on authentic real-world language use in a socio-political and diplomatic setting, this study constitutes a fine example of an "outward turn" (Gu and Wang 2023) in interpreting studies research, where the area is gradually moving beyond the traditionally more inward-looking view and is starting to explore the vital role of interpreting as a socio-political and historical shaping force and a source of inter/trans-disciplinary conviviality. Methodologically, it would have been useful to include other methods (e.g., interviews) to help triangulate the current analysis and gain more holistic insights into interpreters' ideological use of language. However, this is often not easy to achieve due to various constraints. Overall, this book is a must-read for advanced students and

scholars working in areas such as translation and interpreting studies, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, multimodality, and Chinese studies.

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