

Metaoperational Linguistics: Issues of Translatability and Visibility

Kahlaoui Mohamed-Habib

English Department, College of Arts & Social Sciences,
Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the reasons behind the limited dissemination of Adamczewski's Metaoperational approach to language beyond the French academic sphere. The theory, which developed in and by contrastivity between 1976 and 2005, is built on the basic assumption that utterances exhibit on their surface observable traces of the utterer's invisible structuring activity. It is initially derived from a corpus-based approach to English and applied to languages as different as French, Arabic, Turkish, Madagascan, and Kwa languages. The theory's visibility is investigated primarily in relation to its readability and translatability. The findings suggest that visibility retarders and obstructers are more associated with a general context of global scientific publication marked by the hegemony of English as the language of science than with the theoretical framework itself. However, if the model's body of knowledge and conceptual apparatus lend themselves to smooth interlingual transfer, as shown in books of Metaoperational inspirations in Spanish (Matte Bon (1992)), Italian (Gagliardelli (1999)), English (Adamczewski (2002)), and Arabic (Kahlaoui (2010)), the theory's high degree of formalism and its dense metalinguistic description are in some didactic contexts generative of reader frustration.

Keywords: Enunciative approach, metalinguistic status, metaoperational linguistics, readability, translatability, visibility

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