PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION OF POLITICAL TEXTS

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This article deals with the problems related to the translation of political texts in the theoretical framework elaborated by the researchers working in the field of translation studies and reflects on the terminological peculiarities of the special language used for this text type.
The conclusions are intended to highlight the fact that there are no recipes for translating a political speech, because translation is not only a technical process that uses translation procedures and applies transfer operations, but also a matter of understanding cultural, historical and political situations and their significance.

Political and diplomatic languages are among the specific languages employed in the social sciences and, as such, are directly related to the development of political philosophy. Both, in their capacity as technical languages, have a tight relationship with rhetoric since many spoken genres have their terminological roots in these particular languages.

Political language has a distinct scope and intention than diplomatic language. The former is sufficient for transporting historical genre statements while the later is mostly employed as the protocol language of formal events and ceremonies (depicting historical events, personages and socially significant phenomena in the history of society, and presenting past representations of recent events whose social significance is recognized by contemporaries).

As such, political language is suitable for recording data and facts (e.g. highlighting important legal and territorial changes and political events in the world, wars, treaties, etc.).

The terminology of political language is related to the special language of political philosophy, since this terminology aids the formulation of the most common questions regarding the relationship between the individual and society. However, it is also related to political theory since political terminology is used to formulate the descriptive theories of political phenomena, too (such as social criticism, the principles of justice, law, etc.). It would not have been possible to elaborate state theories without political language, and concepts such as "good government" or "right form of government" could not have been created. The description of political ideas (doctrines, ideologies, and political programs and policy objectives) is also an important domain for the manifestation of political language. According to the foregoing ideas, political terminology can be considered a secondary discourse arising from the primary discourse, that is, a new discourse in which the primary discourse is alloyed with terminology. [1, 68p] Strongly related to the language of politics, the language of diplomacy is also an interesting segment of communication among different states. This is actually the language of international relations, and its character is closely related to the function it performs in the international arena. Thus, diplomatic language is closely related to the nature of the most important diplomatic tasks.

The political representations of different countries generally require the use of two or more languages and therefore the languages used on the scene of diplomacy are in permanent contact thus establishing, out of necessity, a kind of lingua franca of diplomacy. These scenes of diplomacy are: bilateral relations, relations with third countries and international organizations, international forums and non-political events with international impact.

Regarding the political issues there is a continuous relationship between the diplomatic delegation and the competent authorities of the receiving state. The language of these relationships may also take specific forms since, in many cases, the members of the diplomatic delegation do not speak the language of the host country at an appropriate level. In such cases a third language is involved in communication, or an interpreter is used, the latter representing a special form of diplomatic communication. Meetings between the senior leadership or a political delegation of the visiting country and that of the host country – as well as international diplomatic conferences and all the other similar events – require special diplomatic language use, as do the preparation of international agreements, negotiation and the conclusion of treaties. The specialized language of politics and thus of diplomacy in many respects depends on the international actions, habits and the bilaterally agreed solutions.

Political words cannot be analyzed in isolation, in their analysis one must take into consideration the whole sentence and even the entire discourse. If we want to analyze them, we must do it in their context, we must arrange them in

phrases. The primary function of these words is not to describe something but to set up a relationship; this fact gives rise to the difference between these words and the rest of the lexicon. [2, 47p]

From the pragmatic point of view we may state that the politician breaks from the normal language used by common people and forces them into a specific language domain. The political relevance of a given term makes itself visible only in this specific language, which destroys the everyday use of human language. Political language and common language do not differ in the way foreign languages do. One may ask why political language differs from common language. The prime reason for this kind of difference is that the semantic value of the political words is richer than that of normal words. For instance, men are sentenced to death in the name of the law, properties change owners based on the words of a contract. [3, 157p]

 In the case of performative political expressions the most important thing is the effect of the sentences on the people. These effects arise through the manifestation of language. Political effects are considered concrete effects. [4, 34p]

Political language forces us to reconstruct, through interpretation, those thoughts which are settled in the political text. This reconstruction is a mental process through which we rebuild the text according to our knowledge in order to gain a better understanding.

    A feature of the political system is that it is composed of strongly related texts, so while creating a new text (e.g. translations) we must pay attention to its coherence with the rest of the political texts. This coherence is ensured by political terminology (party of a contract, death-penalty, etc.) and by some non-terminological elements such as: regarding, breaking a contract, furthermore, etc. The tradition of the political text also contributes to this coherence, for which reason non-jurists may find political text impossible to understand. This is because the juridical system is a logical one, the texts of which try to avoid complex and heavy descriptions beyond the understanding of the common person, and which would require further study and analysis in order to be understood. The specific scope of these texts may explain the use of long phrases which present a hard task for the translator to deal with. To understand and, furthermore, to translate these texts one must interpret them.

One may face a situation in which the source language text (act or contract, deed of foundation or statute, etc.) is overcomplicated and unclear. Although this idea is in contradiction to that referring to the logical character of political texts, it can be seen that in practice, translators often face such situations as a result of the incompetence or lack of knowledge of those who have written the texts. The translator will become an interpreter only when faced with problems related to the act of translation, not to the content of the paper. The problem is even more considerable if the lack of clarity is due to the differences between the two language systems. During the process of translation the translator must reject creativity and instead accept the traditional specialized language. Specialized language in this study means: the terminology of a domain which mirrors that slice of reality which is the research territory of a certain circle of specialists. [5,219p]

It is not a simple task for the translator to deal with special terminology because he or she may have other linguistic preferences, or might not accept the existing calque-forms1 of expression. A further cause of difficulty might be the fact that documentation sources are not available to them. [6,91p]. In the case of political translations it is important that the translator use the existing source language terminology, because this becomes in fact the code of political communication and the tool of coherent texts. If the translators face new concepts during the translation process, they must take into consideration several political, linguistic and cultural aspects in order to reach the perfect or at least the most acceptable equivalent.

In the process of political translations one may find comparative study a useful method. It can be used to make a comparative study of the two language systems.

As a translation technique, adaptation can be defined as a technical and objective method. The best-known definition is that of Vinay and Darbelnet, who list adaptation as a separate translation procedure: "adaptation is a procedure which can be used whenever the context referred to in the original text does not exist in the culture of the target text, thereby necessitating some form of re-creation." This widely accepted definition views adaptation as a procedure employed to achieve an equivalence of situations wherever cultural mismatches are encountered (1958).

Eugene Nida has noted that "language is a part of culture, and in fact, it is the most complex set of habits that any culture exhibits. Language reflects the culture, provides access to the culture, and in many respects constitutes a model of the culture." (1964) In order to render culture specific elements and to reflect a certain model of culture, translators may use the following techniques:

– omission: the elimination or reduction of part of the text;

– expansion: making explicit information that is implicit in the original, either in the main body or in footnotes or a glossary;

– exoticism: the substitution of stretches of slang, dialect, nonsense words, etc. in the original text by rough equivalents in the target language (sometimes marked by italics or underlining);

– updating: the replacement of outdated or obscure information by modern equivalents;

– situational equivalence: the insertion of a more familiar context than the one used in the original;

– creation: a more global replacement of the original text with a text that preserves only the essential message/ideas/functions of the original.

CONCLUSION

The translation of political speeches can be studied from a linguistic perspective, but it can also be looked at from a broader perspective, based on the theory of the political discourse and on research related to the study of special languages.

The prominent feature of the style of political speeches is very long sentences. This predilection for lengthy sentences is due to the need to place all information on a particular topic in one complete unit, in order to reduce the ambiguity that may arise if they are put in different sentences. Due to these features political speeches are hard to translate and they can sometimes be included in the category of untranslatable text. Politicians do not deliver their speeches to be translated for foreign audiences. Thus, in some cases translators cannot produce parallel texts that are identical in meaning, or in their political and historical effect. Thus the translator's main task is to create a text that will transmit the core of the message included in the original text. To do so, the translator must be able "to understand not only what the words mean and what a sentence means, but also what political or historical impact could it have. They also have to know how to achieve that certain effect in the other language." Translators must be able to use language effectively to express the most important political concepts in order to achieve the desired effect. They must be familiar with the conventional rules and styles of political speeches (rhetoric, stylistics).

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