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УДК 81-112; 81-115; 81'255; 81'42

Sacral Communication in its Contrastive Aspect (as Exemplified by Latin, Old Greek and Germanic Languages)

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Received 18.10.2016, received in revised form 26.11.2016, accepted 04.02.2017

The article concerns the research of functional peculiarities of multilingual religious discourse in its diachronic aspect. The author considers the religious discourse as a means that conveys a complex of meanings of a sacral text regarding the mentality, religious experience and objective reality of the people speaking a certain language in a certain historic period, the discourse being consistently reproduced in time and space. Multilingual sacral texts are a significant part of the religious discourse. Their contrastive analysis is worthwhile only when historical, chronological, sociocultural and situational factors which have some impact on the meaning of a sacral text are taken into consideration, a sacral text being an object for translation. Since translators were traditionally expected to observe the compulsory rules of preserving the meaning and structure of the source text, their translations either distorted the text meaning or were not fully accurate in the meaning conveyed.

Keywords: religious discourse, New Testament, sacral text, diachronic aspect, contrastive-comparative analysis, translation.

DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0025.

Research area: philology.

1. Introduction

Expansion of the scope of linguistic researches, involving a comprehensive study of various viewpoints and conceptions with a similar subject of the research, approach, or innovative research method is typical for modern communicative linguistics. Numerous varieties of discourse with its inestimable role in

the organization of any type of communication are in the focus of interest for communication researches. Among the priority areas of recent ones are religious language and style, sacral text and religious culture analysis.

The object of the religiosity phenomenon and the nature of sacral language analysis in the theory of discourse framework is an act of sacral

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communication aimed at conducting the religious worships by an individual and organizing the system of religious beliefs to encourage a person's faith.

Discourse as "a central moment of human life in the language", "the language life" (Gasparov, 1996: 10) covers all spheres of human activity. "Every act of using the language – whether it is a product of high value or a fleeting remark in the dialogue – is a part of continuously moving stream of human experience. As such it absorbs and reflects a unique coincidence of circumstances under which and for which it was created" (Karasik, 2002: 39).

In its modern sense, the discourse is considered as a complex communicative phenomenon rooted in socio-cultural, historical-chronological, situational factors and comprising extra-linguistic information (in addition to the text) which primarily implies the communicants' knowledge about the world, their different views and concepts, the speaker's pragmatic objectives necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the text, etc. Therefore, the discourse also involves the analysis of the speakers and their utterances, classification of genres and speech types, description of the signifier and the signified, the study of the communicants' goals and desires.

The concept of "discourse" is characterized by the parameters of completeness, integrity, cohesion, or, in other words, the properties relevant for the text.

2. The Diachronic Aspect of the Religious Discourse

The religious discourse refers to the institutional discourse. It is a special type of discourse represented in various forms in a narrowly focused field of spiritual communication between people of different faiths.

The religious discourse implies the knowledge not of the sacral texts only, but also

the religious background knowledge which makes the meaning of ancient books explicit.

The religious discourse can be explicit when all the elements of the word meaning are more or less clear or implicit in cases when some elements of meaning are hidden. Uncovering and understanding of implicit sacral meanings is possible due to the hermeneutic approach, as any "secret" meaning can be understood through an integral research of religious, sociohistorical and national-cultural facts serving the evidences of an era that shed light on nature and purpose of numerous ritualized actions of the representatives of a certain society in a certain epoch.

The cults of worshipping the Gods were the most common sacral actions of ancient people both in the West and in the East. The cults included various rituals of pragmatic character. The advent of Christianity made the cult of word but not the "cult of eye" increasingly important. It is "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" that turns into a leading thesis in the church service (John, 1: 1).

The religious discourse is represented by two text types – oral and written ones, since the earliest sacral texts originated in the early stage of primitive culture in the form of spells and myths, hymns and chants to the gods. Prayers, sermons, theological texts, etc. followed them. Oral sacral texts and other forms of religious consciousness accompanied a man at every stage of life – at birth, upbringing, marriage, death, for every event in the life of the human community was interpreted solely from the point of view of a disposition of Providence. Much later almost all religious cults for which the oral form of worshiping was obligatory were held in written form. These phenomena of the religious discourse are still a switching code for speaking to God for most people.

Discourse is an essential component of sociocultural interaction with interests, goals and styles of verbal behavior as its characteristic features. In addition, the discourse analysis also involves the study of a particular linguistic community members' language as well as its form and functions, the study focusing on spoken language as well as written texts. From the perspective of the discursive approach it is possible to identify the language features of different texts and stylistic types of speech communication.

As a cornerstone of the religious discourse sacral texts have been the object of theological exegetics and hermeneutics for a long time. However, an overwhelming number of scientific studies are devoted to sacral texts functioning in one language or one group of similar languages.

The comparative analysis of sacral texts in the languages of different structures that are spoken by people with different systems of belief is extremely rare, whereas the need to identify general and specific features of sacral texts is a crucial task. It is mostly natural to carry out the analysis in the aspects of semiotics, logic, hermeneutics and other modern scientific disciplines to one extent or another aiming at the research of a human's religious experience, embodied in sacral books.

The language of religion is an autonomous object of research. It is the basis of the religious discourse formation and development. All language resources – phonetic sounding of sacral texts, their rhythmics and melody, grammatical, lexico-grammatical and stylistic means and speech acts – are aimed at solving one of the basic problems of the religious discourse, the problem being a search for the means of an adequate expression of the system of references. Since mystical feelings cannot be fully and adequately represented in semiotic systems in principle, it means that the language parameter of the religious

discourse expresses only a particular degree of a statement's "approximation" and its conformity with the content of religious experience.

A number of significant properties of the religious discourse are revealed through the analysis of ancient acts of communication and modern organization of a discursive statement. The problem of discourse analysis through this phenomenon mapping on the diachrony / synchrony axis is quite multifaceted. First of all, it involves the linguistic research proper. That is the analysis of the word meanings correlation, the balance of various language structures and expressions in different historic periods. Besides, the researchers often face the following question: whose language picture of the world is reflected by this source of the religious discourse? Moreover, the fact that the Bible, existing in almost all languages, is a translation of the text that was lost so long ago that many people believe the New Testament in ancient Greek to be its original text should not be forgotten. There is an original text source in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, in the repertoire of some libraries. Yet, it is exclusively fragmented and is not fully understood, which definitely causes difficulties with the interpretation of the religious discourse in the diachronic aspect. Since all the texts of the Bible and the Gospel in particular are translated texts, this means they are to great extent interpretative texts and reflect the point of view of an individual or a group of people involved in disseminating of not only the text but mainly its meaning. At that the Jewish picture of the world presented in the original text was subjected to multiple interpretations. As a result, these sacral texts reflect not only and not so much the Jewish worldview but that of people of different nationalities, ages and faiths.

Regarding the religious discourse formation and development, one cannot avoid the problem of inclusion of national, social and historic events of the past with their subsequent description and interpretation in its outline as the mentality and attitude of the representatives of a certain era, who are the religious discourse creators and participants, are formed against their background. It can be argued that the religious discourse is a constantly reproduced in time and space means (and tool) of transfer of all meanings of a sacral text in the light of the native speakers' mentality, religious experience and physical existence in a particular historic epoch. This explains the numerous attempts of the Evangelical texts translations in different languages, each time to a certain extent reflecting the picture of the world of a translator's contemporaries and fellows. This picture of the world differs from that of the ancient Jews or representatives of other ancient peoples, professing the doctrine of Christ (the Greeks, Romans, Germans, etc.).

The study of the religious discourse in the diachronic aspect clearly shows the change of points of view on certain events and facts together with diversification of ways and means of representing reality (that is topical for a certain era) and a variety of approaches to its analysis and description.

The research of discursive practices from diachronic positions makes it possible to algorithmize the processes of sacral communication in the ancient era, reveal its specificity, feel the spirit of the era through holy books and get closer to the philosophy of ancient rituals and customs at least on an intuitive level.

The religious discourse of the past is often associated with the ideas of life and death as eternal human symbols. A discourse in ancient languages is primarily based on reflection and interpretation of facts with the philosophical and religious content. It is reasonable to state that every sacral text of that time is discursive. Sacral texts do not merge as each text is characterized by narrativity, static character, preservation of the

traditional artistic tropes and rhetorical figures like in best classical examples.

Interpretation of a sacral text implies its particular reading based on the existing theological tradition. As an attempt of irrational transition from a field of common and everyday life to that of sacred and transcendental, it actually initiates the process of discourse development.

The religious discourse in modern linguistic space can be classified as a phenomenon in the international cult communication aiming at presentation and interpretation of historic data about the time of a sacral text, the events described in it, characteristics of certain historic figures as well as at setting spatial-temporal boundaries within which this type of discourse functions. This means that the religious discourse contains the signs, or "tracks" to its facts and events.

At the present stage the religious discourse carries less information about the intuitive or psychological. The reflection of the exegetic, hermeneutic and philosophic approaches to religious literature, religious customs and rituals turns out to be more characteristic to this discourse type as the modern era with its multiplicity of worlds does not keep a common confessional spirit. Therefore, it can be argued that the contemporary discourse demonstrates less autonomy and uniqueness and becomes more structured and schematic (Schwarz, 1964: 106).

3. Sacral Communication and Translation Problems

Dwelling on the problem of structural-andsemantic correlation of ancient texts and their modern translations, one has to agree that "the modern text is a translation from an ancient language to a new one" (Chistovich, 1997: 138). In this sense the entire physical nature of the world, the society of that time and the culturalhistorical situation, in which an ancient text originated, are perceived as a completely different extralinguistic reality. Since the language of the original text changed or even disappeared (though the text itself still exists), the question about the truthfulness of meaning of the translated text remains in abeyance in any case. It is appropriate to recall the words of Jerome, the author of the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible: "I can translate only what I do understand" (op. cit.: Beekman, Callow, 1974: 32).

Thus, the original text and its translation into another language appear in different discourse conditions, giving rise to the interference effect of the discourses of different periods. Multidimensionality and diversity of the language picture of the world even within the same language space proves the necessity of the research of national-cultural and socio-historical context in which the discourse if formed and materialized. In the course of such research the text of translation is a reality given. At that it is not a depicted object ("referent", an authentic text in this case), but a structural integrity as a reality given, an actual "structure" with certain aspects of a depicted and detached "referent" that is analyzed (Kristeva, 2004: 9). This results in the displacement of text situations and situations emerging in reality.

A comparative analysis of theological literature also leads to some conclusions about the differences between ancient texts and their translations, the differences being due to textual inaccuracy or distortion of meaning. Incomplete information, extraneous information and distinguishing information can be referenced to such distortions.

Incomplete information is the information of the original message that is implicitly expressed (i.e. only implied) in the text of translation. The fact of this distortion of meaning can be explained by a rough translation of the original text. Another cause of the incompleteness of translation is the absence of essential information in the text of the translation. This information is implicit in the original text and, thus, it is manifested through the second and, possibly, third layer of the implied content of the original source.

Extraneous information is another informative distortion. For example, obligatory grammatical categories of the original are automatically stored in the translation in the same form, even if they are not essential for this text. A redundant use of words or use of a descriptive equivalent to replace the original word is characteristic at the lexical level. This may lead to unnecessary strengthening or weakening of the word meaning and change of the original rhythm inherent to the text.

Inclusion of diverse information, caused by the erroneous exegesis, into the text of translation is, probably, the most critical inadequacy of translation regarding the original. This type of violation of the text's intentions is the most difficult for identification. On the other hand, it is the differing information that in certain cases leads to a complete distortion of the text, thereby giving new connotations to the original sacral text and depriving the recipient of the most important opportunity which is the opportunity to hear the author's voice.

4. An Example of the Comparative Analysis

Since the sources for translations in the historic period of our research interest were books in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew languages and the traditional translation technique required adherence to certain rules of following the meaning and structure of the original, there appeared the translations, misinterpreting or not fully conveying the meaning of the original.

To exemplify the mentioned above it is worth while providing the comparative analysis of some fragments of verse 19 of chapter 5 of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Latin, Gothic, Old

High German and Early New High German and modern German.

Latin translation (the end of the IV century A.D.; blessed Jerome): Qui ergo solverit unum de mandatis-istis minimis et docuerit sic homines minimus vocabitur in regno caelorum. Qui autem fecerit et docuerit hic magnus vocabitur in regno caelorum (Vulgata, 1994: 1531).

Gothic translation (approx. the year of 360; Wulfila): *iþ saei nu gatairiþ aina anabusne þizo minnistono, jah swa laisjai mans, minnista haitada in þiudangardjai himine; iþ taujiþ saei jah laisjai swa, sah mikils haitada in þiudangardjai himine* (Braune, 1912: 123).

Old High German translation (approx. the year of 830; Fulda): Ther thie zilosit einaz fon dann minnistun bibotun inti lerit Sie, ist minnisto rihhe giheizan in himilo. Thie thar inti thie lerit schließlich ist mihhil giheizan in himilo rihhe (Sievers, 1892; 49).

Early New High German translation (1545; M. Luther): Wer auflöset nun eines von diesen Geboten auflöst kleinsten und lehrt die Leute so wird der kleinste der heißen im Himmelreich; wer aber es tut und lehrt, groß wird heißen im Reich der Himmel (Luther, 1866: 674).

Modern German translation ("Schlachter 2000"): Wer nun brechen eines kleinsten von diesen Geboten auflöst, so lehrt und, wird als der geringste im Reich der Himmel; wer es tut und lehrt Sie, er wird genannt werden im Reich der Himmel (Schlachter, 1951).

In the Latin version, which obviously follows the Greek text, the lexeme *ergo* conveys the semantics of concluding, final evaluation ('thus, therefore'). Yet, this meaning is partly lost in the Gothic text as Wulfila uses the word *nu* which, along with the meaning of evaluation, to a greater extent implies the meaning of temporality 'now, at present' (Feist, 1923: 286). This word, the meaning of which would correspond to Latin or partly Gothic variants of translation, disappears in

Tatian's Old High German translation in which this lexical unit is missing. In M. Luther's translation, like in F. Shlakhter's modern version based on Luther's text, the modal meaning of 'summing up, concluding' cannot be rendered either, because the word *nun* in modern text embodies the semantics of identification with the present reality *nun* ('jetzt, da') (Wahrig, 1989: 946).

Latin and Germanic verbs with the meaning 'to violate' arouse interest in the aspect of the comparative analysis of this text fragment. In the Vulgate text the use of perf. conj. act. tense form of the verb solverit with the lexical-semantic variants 'to tear, ungrid, abolish, liquidate, revoke, cancel' in the structure of its meaning makes the semantics of the Old Greek verb lūo obscure. The main meaning of the verb $l\bar{u}o$ in the text of the Gospel of St. Matthew is conveyed by the seme 'to violate'. It is highly probable that it is the meaning of the Latin verb, rather than its earlier Greek equivalent that is taken into account in subsequent translations of the New Testament into Germanic languages. For example, the meaning of the Gothic verb gatairan, used in the form of opt. pl. gatairib, contains the semes 'to break', 'to destroy', 'to stop' but excludes the seme 'to violate', whereas the Old High German zilosen contains the semes 'lösen', 'auflösen', 'zerstören', 'brechen' (Köbler, 1994: 243). At that the seme 'brechen' that generally correlates with the semantics of the Greek luo is not a basic element of the meaning of the verb zilōsen. It is of interest that G. Köbler in his "Old High German Dictionary" mentions the verbs destruere, dirumpere, dissolvere, dividere, resolvere, solver as Latin semantic equivalents of this verb. The verb resolvere is the only verb that corresponds to the semantics of the Greek lūo and the Old High German zilosen in its eighth (!) meaning (Dvoretskii, 1976: 316, 332, 339, 342, 875, 940). The archaic verb zerlösen is a Middle High German successor of zilōsen (Köbler, 1994: 226). It gradually disappears from the vocabulary

of the German language and has the meaning of 'auflösen; abtun, berichtigen; auseinandersetzen, beilegen; beruhigen' (Ziemann, 1838: 683). A. Ziemann does not mention the meaning of 'brechen' in the dictionary entry of zerlösen that traces back to the Old High German period. This information is found in the relevant article of "Das Deutsche Wörterbuch", the Grimm brothers' dictionary (cf. "Verletzung. ein Gesetz, eine Regel brechen, der nach lat. Vorlage: thaz ni die Kohle-zilôsit Movseses êwa (Joh. 7, 23; gebrochen LUTHER)" (DW, 1960, Bd. 31, Sp. 721, 1, b)). Luther's refusal to use the lexeme zerlösen in his translation of this part of the Gospel and replace it with auflösen, its Early New High German analogue ('to untie, unravel, cease, liquidate'), leads to the fact that the verbal meaning 'brechen' ('to violate') is not conveyed in the text of the German translation (cf. modern German sein Wort / einen Eid brechen) from this moment on and up to the present time (cf.: the example from F. Shlakhter's Bible). It is again a case of the approximate translation of the content of this part of the text in its current interpretation and the loss of the original meaning that is rendered by the verb $l\bar{u}o$ in the original Greek text.

In what follows it is worth while focusing on one of the key concepts of the religious continuum, the concept being that of *commandments*. This word is not only a meaningful part of a whole in conjunction with the verb 'to violate'. In general, it plays a huge role in any Christian's life. An adequate translation of its semantics is extremely important for the religious discourse understanding.

In the Latin text it is the word *mandatum* that is used to nominate this concept. This word goes back to the Latin verb *mando* with such semes in its semantic structure as 'to give, hand in, transfer, trust, indicate, instruct, order'. The meaning of the verb *mando* is associated, in turn, with Latin *manus* 'hand' + root *dō- (*dare*) 'to give' (Walde, 1910: 460; Dvoretskii, 1976: 615).

In German texts there are other etymons dating back to the roots of proto-Germanic origin, respectively. In his Gothic translation Wulfila uses the lexeme ana-busns 'sign, omen, portent, miracle' < Germ. būsni- (cf.: old English būsen, bisn 'example, model' and Norse bysn 'miracle') (Feist, 1923: 30; Lehmann, 1986: 31). In Old High German text the word bibot 'Gebot' (= Old High German gibot; cf.: old Slavic gibod, old English (ge)bod) is used. This word is a verbal abstract noun, going back to the verbs bieten or gebieten by means of ablaut. Originally, in Old High German the word meant 'Befehl, Erlass' (approx. the year of 800). Later its meaning extended and the semes 'Vorschrift, Gesetz, Grundsatz' were included into it (Paul, 2002: 375; Pfeifer, 2012: 407).

In the period of classical Greek flourishing the word entole (< entéllo) presumably included the semes 'order, instruction, suggestion' in its semantic structure. It was much later, in the text of the New Testament, when the semes 'precept, commandment' were added to the meaning. In the Latin text the word was translated literally: the classical Latin mandatum has no explicit meaning of 'commandment' (its etymology is mentioned above). This seme is added to this word only in the sacral text of the Gospel. A similar process of development is characteristic to the system of meanings of the corresponding German lexemes. The Gothic variant of translation has some semantic uniqueness. The word anabusns in it more clearly conveys a sacral nature of the commandment as a vital concept of the religious discourse since it contains the semes 'a role model, a legend, a narrative' that brings the Gothic variant together with the meaning of that word in the Russian language.

The use of forms of adjectives is noteworthy. Paronomasia, a phenomenon of repetition of the same form (the superlative form in this case) in the same meaning, is most evident in the abstract analyzed: Latin *minimis*,

minimus; Gothic minnistono, minnista; Old High German minnistun, minnisto; Middle High German / New High German kleinsten, der Kleinste. This stylistic device is used to create the rhythm, which is quite recognizable in any context and is running through the entire Gospel. Moreover, the repetition of the same word makes the listener/reader focus on understanding of this particular part of the sacral text that embodies the basic meaning of the whole verse.

In this context the use of the adjective magnus in the Latin text arouses interest. The structure of the meaning of this adjective includes the lexical-semantic variants of 'big', 'great' and its Germanic equivalents. The seme 'great' constitutes the main meaning of the adjectives (Gothic mikils; Old High German mihhil; Middle High German $gro\beta$) in the translations of the Germanic texts, the seme extending the semantic structure of these adjectives and introducing a new shade of meaning to the sentence as a whole. At that the antithesis of the opposition of the minimum of a characteristic feature, expressed by the adjective in the superlative degree, and its maximum, expressed by the positive degree of the adjective (cf.: Latin minimis, minimus – magnus; Gothic minnistono, minnista - mikils; Old High German minnistun, minnisto - mihhil; Middle High German / New High German kleinsten, die Kleinste – $gro\beta$), is evident.

5. Conclusion

A comprehensive comparative analysis of sacral texts in languages that have different systems and are spoken by people with different belief systems favours the identification of general and specific properties of multilingual sacral texts. It can be carried out in the aspects of semiotics, logic, hermeneutics and other modern scientific disciplines to one extent or another aiming at the study of a human's religious experience.

The Gospel texts are translated texts and, thus, interpretive in nature to some extent. Due to this they can reflect the views of an individual or a group of people involved in the translation and dissemination of these texts. In fact, they reflect the world view of people of different nationalities, ages and faiths.

Having absorbed the traditions of the past, the religious discourse of the present time provides the researcher with an obvious evidence that "any suggestion, even a difficult one, can be repeated in its completely identical form an unlimited number of times in the unlimited speech flow, but as a statement (or part of utterance) neither sentence (even a oneword one) can be ever repeated: it is always a new utterance, even if it is a quotation" (Bakhtin, 1986: 345). The existing translations of ancient sacral texts make us reflect every now and again on how adequate they convey the meaning of the original, to what extent they are true and complete for a contemporary reader. how the ancient rules and rituals are "perceived and felt" in the flow of current events, which signs of the past become more visible and prominent and which ones are lost forever.

The comparative analysis of the semantic structure of certain lexical items in the analyzed part of Verse 19 of Chapter 5 of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Latin, Gothic, Old High German, New High German and modern German suggests that the translations into Germanic languages are largely focused on the Latin text of the New Testament than on its chronologically earlier counterpart in old Greek.

The focus of the translators' interest on the Latin version of the Gospel resulted in the loss or misrepresentation of some important semantic elements in the semantic structure of the analyzed words in the Greek text. This, in its turn, leads to the conclusion that the part of the original semantic content of the Gospel verse was roughly rendered in the course of its translations into Germanic languages.

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Сакральная коммуникация в сопоставительном аспекте (на материале латинского, древнегреческого и германских языков)

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Статья посвящена изучению функциональных особенностей разноязычного религиозного дискурса с диахронических позиций. Автор рассматривает религиозный дискурс как постоянно воспроизводимый во времени и пространстве способ передачи всей совокупности смыслов сакрального текста с учетом ментальности, религиозного опыта и особенностей физического бытия носителей какого-либо языка в ту или иную историческую эпоху. Сопоставительное исследование разноязычных сакральных текстов, выступающих в качестве значимой составной части религиозного дискурса, имеет смысл, по мнению автора, только в том случае, если в расчет принимаются исторические, хронологические, социокультурные и ситуативные факторы, оказавшие непосредственное влияние на смысл и содержание сакрального текста, являющегося объектом перевода на тот или иной язык. Поскольку традиционная переводческая техника требовала обязательного соблюдения определенных правил следования смыслу и структуре оригинала, возникали варианты перевода, искажавшие или не в полной мере передававшие смысл оригинала.

Ключевые слова: религиозный дискурс, Новый Завет, сакральный текст, диахронический аспект, сравнительно-сопоставительный анализ, перевод.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.