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INSTRUCTION IN CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION OF WELCOME SPEECH: FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

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Abstract

The subject of consideration in this article is the genre of welcome speech, which we define as a specific type of discourse aimed at establishing and maintaining contact, realized, as a rule, at the beginning of a communicative event. The article analyzes the welcome speech in terms of the functional approach. The analysis has shown that the strategy of cooperation is the dominant one in welcome speech. It is implemented in the following tactics: emphasizing common interests, expressing positive emotions about establishing contact, reducing social distance, expressing gratitude to the organizers of the meeting, and emphasizing an equal position. Welcome speech consists of the minimal set of communicative steps: address, greeting, naming of the goal and meaning of the event, as well as expectations associated with it, expression of gratitude and wish for success. When teaching consecutive interpretation of welcome speeches, we distinguish the following sequence of work on the preparation for it: analytical and training (language, speech, and communicative levels) stages, and the stages of the actual consecutive interpretation and its correction.

Keywords: Functional approach, welcome speech, strategy of cooperation.

1.   Introduction

The relevance of the proposed method of teaching the interpretation of the welcome speech genre is determined by the choice of the functional approach as the fundamental paradigm of research and instruction as well as by the frequent occurrence of this genre in situations of interpretation. Functional approach, in our opinion, is an efficient method of teaching interpreters as it enables students to go beyond the text itself and to consider it in conjunction with the communicative situation of the oral translation and the order for it, and also act as a co-author of the secondary text of the translation, which can demonstrate a certain degree of proximity to the original text, depending on the translation order, the communicative situation of the host culture and the national and cultural specifics of the text genre (Nord, 2013; Barinova & Nesterova, 2017).

According to the functional approach, each text genre possesses several functions, one of which is principal. Therefore, Ch. Nord offers a model of four functions, which the author considers fundamental. To them, she refers referential, expressive, appellative and phatic functions. Each of the functions, according to Ch. Nord, has its own functional markers (Nord, 2013). The functions serve, as the basis for the text genres classification, in this area the works of E. Grosse, E. Rolf and others are known. It is obvious that the knowledge of the leading function of the text genre and its markers, along with other pragmatic factors, helps the learners to build the right interpreting strategy.

2.   Problem Statement

Teaching to interpret various text genres from the position of the functional approach implies the formation of the ability to determine the leading function of the text genre, to find functional markers for it, to distinguish the functional orientation of individual speech acts, and to translate the utterance, preserving its functional dominant.

The subject of our attention is welcome speech. In order to determine the leading function of this text genre, we studied the works of G. Uhlisch, B. Gugold, L. Uvarova, I. Gaponova, E. Grosse, and E. Rolf. Researchers of the communicative act "greeting" note that greeting as a way of expressing courtesy performs primarily a contact-setting and contact-maintaining function. Being an act directed at the partner, greeting fulfills the function of social rapprochement and strengthening of relationships (Uhlisch, Gugold, Uvarova, Gaponova, 2001, p. 6). Can we claim that this will be true for the genre of welcome speech? Analysis of theoretical works on the given problem showed that even in the case when greeting takes the form of monologic statement, the phatic function remains dominant. For example, Ernst Grosse, who distinguishes eight main classes of texts in his classification, attributes a welcome speech to a class of contact texts with a dominant contact function (Grosse, 1976). According to the classification of Eckard Rolf, welcome speech can be characterized as an expressive, stabilizing, and aimed at establishing and maintaining contact text (Rolf, 1993, p. 279). In connection with the foregoing, we define a welcome speech as a specific type of discourse aimed at establishing and maintaining contact, which is realized, as a rule, at the beginning of a communicative event.

To organize training in the welcome speech interpretation, it was necessary to determine the strategy that dominates this type of speech and tactics of its implementation, the leading function of this oral genre, to identify functional markers, to establish the types of prevailing speech acts, and to develop a strategy for students to master interpretation of this type of speech.

3.   Research Questions

We hypothesized that the strategy of cooperation will act as the dominant strategy of interaction in this type of discourse. In order to confirm the hypothesis, we conducted a functional analysis of the welcome speeches of the German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel. The foundations of this analysis are laid down in the works of K. Rice, Ch. Nord. The analysis was carried out at two levels: the interactive level with the aim of highlighting the dominant strategy and tactics of interaction and at the level of individual communicative acts. In the course of the analysis, we succeeded in confirming the proposed hypothesis and highlighting the following tactics of the cooperation strategy: emphasizing an equal role of the interacting parties 'I am OK, you are OK' and mutual interest, expressing positive emotions about establishing contact, tactics of compliment and expressing gratitude to the organizers of the meeting.

Let us illustrate the foregoing by the example of the welcome speech of the German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel delivered at the opening of the German-Indian Economic Forum on October 6, 2015.

The tactics 'I am OK, you are OK' is embodied in the utterance: 'Hier finden deutsche Ingenieurkompetenz und indische IT-Brillanz zueinander und ergänzen sich perfekt' (The engineering competence of representatives of Germany and the brilliant knowledge of the information technologies of Indian specialists perfectly complement each other).

The tactics of assessing the high role of German manufacturers in India is illustrated by the following utterance: 'Sie erweisen sich als wichtiger und verlässlicher Motor der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in dieser Region' (They are the most important and reliable engine of the economic development of this region).

The tactics of emphasizing India's important role in Indian-German cooperation is expressed in the following statement: 'Indien ist für Deutschland nicht nur als Handelspartner, sondern auch als Investitionspartner sehr gefragt' (India is very important for Germany, not only as a trading partner, but also as an investment partner).

The tactics of interest in further cooperation is reflected in the statement: 'Dass das Interesse am weiteren Ausbau unserer Wirtschaftsbeziehungen groß ist, dies unterstreichen die Spitzenvertreter namhafter deutscher Unternehmen, die mich auf dieser Reise begleiten' (Representatives of well-known German enterprises accompanying me on this trip say that the interest in expanding cooperation is great).

The tactics of expressing gratitude to the organizers of the meeting is embodied in the following sentence: 'Ich möchte den Organisatoren ganz herzlich danken' (I would like to sincerely thank the organizers).

It is obvious that the strategy of cooperation in welcome speeches, delivered on different occasions and in different circumstances by representatives of different cultures, will be embodied through a diverse set of tactics. Most essential in the preparation of an interpreter for the translation of a welcome speech will be knowledge of the dominant strategy and the ability to perceive and convey the pragmatic potential of the tactics implementing this strategy.

However, the communicative potential of a welcome speech cannot be described only by means of the concepts "strategy" and "tactics". In the situation of communication, the author of the statement sets and solves a variety of communicative tasks, which include not only coming into contact and maintaining it, but also transferring information, regulating communication and interaction, and ensuring interaction. All these communicative tasks are reflected in the text of the statement.

4.   Research Methods

To determine the function of a single remark or a separate communicative step, one can apply the method of functional analysis of individual speech acts. The method consists in determining the functional load of each communicative step. We applied the proposed methodology to determine the type and sequence of speech acts in the welcome speech. Analyzed were five texts of welcome speeches delivered by representatives of Russian and German society at the opening of the exchange of contacts within the framework of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the cooperation agreement between Lower Saxony and the Perm Region and the celebration of the Days of Germany in Perm. The analysis showed that a welcome speech consists of the following maximum set of communicative steps: address, greeting, introduction to the topic: historical background, the disclosure of the topic: the purpose and significance of the event, its connection with past events, the forecast for the future / expectations, the announcement of the event program, expression of gratitude, statement of compliments, the wish for success, and giving the floor to the next speaker. The minimum set of communicative steps, presented in all speeches, includes address, greeting, designation of the purpose and meaning of the event, as well as the expectations associated with it, expression of gratitude, and wish for success (Moshchanskaya, 2010). Knowledge of communicative acts, typical for the text genre, ensures the degree of adequacy of its translation.

The second stage in the analysis was to identify functional markers of the leading phatic function, and of the referential, appellative and expressive functions subordinate to it. We will use the welcome speech of Chancellor Merkel at the opening of the German-Indian business forum on 6 October 2015 (Welcome speech of the Chancellor Merkel, 2015) as an example. In the speech, we found that the markers of the phatic function are: address to the persons present (in it, those who occupy higher positions are listed first, and then other important persons present), the presence of modal particles in German: 'Aber sinnbildlich gesprochen, war die Präsenz des Löwen doch deutlich zu spüren' (Figuratively speaking, the lion's presence was still felt quite clearly), and treatment of the subjects of communication as partners: 'Indien ist für Deutschland nicht nur als Handelspartner, sondern auch als Investitionspartner sehr gefragt' (India is for Germany not only commercial, but also investment partner).

The referential function is expressed in rational arguments, the listing of factual information: 'Unser bilaterales Handelsvolumen lag im vergangenen Jahr bei rund 16 Milliarden Euro' (Our bilateral trade amounted to about 16 billion euro last year), and the narrative elements: 'Während meines Besuches in Indien ist mir zwar kein Löwe über den Weg gelaufen. Der Premierminister hat allerdings gesagt, wo sie zu finden sein könnten' (During my visit to India, I did not meet a single lion. However, the Prime Minister told me where they could be found).

The markers of expressive function are adjectives that describe positive emotions: hervorragend, beeindrückend (magnificent, impressive), nouns with a positive evaluation component: Ingenieurkompetenz (engineering competence), Spitzenvertreter (best representatives), wishes: 'Daher nehme ich das Symbol des Löwen auch als Ausdruck der deutsch-indischen Partnerschaft, die weiter an Stärke gewinnen möge – zum Wohle unserer beiden Länder' (In this regard, I take the lion symbol as the embodiment of the German-Indian partnership, which should be strengthened onward– for the benefit of our two countries), metaphors: Motor der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung (the engine of economic progress). Examples of the appellative function markers are: 'Passenderweise dient der Löwe auch vielen Städten, Landkreisen und Bundesländern in Deutschland als Wappentier' (In many cities, counties and federated states (Lands) of Germany, the lion is, just like in India, depicted on the arms), and memories: 'Ich erinnere mich noch gut an der virtuellen Löwen wöhrend der Eröffnung der Hannover Messe' (I remember the virtual lion at the opening of the fair in Hanover).

In the course of instruction, it is necessary to train the ability to find functional markers of various text genres functions.

5.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of our study was to determine the type and sequence of assignments in order to form consecutive interpretation skills of welcome speeches. Overall, we identified four main stages of preparation for the oral translation of these speeches: analytical, training, actual translation and translation correction.

The analytical stage includes exercises aimed at analyzing the situation of translation, the text genre (macro- and microlevel, determining the leading communicative function, typical communicative acts, and functional markers), and characterizing the extra-linguistic component of the discourse (paralinguistic, non-verbal and cultural contexts of the utterance). We analyze the situation using a modified scheme of Ch. Nord (Moshchanskaya, 2016, p. 123-126). To explore the role of the paralinguistic and non-verbal contexts, we use the video recording of the speech and the schemes of the respective components analysis (Moshchanskaya, 2016, p. 54, 78). The cultural context is analyzed relying on the research into the communicative behaviour of interacting cultures, description of the communicative behaviour specifics of one of the cultures (Schneider-Flaig, 2011; Prokhorov, Sternin, 2016), and analysis of video recordings of communication and interaction situations.

The training phase focuses on preparing for the interpretation of the text genre and it proceeds at several levels. At the linguistic level, the skills and abilities of interpreting individual lexical (terms, imagery) and grammatical phenomena are formed and automatized, as well as exercises to preserve stylistic markers are given; and skills are trained to transform and adapt the text to the host culture at the level of word combination and sentence.

At the verbal and conventional levels, students are offered exercises for mastering and translating the etiquette norms of communicative behaviour (observing the sequence of naming persons in the greeting, choosing the register and communication modality appropriate for the situation), using typical situational clichés, learning the specifics of and translating individual compositional and speech forms (description, narrative, argumentation), condensed translation of the communicative core (thematic and rhematic progression), then a detailed interpretation of the statement fragment follows.

The communicative level features exercises designed to model the communicative (verbal-nonverbal) behaviour of the subjects of communication and the interpreter during role-playing and business games.

The actual translation level includes exercises in the interpretation of welcome speeches from various spheres of communication using different types of consecutive interpretation: a paragraph-phrasal one or of a whole statement based on the interpreter's note-taking.

The translation correction stage is aimed at developing the skills to notice one's own and colleagues' mistakes, and it also helps to acquire skills of reflection and self-reflection.

6.   Conclusion

In this article, we presented the elements of the teaching methodology for the consecutive interpretation of the genre of welcome speech. On the basis of the functional analysis of the German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, the German ambassador to Russia, the Governor of Perm Krai and other dignitaries welcome speeches, we have identified the leading function of the welcome speech, the dominant interaction strategy and the set of tactics

that implement it, drawn up a list of typical speech acts, and described its functional markers. The analysis served as the basis for creating a sequence of methodological steps for teaching the consecutive interpretation of the welcome speech genre.

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