

BOOK REVIEW

Mona-Ancuța Ionescu, *The discursive role of adjectives in the translation of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom’s religious texts*. Editura Universității din București, 2023. 222 pag. ISBN 978-606-16-1397-7.

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Previous Romanian studies on the orthodox religious discourse, viewed as a specialized type of discourse, provided valuable insights into its semiotics (Teleoacă 2016) and examined sermons, as instances of oratory religious discourse (Zafiu 2010).

Mona Ionescu’s book is a new contribution to this line of research; it approaches the orthodox religious discourse from a particular linguistic point of view, the theory of communication, and focuses on the ways in which adjectives contribute to the realization of the various language functions in several of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom’s (1914-2003) sermons and transcribed talks, published in book format, as well as in their Romanian translated versions. The study relies on the research methods of lexical semantics, pragmatics, as well as cognitive linguistics.

Summary

The introductory chapter presents the topic, the theoretical framework and the structure of the book. The author starts from the hypothesis that adjectives in the selected corpus are likely to fulfill certain language functions, specific to religious communication, and more than that, they have a notable contribution to the transfer of these functions from English into Romanian.

The second chapter introduces the corpus, made up of sermons and transcribed talks, and highlights the characteristic features of the Metropolitan’s oratory discourse. His legacy brings ancient teachings of Orthodox Christianity up-to-date and is, therefore, viewed as an inspiring illustration of the catechetical discourse. The author addresses the language functions identified within the corpus (conative, metalingual, phatic, expressive, poetic and referential), the conative (persuasive) function being paramount in the hierarchy of functions. She also deals with the main features of the persuasive speech: focus on the receiver, the presumption of identification with the audience, direct imperatives and the appeal to emotions.

The third chapter, dedicated to the examination of the discursive role of the adjective class, demonstrates that the adjectives in the corpus support the speech both rhetorically and conceptually, and are also essential means of realizing the functions of the language, representing a cohesive factor in the argumentative speech of the Metropolitan.

In brief, the results of the research prove that adjectives, through the lexical-semantic relations established in the discourse, as well as the collocations specific to religious language, support the functions of communication. For instance, relative adjectives (e.g. *the divine fire, ascetical endeavour*) contribute to the understanding of the religious terms and thus support the realization of the metalinguistic, conative and referential language functions.

Collocations with nouns modified by qualifying adjectives (e.g. *the living God, daring and generous endeavour*), intensional adjectives (e.g. *real communion, pure spirit*) and relative adjectives (e.g. *the divine wisdom, spiritual quality*) contribute to the definition of the nominal concepts that belong to theological terminology. Grammaticalised intensifiers and adjectival phrases with adverbial modification (e.g. *dreadfully clear, strangely alien, perfectly alert*) have a significant role in conveying the author's attitude towards the discourse content and in the expressive, emotive function of the discourse.

The fourth chapter aims to investigate the role of adjectives in transferring the functions of the text from the source language (English) to the target language (Romanian).

The author argues that the written material selected from the corpus belongs to the type of *appeal-focused texts* and demonstrates that adjectives support the transfer of the linguistic functions from the original text to the target text, as well as genuinely render the appellative function in the translation from English into Romanian.

In addition, the chapter includes a functional-cognitive analysis of the translation into Romanian of adjective+noun collocations (e.g. *Christian consciousness, apostolic experience, spiritual endeavour, the divine wisdom*) typical of religious discourse.

Mona Ionescu concludes that adjectives play a significant role in fulfilling language functions in the Metropolitan's religious texts and in their translations into Romanian. At this point, she proposes options for further research, specifically, including other religious discourse texts in the current corpus, for comparison, or applying the same linguistic research method to other religious text types to determine how far generalizations can be made.

Evaluation

I found this monograph both original in its aims and impressive in its elaboration.

It is innovative in that it approaches the religious discourse from a linguistic point of view, particularly the theory of communication, and focuses on a new topic - the pivotal role of adjectives in oratory religious discourse.

The book is a thoroughly documented study that gives an update on the semantic, syntactic and lexico-pragmatic properties of adjectives in the English language, particularly in contemporary religious discourse.

The study draws on the communication theory (Jakobson 1987, Kinneavy 1980) and on the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (van Eemeren *et al.* 2002). The classification of adjectives involves a threefold perspective, integrating syntax, ontology and mode of semantic combination (Cornilescu, Nicolae 2016). This complex network of lexical-semantic and pragmatic theories contributes to revealing the cohesive role of adjectives in the corpus as well as their important argumentative role.

In terms of translation, functional theories and cognitive translatology are most suited to the proposed research. The importance of adjectives in the English-to-Romanian translation process is examined using Reiss' (2014) and Nord's (2007) functional translation theories, as well as Ionescu's (2003) functional cognitive translation model.

Moreover, the monograph is outstanding through the research findings and their interpretation. The author meticulously applies the theoretical framework that she adopts to the study of the corpus data. She compiles lists of occurrences (noun phrases with adjectival modification), extracted from the corpus of religious texts, that are based on the classification of adjectives. The comments on the collocations highlighted in this study may be of interest to specialist readers: lexicographers, who compile general dictionaries of collocations or dictionaries of religious terms; translators in their endeavors to find appropriate equivalents for the religious terms, as well as theologians, who aim at proficiency in the oratory religious discourse.

However, an observation, as a challenge for future research, seems to be in line. The examination of the functions of adjectives in the oratory religious discourse is convincingly argued and exhaustive, but it is restricted only to adjectives in prenominal modification and to predicative adjectives. Based on the theoretical background underlying this research, the scope of the study could be broadened to cover different patterns of adjective complementation and the correlation with the language functions may be linguistically rewarding.

This monograph is solid proof that linguistic research can reveal and bring to the attention of the specialists, both linguists and theologians, new

facets of the religious oratory discourse. At the same time, though the book is couched in a rigorous theoretical framework, the wealth of empirical data clearly makes it relevant for a wider readership.

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