Translating media texts, and political speeches

Media texts deal with the main means for receiving information and entertainment, the language usually found in articles and advertisements published in newspapers or broadcast on radio, TV, websites, etc. These depend on the addressee and their main function is to express the message in an effective way, so they emphasize the layout and mode of presentation. In newspapers, for example, the message is aided with much focus on the display of headlines/banners (font size, organization, prominence and other typographical features) in the way most appealing to readers. Being a sub-category of non-fiction, media texts do not always apply the literary use of language. First, media texts tend to adopt a different structure. Careful structuring is important for all types of text, 'whether you're writing a novel, a letter to a friend, or a recipe, clear structuring is the key of effective communication'. Indeed, structuring of texts is vital not only for strengthening one's argument, but for the coherent flow of information. However, unlike conventional writing, media texts often have a different opening and emphasis. While literary texts, for example, habitually offer a clear introduction, media texts open with what is often referred to as a 'lead' which is used to 'create suspense or surprise, or shock or arouse emotions in the reader'. Moreover, the language of media texts is characterized by being more free than standard language. The media style, unlike the literary, is often geared towards the production of news and information in a very limited timeframe. The nature of news production necessitates a simple style, with very short sentences and subtle cohesive devices that are almost absent. On the sentence and paragraph level, therefore, sentences and paragraphs are short and economical, and on the grammatical level, the use of active rather than passive verbs is preferred and the presence of adjectives is limited. Especially when the language is attention-grabbing (e.g. a headline), it tends to be free from grammatical constraints. For example, a newspaper headline would read, 'State population to double by 2040; babies to blame.' instead of a more grammatical sentence such as 'The state population is expected to double by 2040 and babies are the ones

to blame.' It is clear how short the headline is, omitting functional words and focusing only on the meaningful lexis. 'The headline has a range of functions that specifically dictate its shape, content and structure, and operates within a range of restrictions that limit the freedom of the writer'. These restrictions are indicated in the condensed heading or title that is often used for marketing purposes, and with the intention of attracting the reader. To this end, 'headline writers use a wide range of devices to create a very specific style, which is sometimes called headlines' Internally also, media language is less elaborate than other types. In Arabic, for instance, media sentences are less complex, with the main function of conveying information away from the creative stylistic aspects of the text. Rhetorical and aesthetic features are minimized, with more emphasis on plain language to convey the meaning.

Conflicts/Civil Wars

Translating texts about conflicts and wars remains one of the most complex tasks faced by translators. This is due to the fact that the type of register used may be interpreted differently by different parties involved in the conflict. For example, what could be considered as a 'holy war' by some could be regarded as a 'guerrilla war' by others. These ideological differences in the way terms are approached and actions are labeled make it difficult for translators to provide a representative translation for certain terms and actions. In this case, the translator needs to take into account different aspects (i.e. cultural, social and political) of the TT and ST, meaning that the translator should be very aware of these cultural differences in order to provide a balanced translation. In translating what could be deemed as controversial terminologies, the translator could resort to footnotes to explain or contextualize these key terms in the SL, so that the TL audience is aware of the main aspects underlining these terminologies in the source text.