

The Different Aspects of Diplomatic Mediation: The Extralinguistic Motives of Having an Interpreter in the Diplomatic Settings

Diplomatik Arabuluculuğun Farklı Yönleri: Diplomatik Ortamlarda Tercüman Bulundurmanın Dil Dışı Nedenleri

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article



Sorumlu yazar/
Corresponding author:
Yaşar Akgün

ORCID:
0000-0002-8728-2615

Geliş tarihi/Received:
23.05.2024

Son revizyon teslimi/Last
revision received:
18.07.2024

Kabul tarihi/Accepted:
19.07.2024

Yayın tarihi/Published:
20.07.2024

Atıf/Citation:
Akgün, Y. & Yetkin Karakoç,
N. (2024). Diplomatik
Arabuluculuğun farklı yönleri:
diplomatik ortamlarda
tercüman bulundurmanın dil
dışı nedenleri.
İletişim ve Diplomasi, 12, 75-89.

doi: 10.54722/
iletisimvediplomasi.1488687

Yaşar AKGÜN¹ , Nihal YETKİN KARAKOÇ² 

ABSTRACT

Diplomacy is a concept that permeates many aspects of the daily life. The fact that it has always been displayed and discussed in the media has generated much academic interest. Each expertise and profession involved in the implementation of diplomacy plays an essential role in the process of diplomacy. Within this context, the interpreting is of vital importance. The history of the practice of interpretation, as one of the most important fields of Translation Studies, dates back to ancient times. However, the interpretation studies have fallen behind relative to the wide range of studies conducted for the field of translation. The delay in examining interpretation on a scientific level has similarly delayed the discussion of its role in the diplomatic process; the limited studies conducted in this field have only addressed the linguistic dimensions of translation's role in diplomacy. Of all types of interpretations, diplomatic interpretation, having a unique role in the political and diplomatic settings, has been understudied, confidentiality being one of the reasons among - others. This paper, therefore, aims to demonstrate some of the extralinguistic aspects of political interpretation that might prompt the interlocutors to hire an interpreter, even when both of the parties share a common language and do not seem to need an interpreter at first glance. This issue appears to be significant both for translation and diplomacy studies. In this context, throughout the article, the non-linguistic roles of translators in diplomatic processes, such as representing the national language of the country, assu-

¹ Arş. Gör., İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi, İzmir, Türkiye, yasar.akgun@ieu.edu.tr.

² Prof. Dr., İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi, İzmir, Türkiye, nihalyetkin@ieu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-7649-5949

ming responsibility for communication errors, advising diplomats, and saving time, are examined.

Keywords: Diplomacy, diplomatic interpreting, interpreting, diplomatic language, interpreters.

ÖZ

Diplomasi, günlük yaşamın pek çok alanına sirayet eden bir kavramdır. Bu kavramın medya ortamlarında sıklıkla yer alması ve tartışılması, akademik boyutlarda da ele alınmasına neden olmuştur. Diplomasinin uygulama sürecine dâhil olan her bir uzmanlık ve meslek alanı, bu süreçte önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, sözlü çeviri büyük önem arz etmektedir. Çeviribilimin önemli bir alt dalı olan sözlü çeviri uğraşı, esasında antik dönemlere kadar uzanan köklü bir geçmişe haizdir. Ancak sözlü çeviri, çeviribilimin diğer alt alanlarına kıyasla nispeten daha az çalışılmış bir alandır. Sözlü çevirinin bilimsel düzlemde irdelenmesinin gecikmesi, diplomasi sürecindeki rolünün tartışılmasını da geciktirmiş; bu alanda yapılan kısıtlı çalışmalar ise çevirinin diplomasideki rolünün yalnızca dilsel boyutlarını ele almıştır. Siyasi ve diplomatik ortamlarda önemli bir yeri olan diplomasi çevirmenliği, gizlilik ve diğer bazı sebeplerle yeterince incelenememiştir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, diplomasi alanında çalışan sözlü çevirmenlerin yalnızca dilsel nedenlerle değil, -diplomasi sürecindeki tüm paydaşların ortak dil bilmelerine ve ilk bakışta bir tercüman bulundurmaya gerek duyulmamasına rağmen- dil dışı nedenlerle de istihdam edilebileceklerini konu edinmektedir. Bu husus, hem diplomasi hem de çeviri alanı için önem arz etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, makale boyunca çevirmenlerin diplomasi süreçlerinde ülkenin millî dilini temsil etme, iletişim hatalarını üstlenme, diplomatlara danışmanlık yapma ve zaman kazandırma gibi dil dışı rolleri irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diplomasi, diplomatik çeviri, sözlü çeviri, diplomatik dil, çevirmenler,

INTRODUCTION

Being an inseparable part of statecraft, diplomacy has evolved to be integrated in nearly all aspects of the states, necessitating revised and augmented forms of diplomacy in order to meet the competitive demands of the modern world. Given the fact that diplomacy represents a stage on which the developed and the developing countries craft their policies, the diplomatic meetings, summits and most gatherings tend to be demonstrated on the media by preserving the in-doors classified exchanges. Considering the popularity enjoyed by the concept of diplomacy, it is barely surprising that it has come to be discussed in the media, academic, and the daily life.

On a linguistic basis of diplomacy, diplomatic language has been discussed and branched out through the studies. However, the extralinguistic aspects have widely been ignored due to the fact that interpreting has been seen as a simple conduit for a long time. On a diplomatic basis, it would be a misguided idea to argue that the diplomatic processes are solely and exclusively led by the diplomats. The concept of diplomacy has come to be realised as a field handled through many professionals whose contributions to the diplomatic processes are significant. The most widely-consulted one is interpreting. Interpretation itself can be said to be a diplomatic profession (Kurbalija & Slavik, 2001). Given that diplomacy is built on a series of communicative acts, interpretation which is infested with communicative elements can easily be thought as a reflection of diplomacy.

Yet, when interpretation is combined with diplomacy and politics, its comprehensive nature is complicated by the far-reaching features embedded in the uniquely crafted language and diplomatic and political settings. After all, “communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body” (Jönsson & Hall, 2003). Moreover, as to the role of interpreters in such settings, Sayın and Sayın state that “translators and interpreters contribute crucially so that diplomacy can fulfill its function of making communication between states and their agents possible” (Sayın & Sayın 2013, p. 26). The diplomatic language may also aim to hide reality or various interests (Bobeica, 2022). As Kadrić et al., (2021) state in their book titled *Diplomatic and Political Interpretation Explained* “a notable characteristic of the political/diplomatic language is that not everything is said directly” (p. 19). As how something is said is more important than what is said, that is packaging matters more than the content, it might be stated that “language frames diplomacy, it shapes relations and determines the rules of the game (Kadrić et al., 2021).

The literature has examined in depth the roles of the political/diplomatic interpreters focused on the linguistic matters (Metzger, 2003; Diriker, 2004; Eraslan Gerçek, 2008; Gülmez et al., 2020; Linell, 1997; Pöchhacker, 2000) but not much was stated on the extralinguistic motives of their presence in vitally important top-level meetings, putting aside some comments mentioned in the articles. In fact, though the language transfer is significant, it is unfortunate that it has widely been seen as the sole significant element of a diplomatic meeting, curtailing its intricate nature. Indeed, the motives that prompt diplomats/politicians to prefer interpreters in their high-stake meetings are not only limited to the linguistic requirements. When a relatively comprehensive research and data collection is tackled, it is easy to perceive the fact that linguistic motives of hiring an interpreter pale in comparison with the extralinguistic motives. To demonstrate this, we aim to deal with why interpreters are used even when interlocutors of both parties in a bilateral meeting share a common language. The point of departure is that if it was only about linguistic transfer, top-level officials would not include interpreters to the delegation to be involved in the crucial meetings, but they do in many cases.

The research question is why parties tend to use one or more - interpreters in bilateral meetings even if the two parties speak a common language, being lingua franca, or a language both know due to historical origins? To explore the reasons why, reasons not directly with language will be dealt with, which would directly contribute to diplomatic studies. The subsequent discussion will emphasize the idea of diplomacy and its communicative role, followed by an examination and demonstration of the non-linguistic reasons for using political/diplomatic interpreters whenever possible. The linguistic characteristics of the diplomatic language wielded by the diplomats and all the other diplomacy-makers will also be accentuated. The fact that features of the diplomatic language utilized by the diplomacy-makers affect the interpreting processes will be discussed. However, the study argues that the presence of the interpreters in the diplomacy settings is beyond the linguistic reasons.

DIPLOMACY AND ITS COMMUNICATIVE ROLE

Diplomacy might easily be stated to permeate - all aspects of the daily life as a result of its far-reaching and all-encapsulating effects for the people in the world. It is widely known that retaining a good communication between the states is one of the prerequisites of ensuring a prosperity within the state. That is to say, forging a relationship based on a bona fide with the other states ensures that the channels through which both countries benefit from commercial, cultural and political possibilities are open. Indeed, cordial relations among the states are often resorted in order to resolve strained issues between the states so that the stalled communication between the countries remains productive and promising. Smith and Fallon (2022), who scrutinize the role of friendship in state relations, argue that “friendship is understood as a mutually constructed bond that enhances security by prioritizing negotiation and cooperation as the first modes of interaction in times of stress or crisis” (p.6). Indeed, if it were not for communication, neither the international system nor the international community would exist.

In order for any state to overcome its strained relations with the other countries, it is required to get to know the characteristics of the targeted party so that the steps that would be taken would be calibrated in tandem with the known habits of the country. However, deciphering the habits of any state necessitates people practising diplomacy to cross the boundaries that prevent two sides from arriving on a consensus and resolving the issues. Communication based on a friendly attitude, therefore, might be stated as the number one requirement of establishing a diplomatic relation in order to cross the boundaries (Jönsson & Hall, 2003). Therefore, it is of vital importance to reiterate that diplomacy is best defined through its nature of communication.

Moreover, the concept of diplomacy dates back to the times when the name of “diplomacy” was not even accentuated. Ever since the first civilizations were built,

the need for communication between the states and societies was ensued. Nigro (2010) argues that:

Diplomacy, broadly defined as the peaceful dialogue and interaction between political units, is as old as civilization itself. The first known peace treaty was signed about 2300 BC between a king of Ebla, in what is today Syria, and the king of Assyria. The Amarna tablets record the diplomatic correspondence between Egypt and Syrian rulers more than 1400 years ago, while Genesis 14 talks of Abram's "treaty of alliance" with Amorite kings. From the eighth to the third century BC, China was divided among several "warring states" that conducted diplomacy as well as made war on each other in order to survive and succeed, as Sun Tzu's writings indicate. Other early civilizations offer similar examples of diplomatic activity.

Thus, it might easily be argued that the concept of diplomacy, though not named professionally, has been part of the world ever since the first ancient de-facto states were established. Indeed, the concept of diplomacy is such an ancient issue that it even encapsulates a religion-related connotation dating back to prehistoric times. That is, angels carrying a sacred information between the human beings and God are regarded as the first diplomats (Jönsson & Hall, 2003; Aksoy & Çiçek, 2018). Even though the communication forms that were widespread back in - history were quite rudimentary, they eventuated in shaping the new form of diplomacy.

Yet, even though the concept of diplomacy is a well-rooted and ancient practice, it has not stopped evolving. The changing nature of the world characterized by disasters, pandemics, wars and the technological improvements has metamorphosed the nature of diplomacy, too. Thus, diplomacy might easily be stated to have changed over time (Kocabıyık, 2019). Diplomacy has become much more intricate, multi-stratified and interdisciplinary profession in which many professions take part with the purpose of contributing to the process of ensuring - communication and conflict-resolving, among which interpretation is quite significant. Interpreters, who ensure that the communication between the parties remains solid, tend to be engaged within diplomatic processes in order to cross the communication boundaries. Yet, a precise glance at the literature and diplomatic developments reveals that interpreters end up being assigned not only for - linguistic duties but also extralinguistic roles that are needed in diplomacy.

METHOD

It ought to be mentioned that due to the limited amount of literature penned with regard to the extralinguistic motives of hiring an interpreter in the diplomatic settings, the method of the study has had to be based on the media stories of the events

in which interpreter as part of the diplomatic process is mentioned. Though limited, several works delving into the issue of interpreters in diplomatic settings have also been taken as points of references.

Thus, in order to scrutinize the issue, the data have been collected through the media resources where the profession of interpreting has found its place due to some diplomatic reasons. The interpretation of news items addressed from a diplomatic viewpoint in media outlets was analyzed. Furthermore, the resources used in the paper involve the opinions of the authors who have penned works with regard to the diplomacy, the diplomatic language and interpreting. Therefore, it can be stated that the media stories and academic works on the issue at hand have been properly utilized while shaping the theoretical background of the topic. The professional interpreting experiences garnered by the authors of this paper have also been blended with the collected data. The intricate and indispensable presence of interpreters are intended to be demonstrated throughout the analysis. The items listed below are not meant to be exhaustive, and the list to be offered is open to additions with further research.

Motives of Hiring/Assigning Diplomatic Interpreters: By-products associated with their presence in the setting:

a. Interpreters as Time-makers

Diplomatic language needs to be well-calibrated. As a communication tool, it is a double-filtered version of language (Yetkin Karakoç, 2022). Formulating a statement that would fit in the diplomatic conventions requires the speaker to weigh the possible scenarios to be produced by the interlocutor. The interlocutor may end up extracting out the unintended message/meaning, or distort the message, thus, hampering the possible outcome of the conversation. Therefore, diplomatically convenient statement may require some time to crystallise properly. The reason why diplomats/politicians need to spend some time might be attributed to the fact that the topics that are discussed in the bilateral meetings happen to be the burning issues of the time. The interests of the two parties might clash with each other, causing the representatives to be at loggerheads. Therefore, for the sake of the future of the fertile diplomatic relations, diplomats/politicians might be inclined to scale down the seriousness of their utterances and replace these potential-offensive usages with the neutral ones, so that the other party would not be offended (Bobeica, 2022). As Jaber states in his article on the diplomacy and its language, it would be appropriate “to soften their (the statements’) negative impact when such is intended; leaving a face saving room for the opposing party to respond in kind, while protecting the deliverer, the messenger, the ambassador from the responsibility of their impact” (Kurbalija & Slavik, 2001, p. 49). Thus, it follows that the deliberate pauses between the speeches might be quite helpful for the diplomats

who are immersed in the harsh and high-level talks with each other. Here, consecutive interpreting plays an important role to this end. For, the consecutive interpreting encapsulates a process in which the interpreter relies on his/her notes taken after the speaker is done with the speech. Therefore, consecutive interpreting takes more time, when compared to simultaneous interpreting. Even though the time consuming-nature of the consecutive interpreting may seem to be a setback, it might be an advantage for the interlocutors during the process of diplomatic interpretation. Due to the fact that diplomatic language requires some time to be formulated in an accepted way, leaders like to be interpreted consecutively, gaining more time to think about the further responses. Apparently, whereas the speaker is expected to promptly reply the questions or statements in meetings unattended by the interpreters, using interpreters may earn speakers more time to think twice about their possible responses (Gülmez et al., 2020).

b. Interpreters as Scapegoats

The moment when a misunderstanding occurs or an undesirable statement is heard, interpreters happen to be perceived as the first possible troublemakers due to the assumption that none of the parties would be willing to utter a word that would eclipse the lucrative conversation in the diplomatic relations and that diplomatic relations can be maintained. As Buri states, “Interpreters may be easily transformed into scapegoats especially when there are misunderstandings or friction between parties –straightforwardly attributed to misinterpretation (Buri, 2020). For this reason, being a scapegoat can serve as a safety valve in meetings in order to resolve the stalled crisis. In fact, Harry Obst, who worked for seven different presidents as an interpreter, wrote a valuable book named “White House Interpreter: The Art of Interpretation”, states that “Interpreters do not only serve as scapegoats while they interpret. They sometimes are handy lightning rods” (Obst, 2010, p. 168). Likewise, Peter W. Krawutschke, the then president of International Federation of Translators (FIT) urged the community to form awareness towards interpreters working in tense situations, saying it has become a common practice for interpreters to face risks for communication barriers or to be blamed for diplomatic faux pas (Chao, 2007).

c. Interpreters as Flag-carriers

The international negotiations/meetings used to be executed with the foreign relations connoisseurs of the participant countries, whose diplomatic acumens were vital for the external prosperity. These connoisseurs were mainly the diplomats who were operating overseas. That is to say, presidents were generally excluded from these meetings, leaving the room for experts. Yet in today’s world, leaders appear to be willing to represent their countries on their own in the summits. In these summits of high-stakes, leaders tend to speak their own mother tongues in order to proclaim their national identities. National identity as well as image is of great significance for the le-

aders representing their country in international circles, with the aim of elevating the values and characteristics that make up their motherland. In fact, even though most of the leaders are adept in at least one foreign language, which generally tends to be English, they opt to use their mother tongue in diplomatic exchanges, so that they can express themselves in the best way possible. At the end of the day, using one's language is like using his/her own gun, it is unreasonable and more risky to use the other's gun, which he/she may not know to use that well (personal communication) in a vital position. For instance, in the European Union accession process of Türkiye, then-foreign minister stated that he would be speaking in Turkish even though he was proficient in English because the participants would be need to get accustomed to hear Turkish in Europe (Vardar, 2019).

Apart from elevating the national identity, the reason of the leaders' using one's own mother tongue and using an interpreter as a mediator is cultural. Language and culture are intertwined to such an extent that one cannot survive without the other. Therefore, leaders rightly deem that using their own languages when all the international eyes are fixed on them in the international summits would make their identities and cultures more visible. Thus, thanks to the presence of interpreters both of the interlocutors' languages, consequently, cultures are perceived and valued. Such presence also indicates that the addresser is equal to all the other prestigious and distinguished members of the summit. In summits, in particular, interpretation process may take place in booths, the places where the conference interpreters are situated. The flag of the country whose language is being interpreted tends to be portrayed on these booths, clarifying the existence of the country attending the international summit (Doğan, 2009). Therefore, it seems appropriate to argue that interpretation process and interpreters do also possess a function of nationality representative (Bulut, 2015). Taking the importance of national characteristics into account in diplomatic meetings, erasing the linguistic presence of one country cannot be stated to go hand in hand with the diplomatic goals of any country.

To sum up, given that the predominant use of any language is to unbalance the power relations within the room, the existence of interpreters in the setting enables the diplomatic-parties to resolve the conflicts, stand-offs and decisions on an equal footing. By keeping the risk of power imbalance at bay, interlocutors tend to focus on the matters better.

d. Experts' Clandestine Correction of Their Superiors by the So Called Supervision of the Interpreters

As one of the authors of this paper, Yetkin Karakoç, having served in as well as observed a considerable number of official high-stake meetings in the government as a personal interpreter, observed that in some meetings, meeting delegations are

comprised of the top official speaker, interpreter and an expert of the relevant issue. The expert is made available in the meeting to possibly give assistance to what is said. In an ongoing meeting where the participants exchange words related to highly-classified or highly-high stakes issues, leaders, highly ranked military officials might commit a faux pas due to memory-failures, slips of tongues and etc. At that point, interpreters who effectively listen to the person for whom they are operating are less likely to be caught off guard and to misunderstand what is being uttered. However, given the hierarchical-order in diplomacy, consultants or lower-level figures may abstain from correcting the highly ranked official, as they are not designated speakers. Yet, the yes-men and under-men, as part of the national delegation, may want to make a correction to save face with the relevant top official. Here, interpreters, who are professionally the most important figures in the settings, are perceived to be easier to correct or interrupt in diplomatic/political hierarchy. Therefore, it is not a rarity to see that though the interpreters do the acceptable interpreting at a given time, they may be apparently corrected by the undermen. Indeed, they are not correcting the interpreter but rather a speaker who has uttered the statements in the first place. So, the interpreting is used as a disguise to modify the original statements of the speaker. In a nutshell, there may be multiple interpreting i.e., an interpreting within an interpreting sticking to the political and diplomatic hierarchy in the process of interpretation, and the personal image of the leader is saved, where necessary, thanks to an interpreter.

e. Dirty Diplomacy and Women Interpreters as Distractions

Political interpreting in the meetings tends to be undertaken on an intimate basis, where the intercepted messages are conveyed through consecutive or even whispered interpreting. Yet, even though the political settings are set up so that the bona fides are displayed, it is not to be underestimated or overseen that each party possesses its own agenda and interests, which may deconstruct the amicable core of the meeting in a way that the participant parties become cognizant of the potential deceiving strategies espoused by the opposite party. In the process of deceiving or persuading the interlocutor into any decision or consensus, the choice of interpreters might very well be considered as a cardinal issue. Though unethical, the preference for beautiful interpreters in the meetings to which male leaders are to participate has widely been accentuated in the media outlets. At the G20 meeting organized in 2019, in which the two important political figures Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin attended in order to hold a bilateral discussion, Putin's choice of interpreter was situated in the core of the media headlines following the meeting, sidelining all the other urgent issues that merit attention. Indeed, US officials stated that Kremlin chose the interpreter named Daria Boyarskaya with the intention of distracting Trump (Steinbuch, 2021). Stephanie Grisham, the former white house press secretary, claimed in her book named I'll Take Your Questions Now, What I Saw at Trump White House that Boyarskaya was delibera-

tely chosen to distract Trump in a highly important meeting (Grisham, 2021). Furthermore, Fiona Hill who assisted Trump as Russia expert confirmed the rumors in Good Morning America by stating that:

“We know that this was the case because there had been somebody else on the list, a man, intended to translate for that particular session. And at the very last minute the Russian swapped out for the other interpreter. It was clearly intended to draw attention” (Schwab et al., 2021).

One of the evidences that underline the potential deliberate choice of a good-looking interpreter by Putin is the fact that “President Putin made a big point of basically introducing President Trump to the interpreter, which is something that he normally wouldn’t do (Schwab et al., 2021). Although Kremlin denied the claim that Boyarskaya was specifically chosen to distract Trump (Colson, 2021), the issue was circulated among the media outlets for several weeks. It has not only influenced the short-term and immediate audience but also the long-term and general audience. For, the media also gives high credit to physical appearance and uses it for distraction. The performance of a female interpreter may even be overshadowed by her appearance as in the case of Zhang Jing who made an outstanding interpreting for China in the abovementioned US-Sino talks (Teng, 2021), something which would not be faced by a male interpreter.

Motives of hiring/assigning interpreters: Other hidden tasks Influencing Dynamics of the Setting

a. Seasoned Interpreters as Diplomatic Consultants for Crisis Prevention

As frequently stated, diplomatic processes require the individuals to stick to diplomatic conventions, and rules of etiquette. As Özdan (2019) highlighted:

“Diplomatic language requires expertise thereof; state agents who conduct international negotiations should master the language of diplomacy and have comprehensive knowledge of the protocols on conducting negotiations.” (p. 98)

Furthermore, diplomatic acumen and a well-constructed organizational memory ought to be deployed for the implementation of diplomatic affairs. However, these notions take time to form. Therefore, a newly-designated statesperson may lack the necessitated amount of experience in the statecraft. It follows that a statesperson who has just started to work within the diplomatic processes is more likely to confront a serious faux pas. If that statesperson is a highly-ranked individual, the faux pas they committed may lead to a severe diplomatic crisis in the international area, ranging from being announced as a persona non grata to the deteriorated relations in personal rapport. However, diplomatic interpreters tend to be seasoned individuals especi-

ally when it comes to the conventional codes of diplomacy. Indeed, a quick glance at the historical scope would reveal the fact that interpreters have undertaken to be a consultant for diplomats/politicians (Doğan, 2009) and interpreters working in the war zones as a diplomat (Marquez de la Plata, 2019). Thus with their diplomatic savoir-vivre and diplomatic organizational memory, interpreters prove to be trusted consultants (Kadrić et al., 2021). History is replete with examples of interpreters working as consultants (Aydın, 2007, p. 42). A recent example is Donald Trump, embodiment of a politician as a former businessman, escorted by seasoned diplomatic interpreters in crucial meetings. As a reflection of the trust to the consultant interpreters, the seasoned diplomatic/political interpreters who have worked in tandem with many statespersons might actually be elevated to the status of formal designated diplomats, to name but a few, Satow (Ohsawa, 2023) and Walters (Kelley, 2002) abroad and Bağış (Yeniçağ Gazetesi, 2007) and possibly Kale (Yanardağ, 2019).

b. Presence of two Interpreters as a Gatekeeper for Ideology/Political Interests

As Alexieva stated, interpreters manage turn taking, interrupting and question and answer periods while taking notes and asking for turn to interpret (Alexieva, 1997). Diplomatic organizations can be classified as international full-fledged ones and generally require a limited participation. Even though interpreters are hired by the organizer of international meeting in a way that all the parties are escorted with the language pairs they need, the same feasibility and opportunities in a local and rushed diplomatic meeting seem to be off the charts. In this simulated situation, the foreign party is less likely to have an interpreter designated by its own government. Yet, the interpreter who will interpret for both sides tends to be the interpreter designated by the host country. However, the guest party tends to be caught by the thought that its ideologically-crafted messages do not resonate with the targeted audience owing to the distortion, omission and addition applied by the interpreter of the host country, due to the common assumption that diplomatic interpreters are not objective third parties. Therefore, regardless of the scale of the meeting, the guest party may upon request prior to the meeting, wish to be accompanied by its own interpreter on whom it can rely in the process of ensuring that the ideological messages are appropriately conveyed to the other side. This would mean that the diplomatic interpreting is in general form the interpreter's language A into language B. This routine set may sometimes be observed in simultaneous interpreting as well, where necessary (Setton & Dawrant, 2016, pp. 32-33). Thus, the interpreter turns out to be a gatekeeper on whom the fate of the ongoing diplomatic meeting hinges. Whereas this gatekeeper interpreter might operate as a real full-time interpreter at the meeting, s/he may also operate as a control mechanism, which checks to what extent the interpreter appointed by the host party abides by and interprets the ideology-laden messages of the guest party without any alteration.

CONCLUSION

It can be safely concluded that the spoken language in the field of diplomacy differs from any other technical language, in that the diplomatic language is the refined and multifaceted form of the communication, which embodies many features. The diplomatic language does not only serve to utter the intended meaning but rather to preserve the politeness no matter the range of the harshness embedded in and lurking behind the uttered exchanges. Being such a well-calibrated language form, diplomatic language comes to the fore when the concept of interpreting is discussed. Having put forth the hypothesis that the interpreters in the diplomatic settings are wielded not only for linguistic purposes but rather for many side-duties necessitated by the nature of the diplomacy, the study has come to the conclusion that the interpreters are expected to assume or serve in several functions under or without their control in a meeting. The linguistic bridge is insufficient to exhibit what they undertake as it is demonstrated through this study that they are preferred for motives other than language, by putting forth that two parties may speak a common language but they still wish to use an interpreter in the diplomatic settings. It is evident that there appear to be other motives that trigger hiring of the interpreters. Encapsulating an interdisciplinary nature, a diplomatic interpreter might wind up serving for not only solely interpreting what is being uttered but also diplomatically correcting their employers as diplomatic consultants, assuming the mistakes made by them as scapegoats, representing the linguistic and cultural existence of their countries as flag-carriers, distracting the opposite party with their appearances or even gaining time for their leaders while intentionally interpreting slowly in order to let his/her employer think about the following utterances. It is no coincidence that there are many diplomats that transition from interpreter to diplomats and - serve as diplomats since their position in the hierarchy and function in delegation are very much similar. Since the process of diplomacy requires not only the policies but also the modus operandi which ought to be technically at hand while approaching many issues, a well-groomed and educated interpreter who presents the needed linguistic diplomatic expertise and is seasoned in terms of the diplomatic etiquette, might very well be utilized not only for the linguistic reasons but also for many other possible issues put forth in this paper.

Though it is a profession that has been practiced for centuries, interpretation, let alone a diplomatic/political interpretation, does still appear to be a dark, undiscovered field, in which many potential research topics remain unaddressed due to confidentiality issues, among other issues. It is hoped that this research paves the way for other interdisciplinary studies, with which interpreters are engaged. Only being a linguistic expert is surely not adequate to work in such multilayered positions. Psychological, sociological, security related, nationalistic aspects as illustrated by this study, can be further explored by diachronic and cultural studies in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aksoy, M. & Çiçek, A. S. (2018). Redefining diplomacy in the 21st century & examining the characteristics of an ideal diplomat. *MANAS Journal of Social Studies*, 7(3), 907-921.
- Alexieva, B. (1997). A typology of interpreter-mediated events. *The Translator*, 3(2), 153-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.1997.10798996>
- Aydın, B. (2007). Divan-ı Hümayun tercümanları ve Osmanlı kültür ve diplomasisindeki yerleri. *Osmanlı Araştırmaları XXIX*, 29(29), 41-86.
- Beyaz Saray'daki tercüman... (2007, September 9). *Yeniçağ Gazetesi*. Retrieved from <https://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/beyaz-saraydaki-tercuman-1283h.htm>
- Bobeica, G. (2022). Diplomatic language as part of the language for specific purposes. *Études Interdisciplinaires En Sciences Humaines*, (8), 600-610.
- Bulut, A. (2015). Tercüme hatası!, İstanbul: Çeviri Bilim
- Buri, M. R. (2020). Interpreting in diplomatic settings. Retrieved from <https://www.mariarosariaburi.it/en/interpreting-in-diplomatic-settings-2/>
- Chao, C. (2007). War interpreters should be given red cross protection status. Retrieved from <http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/206585.htm>
- Colson, T. (2021). Kremlin denies Grisham's claim that it picked an "attractive" translator to distract Trump in a G20 meeting with Putin. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/kremlin-denies-picking-attractive-translator-to-distract-trump-2021-9>
- Diriker, E. (2004). De-/Re-Contextualizing conference interpreting: Interpreters in the Ivory Tower? Retrieved from <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/uk-ac-man-scw:4b1919>
- Doğan, A. (2009). Sözlü çeviri çalışmaları ve uygulamaları. Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi.
- Eraslan Gerçek, Ş. (2008). "Cultural Mediator" or "Scrupulous Translator"? revisiting role, context and culture in consecutive conference interpreting. *CETRA*, Retrieved from <https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/cetra/old-website/papers/files/eraslan-gercek.pdf>
- Gülmez, S. B., Yetkin Karakoç, N., & Buhari Gülmez, D. (2020). Diplomatik aktör olarak çevirmenler: Trump döneminde çevirmenlerin Amerikan diplomasisine etkileri. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*. <https://doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.655130>
- Grisham, S. (2021). I'll take your questions now. Harper.
- Jönsson, C., & Hall, M. (2003). Communication: an essential aspect of diplomacy. *International Studies Perspectives*, 4(2), 195-210. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.402009>
- Kadrić, M., Rennert, S., Schäffner, C., & Krois, P. (2021). Diplomatic and political interpreting explained. In Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367809898>
- Kelley, T. (2002). "Vernon A. Walters, 85, Former Envoy to U.N." *The New York Times*, February 15, 2002, sec. World. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/15/world/vernon-a-walters-85-former-envoy-to-un.html>.

- Kocabıyık, H. (2019) Değişen diplomasi anlayışı, kamu diplomasisi ve Türkiye. *Avrasya Etüdüleri* 55(1), 163-196.
- Kurbalija, J., & Slavik, H. (2001). *Language and diplomacy*. Diplo Foundation.
- Linell, P. (1997). *Interpreting as Interaction*. Y. Gambier, D. Gile and C. Taylor (ed.), In *Conference Interpreting: Current Trends in Research*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Marquez de la Plata Valverde, P. (2019). *Interpreters and fixers in conflict zones: Iraq and Afghanistan*. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.comillas.edu/xmlui/handle/11531/31607>
- Metzger, M. (2003). *From topic boundaries to omission: New Research on Interpretation*. Gallaudet University Press.
- Nigro, L. J. (2010). *Theory and practice of modern diplomacy*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.
- Obst, H. (2010). *White House interpreter: The Art of Interpretation*. AuthorHouse.
- Ohsawa, Y. (2023). Ernest Mason Satow a diplomat in Japan (1921). In *A Diplomat in Japan* (pp. 13–16). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9853-9_3
- Özdan, S. (2019). Subverting the art of diplomacy: bullshit, lies and Trump. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(1), 95–112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-019-00075-6> p.98
- Pöchhacker, F. (2000). *Dolmetschen: konzeptuelle Grundlagen und deskriptive Untersuchungen*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA54245027>
- Sayın, F. M., & Sayın, B. A. (2013) Old and new diplomacy and the role of communication. *Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 9(9), 15-30.
- Schwab, N., Goodin, E., Earle, G., & Phillips, M. (2021). Hill confirms Kremlin swapped in an attractive interpreter to distract Trump. *Mail Online*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10057807/Hill-confirms-Kremlin-swapped-attractive-interpreter-distract-Trump.html>
- Setton, R., & Dawrant, A. (2016). *Conference interpreting – a complete course*. In *Benjamins translation library*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.120>
- Smith, N. R. & Fallon, T. (2022). The importance of bona fide friendships to international politics: China's quest for friendships that matter. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2022.2044757>
- Steinbuch, Y. (2021). Get to know the stunning Russian translator Putin brought to Trump meeting. *New York Post*. Retrieved from <https://nypost.com/2021/09/29/get-to-know-the-stunning-russian-translator-putin-brought-to-trump-meeting/>
- Teng, T. J. (2021) "Meet Zhang Jing, the 'Interpreter Goddess' lighting up China's social media." *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/news-trends/article/3126953/chinas-beautiful-interpreter-zhang-jing-setting-social>.
- Vardar, S. (2019). *Bu kulaklar neler duydu: Türkiye'de konferans çevirmenliğinin 50 yılı*. İstanbul: h20 Kitap.

Yanardağ, A. (2019) Şahin Ciner | Büyükelçilik yolunu kapalı kapılar mı açıyor? Tele1. Retrieved from <https://tele1.com.tr/sahin-ciner-buyukelcilik-yolunu-kapali-kapilar-mi-aciyor-101366/>.

Yetkin Karakoç, N. (2022). Çeviri ve diplomasi. İstanbul: Çeviri Bilim

Yazar katkı düzeyi/Author contributions:

Makale Tasarımı: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Literatür Taraması: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Veri Toplama ve Analiz: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Sonuç: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Son Okuma, Kontrol ve Sorumluluk: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç.

Design of article: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Literature review: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Data acquisition and analysis: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Conclusion: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç. Final reading, checking and approval: Y. Akgün, N. Yetkin Karakoç.

Hakem değerlendirmesi/Peer review:

Dış bağımsız/Externally peer reviewed

Çıkar çatışması/Conflict of interest:

Yazarlar çıkar çatışması bildirmemiştir/The authors have no conflict of interest to declare

Finansal destek/Grant support:

Yazarlar bu makalede finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir/The authors declared that this article has received no financial support.