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Aquila's Bible translation in the communicative theoretical model
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Viktor Ya. Porkhomovsky, Institute of Linguistics RAS, Moscow)

Andrey V. Vdovichenko

Institute of Linguistics, RAS
1B. Kislovsky Ln., Moscow, 109004, Russia
Orthodox St Tikhon University for Humanities,
23B Novokuznetskaya St., 115184, Moscow, Russia
E-mail: an1vdo@mail.ru
ORCID iD: 0000-0003-4814-9042

Abstract
The first part of the article emphasizes the fallacy of the principle of semantic autonomy of the sign, which in most cases constitutes the fundamental presumption of the linguistic description (the so-called "meanings of words, sentences, texts and verbal language"). The dynamic communicative model of the verbal process assumes that: 1) the "language" metaphor is ineffective for explaining semantic formation in a word-containing semiotic action; 2) the used concepts of a sign (words, sentences, texts) do not have an autonomous semantic (meaning-forming) identity if interpreted outside of a complex semiotic actions performed by the author (actor); 3) what is produced and interpreted in the natural communicative process is the semiotic impact (act) of the communicant, and not a structure of self-significant signs (words); 4) any semiotic (communicative) action is interpreted as complex, multi-channel, multi-factor. The text is defined in the article as a sequence of non-autonomous verbal elements that just "hint" at the corresponding communicative actions. Communicative actions (sought in the generation and interpretation) are perceived in identity on the basis of parameters that the author of the action and then the interpreter think in complex reality.
Such an approach is helpful in interpreting the general manner and the particular cases of Aquila's Bible translation, that is suggested in the second part of the article. Non-grammatical (non-language) interpretation of what Aquila did, allows describing verbal data more correctly. The result of his work (as it was thought by himself) was not a translation in strict sense. That was a component of a traditional communicative practice of reading and studying the Scripture in the Greek-speaking diaspora communities. Aquila's text can be appreciated and understood adequately just in the frame of this practice, being a part of the complex communicative situations (the latter can be understood and interpreted, in contrast with language and grammar). His text had a big success not in the field of the Greek language or grammar but in the field of communicative (historical-cultural-religious) reality, in the same way as any other verbal text tends to be.

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The key point of the paper is a linguistic idea which could be spread and projected on any semiotic process. So, first, I will define the linguistic contours of the problem. Then, I will point out some consequences actual for the theory of signs. Finally, I will demonstrate how it works in a concrete linguistic (at the same time historical and cultural) episode.

Linguistic contours: communicative (semiotic) impact

After more than half a century of linguistic discussions it became rather impossible to deny that any natural verbal process is a communicative impact (action). The Sender has no reasons to organize a semiotic procedure if he/she doesn't mean to make an influence on the imaginable Receiver (i.e. a perceived "owner" of consciousness). So the process of producing sense in verbal data (that is causa finalis of any natural verbal fact) has a perspective to be explained just in close connection with the concept of communicative action (impact, influence). There is an individual Actor in every concrete communicative act, having his/her own aims and tasks, choosing the ways of acting, forming and focusing the objects, manipulating with the Receiver's attention and so on.

To demonstrate the difference between "words of a language" and a communicative action (with verbal component) it is enough to represent, first, un-real ("unnatural") linguistic data, and, then, natural ones.

"Unnatural" linguistic data is represented below:

[Where is he going?]

This utterance is sure to be grammatically correct. The semantics seem to be regular. The "language" is in order. Chomsky's "colorless green ideas" do not "sleep furiously" (Chomsky 1957: 15) here, and even do not make us think of them. Why is it possible to say that this utterance is definitely un-realistic (unnatural)?

The answer is rather obvious: the utterance (being randomly chosen here) does not produce any communicative sense. It is not integrated in the communicative procedure in any explainable way. It is not (a detectable part of) a real communicative action. To understand anything is impossible despite correct grammar. In the real verbal process a Sender makes something when speaking/writing. Here one can not define who does and what is done. That's why it is not natural verbal data.

Worth noting that the same utterance ("where is he going?") could be totally clear if being an actual communicative action. The opposite, the grammar of the same utterance could be totally incorrect if it is posed in a communicative action having "wrong" parametrs: the speaker could mean in fact "them" or "her" by saying "he" etc. In fact, if not being posed in actual communicative reality, the verbal data have no definite semantics and no detectale grammar.

In turn, to demonstrate natural linguistic data, it is worth to point out an actual communicative action. As for instance:[Here you can not define who does and what is done] (see above).

In the definite moment of the text (the sequence of the verbal traces of communicative actions) this verbal element of the definite impact was clear. The opposite, if the same utterance is removed from the actual action, the sense is also gone away.

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The change of the status of the same phrase from not understandable to understandable, is possible because what is generated and interpreted in the natural communicative process, is not the very autonomous verbal form of the statement. Verbal data if represented by a structure which has been artificially removed from the "domestic" communicative action, could be no more interpreted identically. It is no more integrated into an authentic coordinate system which gives it a permission (a capacity) to mean something. Verbal structure, in order to be interpreted is not enough to be a fact of a language. It needs to be a fact of communication, or something integrated into a concrete communicative procedure (Vdovichenko 2009).

It is worth noting again that in this above, as well as in any other samples of natural communication (with or without verbal channel used) the sense production is a process organized by someone: an impact (action) is something done by an actor. So the sense in semiotic data (verbal or any other) is a communicative phenomenon, or communication-dependent, performative, interactional, individually conceivable phenomenon. For the speaker, sense production deals with the attempt to influence the conceivable addressee in the parameterized communicative space. For the addressee (and then, for the secondary interpreter), understanding author's attempts deals with the ascension to the cognitive state of the person who produced the action in a given multifactor situation. Interpretation necessarily implies the establishment of a set of parameters that the author had in his mind when acting, however distant and lost in space and time he was.

Semiotic consequences: language can not produce sense, signs can not signify

The consequences of evident personal performativity of any natural verbal process are as follow:

1.   "Language" while being principally impersonal and non-actional (having no actor) is not effective as a metaphor explaining communicative sense-producing process.

In natural conditions of speaking/writing, the ancient Saussure's language (system of signs generating meaningful utterances) loses its theoretical capacity. It becomes ineffective as a conceptual instrument. As the generation of meaning is localized in the individually defined communicative procedure, the metaphor "language" becomes unsuitable for modeling natural verbal process: whereas the essence of verbal, like any other semiotic act, is the performance of personal communicative tasks, the language, while being principally impersonal, does not have a source of any sense. The individual consciousness if being fundamentally absent in common instrument of speaking/writing, does not determine communicative goals or fulfill performative tasks. In the language itself there is no identical connection between semainon and semainomenon, which both are thought situationally and purposefully by the author and addressee (see the samples above). Definite meanings or sense can certainly not occur in language, since they are localized in the personal cognitive sphere as a certain image, concept, representation. They are being created actively or re-actively in the individual consciousness and then involved in a conceivable interaction. Due to the lack of personality, "language" fundamentally lacks the communication realized by the participants, or the "sender-recipient" relations. It is totally static, though what is happening in semiotic realm is a process of purposeful influence on the imaginable consciousness. If being out of the dynamics of communication, the fundamental causa finalis of actual verbal process (particular case of semiotic process) can not be detected and interpreted.

Thus, in reality, the speaker/writer does not speak/write with language (common "one and the same"), but makes changes in the conceivable communicative space. The linguistic "one and the same" does not interest him principally. Why to speak English or French if every language is already known? Why to do permanently the same, to say hallo, as for instance? The reason of what is really happening

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deals with personal behavior, or semiotic deeds, having values hinc et nunc for the communicant. That's why he/she is not interested in verbal cliches (linguistic data) themselves. He/she needs to make something new that language is incapable to do: sharing ideas, emotions, feelings, forming objects, setting links, creating causality, organizing practical and other interaction etc. All that can not be produced by language itself due to the absence of an acting individual, that is a dynamic active principle.

In fact, one can see that the obligatory characteristics of natural semiotic (including verbal) process: the appeal to a certain audience (so called communicativity), the planning and making changes in the consciousness of the given audience (actionality), certain conditions for performing the semiotic action (situationality), individual awareness of interaction (cognition), as well as indirect, often differ interpretation of the communicant's action (interpretability), all these properties of real communicative process are completely ignored by "language", or by the language model of sense production.

So, if one searches for sources of sense in what is spoken/ written, language is not a correct destination. For the fundamental senselessness, language can be just a subsidiary mnemonic scheme and can not be studied as a sense (meaning) generating unit (Vdovichenko 2009).

2.   Elements ("signs") of verbal process are not identical in themselves; they are empty and senseless without performativity of a concrete individual communicative procedure.

They acquire such a status by following the disappearing "language": its elements (sounds, morphemes, cliches etc.) also can not be "something", if the whole verbal complex is regarded autonomously, without being connected to a working (realizing communicative procedures) source of sense production, that is, to an individual consciousness.

Thus, an arrow with the above inscription "Registration" drawn on a paper sheet, can not make sense if the paper lies prostrate on the floor, after an uncontrollable fall from the place on the

wall where it was previously fixed by the conference organizer's hand. In this "sign" in his current situation, there is no understandable communicative action. "Registration" could not be found where the "sign" on the floor indicates to at the moment. Moreover, the conference has long been over. Therefore, it can hardly be acknowledged as a "sign": in this arrow bearing an inscription, there is already no sense (some content, or planned effect, thought by the author of the semiotic action), despite the relative stability of the external form. In fact, by means of this arrow the organizer of the conference once pointed out a different (rather than now) direction, having in mind another disposition of the addressee in relation to the arrow, another period of relevance of the "sign", another moment of interaction with the addressee, etc.

To represent the "arrow with the inscription" to be a "sign" again, one should recreate the personally conceived communication procedure. To do that is impossible by studying the body of the "sign" itself. If the conceivable parameters of the communicative action are not recreated, the sign "arrow with an inscription Registration" turns out to be empty and even seems to be completely non-existent: it does not say anything to anyone, does not point to anything, does not give any reasonable recommendations. In other words, the action of the source of communicative intention is not detectable in it. The act of the person who is conscious of his influence, is not identified. From the arrow with the inscription itself one could hardly achieve an autonomous sense (or meaning).

It is rather obvious that any "sign" being considered separately from a personal meaningful communicative act (including word, sentence and text), behaves in a similar way: while the sign's body is deprived of the organizing sense-producing principle, such a sign disappears, does not exist as such. Apparently, the required condition for the appearance of a sign (or what one can conditionally count as a sign, say, as in Peirce's or Saussure's interpretation) is not a stable objective form and a meaning attached to it from

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nobody knows where, but the opportunity to see behind him a personal concrete communicative process (a semiotic act).

In addition, the problem of the sign implies a rather vague procedure of isolating a particular object matter, which can be presented as a semainon (signifier). In other words, the question transmitted into practice consists in how many signs one should count, say, in the word [other]. The possibility to recognize that there are five, four, three or two signs (five graphemes, four phonemes, three sounds, two syllables) in the given word, and that the whole word is also an entire indivisible sign, testifies to the utilitarian character of defining "signs": the observer calculates them according to the criterion he introduced himself.

One should add also the fact that the body of the sign is a kind of empty reservoir, a shell, a wrapper which by itself has an independent value only in a limited number of cases, where the material meaningless component of the "sign" could play a role (for instance, in the poetic meter, in spelling, in polygraphy, where, say, the replacement of [other] by [different] may be unequal). In the ordinary sense-generating ("working") mode of verbal cliches, the speaker/writer and the addressee (including the indirect one) do not distinguish "units of natural speaking" either at the level of sounds-morphemes-syllables, or at the level of words, if the communicative action is performed and interpreted unproblematic.

Thus, words ("signs") by themselves can not be summands of the total sum of meaning arising in the utterance, since each "summand" has no definite meaning. In fact, that must be established in the real speech (writing): autonomous words ("signs") do not have conceivable identity and are not capable of having a concrete meaning to be a definite summand of the total understandable utterance.

Thus, every word of the last utterances (see above) possesses much more values than the only definite one, which is necessary for a firm understanding of the whole utterance: [fact], [that], [must], [be], [establish], [real], [speech], [writing], [word], [sign], etc.

It should be noted that the salutary reference to the "context", which could make the word be understood in identity, is precisely indicative of the semantic insufficiency of the autonomous word (the main Saussure's "sign"): it is clear enough that something extraneous, which extends beyond the word, is needed (that is the so-called context), without which a word is not capable of producing an independent meaning (sense).

Moreover, if remembering the samples above (Here you can not define who does and what is done, etc.) one should admit that utterance could not be a sufficient context for a word: such a "guarantor of identity" can not be recognized as independent and meaningful itself.

It seems that the theory of generating sense in verbal data needs at least a concept of "consituation", or "communicative (that is, complex, not just verbal) context", which would take the causes of meaning formation far beyond the verbal sequence. Such "signs" as words and sentences could gain the semantic identity just if placed in authentic communicative procedure, the external source of actional sense.

The observer, however, discerns "signs" by dividing into visible parts the material component of a communicative action, while the action itself has a non-verbal and integral meaning.

Thus, in the above sample, one should divide into parts the arrow and the inscription Registration, when searching for "signs". The concrete sense-producing process, however, is realized not only by the arrow and the inscription, but much more by the personal communicative intention, which is recreated during the interpretation, by the whole set of conceivable parameters of the action, including the disposition of the addressee and the "body of the sign", etc. It is therefore clear that each "sign" which was found by dividing the material elements of complex communicative action, will be something inadequate, not conveying the character (mechanism) of the multidimensional communicative dynamics.

At last, the third sequence:

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3.   If language can not produce sense (due to the lack of a communicant acting), and signs themselves can not signify, and even do not exist independently (due to the lack of autonomous definite meaning), what or who is able to generate sense? In such a disposition one should admit the communicative action (semiotic deed) as the only source of semantic identity. What speaker/writer (as a Sender) produces and listener/reader (as a Receiver) understands is an actual (performative) complex communicative action, not just verbal formulas (elements of structure of empty "language"). To say this in other words, what is spoken or written (and then understood) is the activity of a communicant (known or reconstructed). The action of a communicant is perceived as a set of numerous parameters (Vdovichenko 2006:   32-33; Vdovichenko 2009). Worth noting that semiotic (communicative) actions are analyzed and interpreted the same way as non-semiotic (non-communicative) ones (cf. Morris 1946).

In fact, stating that only personal communicative actions can be generated and understood, the communicative model thereby demonstrates the impossibility of presenting a "sign" with the same certainty as the static language model did. It turns out that the communicative   "sign"   is   appointed conditionally (in the language model it is stated unconditionally and definitely), it does not exist as an object or body (in the language model it exists as a dyad "sign's body - meaning"), it just hints   and   refers   to   the   sense-generating communicative action, being interpreted (in the language model it has a direct uniform meaning).

If in the language model the sign can be compared to a thing of a certain color (form-value), in the communicative model the "sign" is a conditionally (nominally) assigned and conditionally (utilitarianly) appointed form, hinting and referring to a specific value, that is, to the cognitive state of the author of the communicative action. The latter can be interpreted and understood.

Particular linguistic case of Aquila: communicative impacts (actions) instead of grammar

One can consider all above being a methodological introduction to the procedure of interpreting texts (being historical-linguistic-cultural data). At the same time, what has been said is some sort of a caveat:

To   ignore the parameters   of a communicative procedure means to ignore the sense of what is happening (what the author is doing). Attempts to ascribe the sense-producing capacity   to autonomic linguistic   signs ("language" or "grammar") do not correspond to the reality of natural communicative (semiotic) process.

Though, that is definitely Aquila's case.

In the 2nd century AD he made a new translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, because   of   the   dissatisfaction   of   Judaic communities with the Septuagint (Silverstone 1931). By that moment in the Jewish Greek-speaking communities it became clear enough that the Septuagint had played too remarkable role in shaping the ideological basis for the "heresy of Christianity" (cf. Veltri 2006; Labendz 2009).

It is known and it is absolutely undoubted, that Aquila strictly followed a word-by-word translation strategy (Jellicoe 1968: 102-103). Particles pi, ^N,   ,   were translated with separate words. The Hebrew i ("and, but, though", etc.) is always translated as   a^, etc. As a result, in the final text the standards of the Greek   grammar   -   semantics,   syntax, combinatory, and the Greek textuality in general - were violated much more, than ever in the Septuagint.

Thus, the most known episode which was mentioned by Hieronymus is rather illustrative (Hieronymus 1980): the part of Gen 1:1

1 D'nwn   was   translated   as   guv tov oupavov Kal guv t ^v yqv, that seems to mean roughly: "(at the beginning created God) with the   sky   and   with   the   earth". This   not   so understandable utterance came into being due to word-by-word translation strategy: the Hebrew word   (which   has   identical   consonant   form both for the object marker, and, at the same time, for the proposition "with, together") is translated with the Greek proposition guv "with, together"

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being the object marker from the grammatical viewpoint. Despite of the fact that the Greek proposition onv demands Dative one can see Accusative in Aquila's text: xov onpavov, xpv ypv. Hieronymus was joking and laughing at Aquila's translation just because of that. Anybody who knows Greek grammar is ready to do the same (cf. Lieberman 1965: 15-28).

However there is a definite problem here.

The fact is that Aquila was a Greek-speaking person. He was even well- educated (Field 1875). He is sure to have known Greek much better than Hieronymus or anybody else in the 4nd c. AD or thousands years later. This 'language' was known to him much better, than to anybody who is not dipped in a historical and cultural and religious context of a specific chronotope. His audience, by the way, was also Greek-speaking, Greek-reading and Greek-writing.

In other words, the translator himself and his audience, too, were totally aware of that 'the Greek onv demands Dative'. Nevertheless the translator used Accusative after onv in front of the native speakers. How was that possible?

All this leads to the only solution: Aquila had a principally different aim of his job which was approved by himself and by the addressee of the translation. The criteria of doing this job were not the standards of Greek. It is impossible to judge Aquila on the base of Greek grammar because he had in mind and fulfilled another communicative task.

The sense of Aquila's activity can be explained by the specific Jewish practice of reading and learning the Scripture. Every separate word could be an object of exegesis, that was clear to rabbi Akiba (Bereshit Rabba, I (Midrash Rabbah 1983); cf. Kiddushin 57) and others.

The success in reaching Aquila's communicative task can be testified by the fact that the translation was very popular in Jewish Greek-speaking communities even in the Byzantine period. Thus Justinian I in 553 edited the famous Novella 146 containing "permission granted to the Hebrews to read the Sacred Scriptures according to Tradition, in Greek,

Latin or any other Language" (Parkes 1934: 392). Despite the strict attitude to the Hebrew hermeneutical methods of interpreting the sacred text, the use of Aquila's translation is mentioned separately: "This therefore they shall primarily use, but that we may not seem to be forbidding all other texts, we allow the use of that of Aquila, though he was not of their people, and his translation differs not slightly from that of the Septuagint." (Parkes 1934: 392-393) It is rather reliable that the Emperor gave the separate permission because of the wide popularity of Aquila's version in Jewish communities of that time (Rutgers 2003: 385-407).

It is also illustrative that Aquila's text was found among the documents of the Cairo Genizah which were gathered there for the period of 870 CE to 19th century shedding some light to Jewish Middle-Eastern and North African history. Aquila's translation was still in use by that time (Burkitt 1897: 47).

So, non-grammatical (or non-language) interpretation of what Aquila did, allows describing verbal data more correctly. The result of his work (as it was thought by himself) was not a translation in strict sense. That was a component of a traditional communicative practice. Aquila's text can be appreciated and understood adequately just in the frame of this practice, being a part of the complex communicative action (the latter can be understood and interpreted, in contrast with language and grammar). His text had a big success not in the field of Greek language or grammar but in the field of communicative (historical-cultural-religious) reality. The same way as any other verbal text tends to be.

In turn, the texts of the Septuagint and the NT (which also meet reproaches in violating the standards of Greek grammar) should be considered as communicative activity, being integrated in the Jewish Diaspora practice of interpreting and creating the sacred text.

Conclusions

The communicative model of the verbal process allows us to represent the activities of the author of the verbal text as a consistent

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word-containing "hinting" at semiotic actions (impacts). Unlike verbal structures, semiotic acts (impacts) are interpreted as multifactorial, possessing such parameters as the author of the action (semiotic actor) had in his mind. The activity of Aquila can be adequately understood by reconstructing the authentic parameters of the semiotic actions he performed. To interpret his "translation", it is necessary not so much the grammar of the Greek language as the complicated practice of reading and studying the text of Scripture in the Greek-speaking Jewish diaspora. Aquila in the strict sense did not translate into Greek, but created a word-for-word copy of the Hebrew text, which was used in Greek-speaking synagogues as an aid to ensure access to the original.

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Andrey V. Vdovichenko, Doctor of Philology, Lead Researcher, Professor, Department of Theoretical Linguistics, Institute of Linguistics of RAS, Orthodox St Tikhon University for Humanities, Faculty of Philology, Department of Language Theory and Slavistics