

RHETORICAL UNIT “SILK ROAD” FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE TRANSLATION

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Abstract: Rhetorical devices, if combined with correctly developed rhetorical strategies, contribute to effective contact with the listeners and prove to be powerful means of immediate impact upon the audience. Figures of speech are among the most significant rhetorical devices, which intensify the expressiveness and emotional impact of a political speech. The term “Silk Road” possessing a long-lasting historical past, has currently acquired metaphorical properties and is often used as a rhetorical device by politicians in different countries and in various circumstance. When public speeches are translated, both the language and socio-cultural context should be carefully examined to maintain the persuasive impact of the original message on the target audience. Hence, a well-done pre-translation discourse analysis of the ST (the text of the uttered speech) will let the translator go deeper into the content-conceptual information and the techniques it is specified by, to identify the verbal and non-verbal elements, which capture the receptor’s attention, leading it simultaneously in the direction intended by the speaker. The article focuses on trilingual (Armenian, English, Russian) analysis of the “Silk Road” rhetorical device in RA Prime Minister’s speech, to specify its function through the socio-cultural situation case study and to identify its translation properties. The narrative, discourse and comparative methods of analyses have been used in the course of research.

Keywords: public speech; persuasive communication; rhetorical device; Silk Road; translation transformations

1. Introduction

As a subgenre of political discourse, oratory is often considered as an effective tool of persuasion for its significant influence on the target audience. Speeches are usually

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characterized by their immediate and effective interaction with listeners. A good orator is the one who is able to combine the public speaking skills with the socio-cultural environment he/she is acting in, the target audience expectancies and demands, and the rhetorical devices, to make the persuasion more effective and to achieve the desirable impact upon the listeners. According to Aristotle “the right thing in speaking really is that we should be satisfied not to annoy our hearers, without trying to delight them: we ought in fairness to fight our case with no help beyond the bare facts: nothing, therefore, should matter except the proof of those facts. Still ... other things affect the result considerably, owing to the defects of our hearers. The arts of language cannot help having a small but real importance, whatever it is we have to expound to others: the way in which a thing is said does affect its intelligibility. Not, however, so much importance as people think. All such arts are fanciful and meant to charm the hearer” (Aristotle 2008: 271-272).

Thus, Peter Newmark (1988) highlights the dual function of speeches, emphasizing the critical intertwining of informative and persuasive elements necessary for effectively engaging the audience and motivating action. This perspective underscores the importance of deliberate language choices in attaining communicative effectiveness, suggesting that the manner in which information is presented can significantly influence the audience's perception and response.¹ Vilen Komissarov (1990) emphasizes the speaker's crucial role in maintaining audience attention through language that is both accessible and aesthetically pleasing. This focus reinforces the idea that the delivery of a speech is as important as its content. Effective oratory surpasses mere informational transmission, it demands an engaging presentation that captivates listeners and sustains their interest. By combining elegant language with clear messaging, speakers can enhance the impact of their speeches, making complex ideas more relatable and memorable, ultimately fostering a stronger connection with the audience. According to Alexander Schweitzer oratory emerges as a vital mechanism for navigating the complexities of social relations, revealing the profound interplay between language, power, and ideology in shaping collective consciousness. He underscores the significant societal consequences of oratory as a publicistic activity, highlighting its ability to mirror, reinforce, and transform the cultural and ideological frameworks of communities (Schweitzer 1988: 110-118).

However, when speeches are translated, both the language and socio-cultural contexts should be carefully examined to maintain the impact of the original message on the target audience. Peter Newmark, while speaking about the cohesive level in translation, considers it an “attempt to follow the thought through the connectives and the feeling tone, and the emotion through value-laden or value-free expressions, is, admittedly, only tentative, but it may determine the difference between a humdrum or

¹ Newmark categorizes texts based on their communicative functions, positioning speeches within a critical space that merges aesthetic considerations with practical objectives. This classification reflects the unique nature of oratory, which demands a careful balance of content and delivery, ensuring that speeches resonate both intellectually and emotionally with listeners. By recognizing this blend of informational and vocative elements, Newmark provides a framework that enriches the understanding of how effective speeches operate within the broader publicistic style, emphasizing the importance of rhetoric in achieving desired outcomes in communication (Newmark 1988: 38-40).

misleading translation and a good one. This cohesive level is a regulator, it secures coherence, it adjusts emphasis ... This is where the findings of discourse analysis are pertinent" (Newmark 1988: 24). Consequently, a proper discourse analysis of the source speech creates a good opportunity for a translator to determine the translation strategies from the perspective of Christiane Nord's communicative/functional model of translation-oriented text analysis (Nord 2006: 25-153)². A well-done pre-translation discourse analysis of the ST (the text of the uttered speech) will let the translator go deeper into the content-conceptual information and the techniques it is specified by, to identify the verbal and non-verbal elements, which capture the receptor's attention, leading it simultaneously in the direction, intended by the speaker. Rhetorical devices if combined with correctly developed rhetorical strategies contribute to effective contact with the listeners and prove to be the most powerful means of immediate impact upon the audience. Figures of speech are among the most significant rhetorical devices, which intensify the expressiveness and emotional impact of a political speech.

The research focuses predominantly on trilingual (Armenian, English, Russian) analysis of the "Silk Road" rhetorical device along with socio-cultural elements employed by the RA Prime Minister in his speech "Crossroads of Peace" delivered on 26 October 2023 at the Tbilisi International Forum, to specify its function through the socio-cultural situation case study and to identify its translation properties. The narrative, discourse and comparative methods of analyses have been used in the course of research. The narrative method of analysis employed in the article leads to the identification of language means, which are used by the speaker to specify the socio-cultural situation and his personal interpretation of the events, introduced in the speech. The pre-translation discourse analysis is based on Zellig S. Harris' approach towards analysis from the perspective of "the connection between behavior (or social situation) and language, which has always been considered beyond the scope of linguistics proper" (Harris 1952: 2) to specify the conceptual value of the original speech. Finally, the comparative analysis is undertaken to compare various versions of translation (English and Russian), to determine which of them more accurately transmits the original text and to reveal the linguistic properties of the target languages, which contribute to relevant transformations of the source text.

2. Rhetorical Value of the Unit "Silk Road" within the Scope of Pashinyan's "Crossroads of Peace"

The term "Silk Road" was first used in the second half of XIX century by a famous German geographer and traveller Ferdinand von Richthoven after his several expeditions to China. The name was given to the trade route connecting East Asia with

² Nord considers that translation is a process that takes into account both the linguistic features of the source text and its functional/cultural significance. She introduces the concept of functional equivalence, which prioritizes the function of the message in the target language rather than striving for a word-for-word translation. Thus, the translator's goal is to recreate the intended effect or response in the target culture, which may involve adapting cultural references to make sense to the target audience (Nord 2001: 45).

the West World, starting from China to the Mediterranean territories in the period of the II century BC until the XV century AD. “The Silk Road” or “Silk Route” is an ancient network of trade and cultural transmission routes that were central to cultural interaction through regions of the Asian continent connecting the West and East by merchants, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, nomads, and urban dwellers from China and India to the Mediterranean Sea during various periods of time” (Open Ended Social Studies 2015). Consequently, together with trade relations, cultural, spiritual, economic and political interaction started to develop among the people who inhabited the territories along the Silk Road.

The phenomenon of the “Silk Road” is even now the subject of discussions in various fields of research: history, geography, archeology, architecture, political science, literature, linguistics. In his “The Silk Road in World History: A Review Essay” Alfred J. Andrea suggests a detailed analyses of two modern eras of intense academic study of the “trans-Eurasian network of trade routes connecting East and Southeast Asia to Central Asia, India, Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean, and northern Europe, which flourished from roughly 100 BCE to around 1450” (Andrea 2014: 105). He notes, in particular, that the second period has especially resulted in an ever-expanding sense among historians of the scope, and significance of the Silk Road.³ In his article “Silk Road: Past and Present” Subiday Togan, presenting a brief historical review, focuses predominantly on the Chinese initiative to revive the Silk Road trade in Central Asia named the One Belt One Road Initiative (Togan 2015: 36).⁴ From the perspective of archeological researches the “Silk Road” found a rather detailed specification in an article, published in 2021 in “Поволжская археология” (Volga Region Archeology) journal. The authors propose different measures for a new archeological study on the Silk Road, which will lead to global cultural cooperation with a significant contribution of South Korea to the international archeological research on the Silk Road (Kim & Aitbayeva 2021).⁵

As soon as the unit “Silk Road” acquired metaphorical properties and started to be used as a rhetorical device it has become the subject of linguistic and literary researches.

As mentioned above, the present article focuses on trilingual analysis of RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s speech “Crossroads of Peace,” where he presents the principles of the project and outlines its broader implications for regional diplomacy and peace-building. The speech provides a convincing example of political rhetoric, as it combines persuasive appeals with cultural and political references aimed at shaping

³ The two modern eras of intense academic study, mentioned by Alfred J. Andrea are: the first is a period of little more than five decades, from the late nineteenth century into the early 1930s, when a succession of European, Japanese, and American scholar-adventurers, working primarily in Chinese Turkestan and China’s Gansu Province rediscovered and often looted many of the ancient sites and artifacts of the Silk Road. The second era began to pick up momentum in the 1980s due to a number of geopolitical, cultural, and technological realities as well as the emergence of the New World History as a historiographical field and area of teaching.

⁴ Subiday Togan notes, that China intends to remove investment and trade barriers for creation of a sound business environment within the region, and improving road network connectivity.

⁵ In the article the prospects are discussed from the scholars’ standpoint in South Korea, which is actively involved in archeological research in Eurasia. It must be a long-term collaboration on the Silk Road research in different countries.

public opinion and fostering international cooperation. The speech is deeply embedded in historical and cultural references, particularly concerning the Silk Road, which serves as both a literal and metaphorical foundation for his argument. The speech is strategically constructed to engage both domestic and international audiences by employing historical allusions, rhetorical repetition, parallel structures, and cultural symbolism.

Through the central metaphorical unit, *the Silk Road*, Pashinyan emphasizes the necessity of open borders, peaceful dialogue, and economic interdependence to ensure long-term stability. By invoking the *Սիլուարի ճանապարհ* [Silk Road], Pashinyan references a well-documented historical trade route as well as redefines it as a symbol of economic prosperity, peace, and cooperation. He contrasts this positive historical image with the present geopolitical reality, subtly addressing Armenia's closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan. This contrast establishes an implicit critique of regional tensions while reinforcing his vision of a new Silk Road, which he frames as the "Crossroads of Peace." Additionally, Pashinyan emphasizes that the Silk Road was not just a commercial route but also a conduit for cultural exchange:

Այդ ճանապարհներով մարդիկ ոչ միայն ապրանքներ էին փոխադրում, այլև՝ պատմություններ, սովորույթներ, ավանդույթներ, գիտելիքներ, հմտություններ: (Pashinyan 2023)

(Literally: People transported not only goods along those roads, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, skills.)

The idea that roads facilitate human connection rather than mere commerce strengthens his argument that closed borders hinder economic progress as well as cultural and diplomatic relations.

Along with diplomatic tone, Pashinyan's speech contains instances of subtle irony that highlight regional difficulties:

Մեր չորս հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները բաց են, ինչը վկայում է նրանց հետ մեր ունեցած հարաբերությունների բարեկամական լինելու մասին: Մեր հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները փակ են, ինչը հարաբերություններում առկա բարդությունների շատ խոսուն վկայություն է: (ibid.)

(Literally: Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which proves the friendly relations we have with them. Our roads are closed with two of our neighbors, which is a vivid proof of the difficulties in the relationship.)

The phrase *շատ խոսուն վկայություն* (a vivid proof) carries a tone of implicit irony, suggesting that the closed borders speak for themselves without the need for further elaboration. This rhetorical strategy allows Pashinyan to criticize regional obstacles without direct confrontation, maintaining a neutral yet pointed diplomatic stance.

One of the most compelling rhetorical techniques used in Pashinyan's speech is parallelism, a literary device that enhances both the clarity and persuasiveness of his message. Parallel structures make the speech more rhythmically engaging and easier to follow. Simultaneously they serve to reinforce key policy points and commitments. A particularly striking example of this technique appears in his discussion of infrastructure development within this speech:

...Հանապարհներ, երկաթուղիներ, խողովակաշարեր, մաղուխներ, էլեկտրահաղորդման գծեր նորոգելու, կառուցելու, գործարկելու միջոցներ: (ibid.)

(Literally: ...by means of renovating, building, and operating roads, railways, pipelines, cables, and electricity lines.)

The coherent use of such verbs as *նորոգել* (renovating), *կառուցել* (constructing), *գործարկել* (operating) and the sequential listing of infrastructure components *ճանապարհներ* (roads), *երկաթուղիներ* (railways), *խողովակաշարեր* (pipelines), *մաղուխներ* (cables), *էլեկտրահաղորդման գծեր* (electricity lines) create a rhythmic and structured appeal. By listing multiple forms of infrastructure in a systematic and structured manner, Pashinyan presents his argument as comprehensive and well-planned. The usage of a structured sequence implies thorough preparation and a certain strategy, reinforcing his government's credibility and competence. The specific mention of various infrastructure elements suggests that the project is not merely conceptual but includes tangible, actionable developments in different sectors. The sequential use of the verbs *նորոգել* (renovating), *կառուցել* (constructing), *գործարկել* (operating) strengthens the message through reinforcement and rhythm. In classical rhetoric, such tricolon structures are often used to make statements more memorable and impactful, for instance, Julius Caesar's famous "Veni, vidi, vici" or Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Corbett & Connors 1999: 51-52).

Repetition is a fundamental rhetorical strategy in Pashinyan's speech, serving to reinforce key items and ensure that critical messages resonate with the audience. One of the most prominent repeated elements is the word *ճանապարհներ* (roads), which appears multiple times throughout the speech. This repetition is not accidental. It strategically underscores the central premise of the speech – connectivity is the foundation of peace. By continually returning to the concept of roads, Pashinyan constructs a strong associative link between infrastructure development and regional stability. This rhetorical technique ensures that the audience internalizes the notion that open and functioning transport routes are essential for economic growth, diplomatic engagement, and peaceful coexistence.

Beyond the repetition of single words, entire phrases are echoed for emphasis. A particularly striking example is the phrase *բաց սահմանները, անսեսական, քաղաքական, մշակույթային կապերը* (open borders, economic, political, cultural ties). The phrase encapsulates the broader vision of regional integration, emphasizing that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but rather an active and dynamic

process requiring cooperation on multiple levels. By repeating this phrase, Pashinyan both reinforces the key aspects of his peace initiative and highlights the interconnected nature of diplomacy, commerce, governance, and culture.

Repetition in Pashinyan's speech serves as a rhetorical bridge between past, present, and future. By invoking roads and borders as historical symbols of connection, while also framing them as contemporary political challenges and future aspirations, he situates his policy within a broader historical trajectory. This aligns with Aristotle's concept of pathos, as it appeals to the audience's collective memory and aspirations, fostering a sense of continuity and shared destiny (Aristotle 2004: 3-12).

3. Translation Transformations in Context-Oriented Use of the Metaphorical Unit “Silk Road”

After having examined the original speech, which provides valuable insights into Pashinyan's rhetorical strategies, thematic emphasis, and cultural references, it is now essential to turn to how these elements are preserved, altered, or transformed in the Russian and English translations, how key rhetorical devices, linguistic nuances, and cultural contexts have been handled in each language. The analysis will highlight the translators' choices and the potential implications they have on the perception of the original meaning and tone of the speech.

As mentioned above, Pashinyan effectively uses repetition to highlight the central items of the speech, particularly those related to peace, and cooperation. Thus, the syntagm *Մետարսի ճանապարհ* (Silk Road) is repeated to emphasize its historical and symbolic significance, while *ճանապարհներ* (roads) appears multiple times throughout the speech, reinforcing the metaphorical notion of pathways that connect countries, peoples, cultures, and ideas.

«Մետարսի ճանապարհ» արտահայտությունը բոլորի հայտնի է դեռևս դպրոցական դասագրքերից: Շատերը, համոզված եմ, շատ մանրամասներ չեն հիշում *Մետարսի ճանապարհի* ժամանակների պատմական անցքերի և իրադարձությունների մասին: Բայց «Մետարսի ճանապարհ» պատմական տերմինը բոլորին մտքում ասցացվում է բարեկեցության, խաղաղության, զարգացման, համագործակցության հետ, որովհետև *Մետարսի ճանապարհին* անցնում էր բազմաթիվ երկրներով ու բնակչավայրերով... (Pashinyan 2023)

(Literally: The phrase “Silk Road” is familiar to all of us from school textbooks. Many, I am sure, do not remember many details about the historical events and events of the times of the Silk Road. But the historical term "Silk Road" is associated in all of our minds with prosperity, peace, development, and cooperation, because the Silk Road passed through many countries and settlements...)

In the Russian version, the translator keeps to the established Russian variant of the term Silk Road – *Шелковый путь*, where due to lexical substitution, *road* is replaced by *путь* (path, way), as the word *дорога* (road) is the dominant term used to represent the physical but not moral, ethical and spiritual connections.

Все мы знаем словосочетание “Шелковый путь” еще из школьных учебников. Многие люди, уверен, не помнят многих подробностей об исторических коллизиях и событиях времен Шелкового пути. Но исторический термин “Шелковый путь” ассоциируется у всех в сознании с процветанием, миром, развитием, сотрудничеством, поскольку Шелковый путь проходил через множество стран и населенных пунктов... (ibid.)

(Literally: We all know the phrase “Road” from school textbooks. Many people, I am sure, do not remember many details about the historical collisions and events of the Silk Road times. But the historical term “Silk Road” is associated in everyone’s minds with prosperity, peace, development, cooperation, since the Silk Road passed through many countries and settlements.)

The phrase “Silk Road” is a fixed term in both the historical and symbolic contexts, though in Russian, as mentioned above, the established collocation is *Шелковый путь* (Silk Road). *Путь* (path, way) is a word that can denote a route or a direction, but it also carries a non-physical connotation, and is often used in both literal and metaphorical contexts, which aligns well with the Armenian term *ճանապարհներ* (roads), encompassing both physical roads and the broader symbolic meaning of a journey or method. The use of *путь* (path, way) introduces an additional layer of meaning, suggesting not just a specific path but a way or means to achieve something, perhaps underscoring the broader concept of a journey towards peace and cooperation. The word *путь* (path, way) in Russian thus retains the same dual meaning of a tangible path and an abstract concept of a way to a desired end, be it peace, prosperity, or cooperation.

The syntagm *Шелковая дорога* (дорога for road) would be an incorrect choice in Russian because *дорога* (road) generally refers to a physical road, usually in the context of transportation, rather than the broader symbolic journey that *путь* (path, way) conveys. This choice helps preserve the symbolic significance of the term “Silk Road,” which is meant to suggest not only the physical route for trade but also the cultural, economic, and political connections, established along the road.

The distinction between *дорога* (road) and *путь* (path, way) in the Russian translation highlights how subtle shifts in word choice can shape the receptor’s perception of the central issues in the speech. The use of *дорога* (road) in the Russian translation reflects the tangible, real-world implications of connecting nations, while *путь* (path, way) evokes a sense of direction, purpose, and may have even ideological nuances. Both terms work together to preserve the dual nature of *дорога* (road) as physical and metaphorical connectors, allowing the Russian version to maintain the depth of meaning found in the Armenian original.

The use of *путь* (path, way) conveys the idea that the Silk Road is not merely about the movement of goods but also about the movement of ideas, traditions, and relationships, framing it as a broader, more profound journey towards mutual understanding and connection.

Overall, the translation choice in the Russian text plays a significant role in maintaining the balance between the literal and metaphorical meaning of the speech.

The strategic use of *doroga* (road) and *nymъ* (path, way) ensures that the essential message of interconnectedness, cooperation, and the journey towards peace remains intact across languages. Thus, both the physical and symbolic elements of the speech contribute to the effective communication, intensifying Pashinyan's message of a more connected and peaceful future.

In the English version, the repetition of *Silk Road* and *roads* is effectively maintained, preserving the rhetorical impact of the original Armenian. However, it is important to note that English stylistic conventions often favor variation in sentence structure and word choice to avoid redundancy. While repetition can serve a rhetorical or poetic function, excessive recurrence of a word may sometimes be perceived as overtly formal or even monotonous in English. In this case, the translator retains the repeated use of *road*, ensuring that the original emphasis remains intact while aligning with the English language natural rhythm.

We all know the phrase “*Silk Road*” from school textbooks. Many people, I am sure, do not remember many details about the historical holes and events of the *Silk Road* times. But the historical term “*Silk Road*” is associated in all of our minds with prosperity, peace, development, cooperation, because the *Silk Road* crossed through many countries and settlements... (ibid.)

The metaphorical use of the “*Silk Road*” is preserved in the English version, maintaining the historical and symbolic significance of the phrase. One key aspect to consider is the deliberate choice of the word *road* rather than *path* or *route*. While all three terms could theoretically convey the idea of a traveled passage, they each carry different connotations. *Road* suggests a structured, well-established, and physically constructed means of travel, reinforcing the idea of a historical trade network with a tangible infrastructure. In contrast, *path* often implies a smaller, less formal, and more personal route, which would not completely capture the grandeur and geopolitical significance of the Silk Road. Similarly, the word *route* is also avoided, despite its potential relevance. While *route* denotes a course taken from one place to another, it lacks the strong implication of a constructed or established infrastructure that *road* conveys. *Route* is often used to describe directions or mapped-out courses, but it does not necessarily imply permanence or cultural significance in the same way that *road* does. The term “*Silk Road*” evokes an image of a historic passage that was physically traversed by merchants, travellers, and diplomats over centuries, whereas *Silk Route* might feel more abstract, emphasizing the course rather than the physicality of the trade network. The established term *Silk Road* has thus become the universally recognized name for this network, reinforcing the choice of *road* over the other possible alternatives.

In the excerpt beneath the lexical unit *ճանապարհ* (road) is used without *Silk*, though it retains the concept of the “*Silk Road*.”

Այդ ճանապարհներով մարդիկ ոչ միայն ապրանքներ էին փոխադրում, այլև պատմություններ, սովորույթներ, ավանդույթներ, գիտելիքներ, հմտություններ: Ճանապարհը ոչ միայն երկրներ ու քաղաքներ է միմյանց կապում, այլև մարդկանց, և հետևաբար, եթե բանուկ, ակտիվ ճանապարհը

համագործակցության, խաղաղության, հաջողության նշան է, փակ ճանապարհները վկայում են պրոլեմների մասին: (ibid.)

(Literally: Along these roads, people transported not only goods, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, and skills. The road connects not only countries and cities, but also people, and therefore, if a busy, active road is a sign of cooperation, peace, and success, then closed roads indicate problems.)

The rhetorical function of *ճանապարհ* (road), which is repeated four times within the same paragraph, is to emphasize continuity and unity. However, due to linguistic and stylistic differences, the impact of this repetition may vary across different languages.

По этим *дорогам* люди перевозили не только товары, но и истории, обычай, традиции, знания, умения. *Дорога* соединяет не только страны и города, но и людей, и следовательно, если оживленная, активная *дорога* – знак сотрудничества, мира, успеха, то закрытые *дороги* указывают на наличие проблем. (ibid.)

(Literally: Along these roads, people transported not only goods, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, and skills. The road connects not only countries and cities, but also people, and therefore, if a busy, active road is a sign of cooperation, peace, and success, then closed roads indicate problems.)

In the Russian version, the usage of *dorogi* (roads) retains both the literal and metaphorical connotations of the original. Russian likewise Armenian allows for a poetic and philosophical use of repetition without it feeling excessive. The word *dorogi* (roads) refers to physical roads as well as it symbolizes historical connections, cooperation, and shared destinies. Given that Russian rhetorical tradition often employs repetition as a means of reinforcing meaning, the translated version effectively preserves the idea that roads serve as conduits for economic, cultural, and political ties. This ensures that the original message – peace and development must be embedded in the infrastructure linking nations – remains intact.

In the English version, the repetition of *roads* is maintained, but its effect is slightly different due to English stylistic norms.

People transported not only goods through those roads, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, skills. The road connects not only countries and cities, but also people, and hence, while a vibrant, active road is a sign of cooperation, peace, and success, then closed roads are an indication of problems. (ibid.)

While repetition can be a powerful rhetorical tool in English, it is typically used more sparingly than in Armenian or Russian, as English tends to favor lexical variety to maintain fluency and engagement. Nonetheless, the translator ensures that *roads* continue to function as a symbol of connectivity, emphasizing that these are not merely physical routes, but also pathways for cooperation and progress. However, because English often favors communicative clarity over poeticism, the metaphor might sound more explicit and formal compared to the original Armenian.

Overall, while both translations preserve the thematic essence of Pashinyan's speech, each language shapes the rhetorical impact differently. Russian, with its poetic flexibility, retains much of the natural flow of the Armenian original, while English, with its preference for clarity, makes the metaphor more direct but slightly less lyrical. Despite these nuances, the underlying message remains effective: *roads* are not merely infrastructure, they are symbols of unity, development, and peace.

In another excerpt the metaphorical unit *Սինարի ճանապարհ* (Silk Road) plays a significant role in conveying historical, economic, and diplomatic issues. Beyond its literal reference to the ancient trade route, it serves as a powerful symbol of prosperity, peace, and cooperation – values that are central to Pashinyan's message.

Մեր չորս հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները բաց են, ինչը վկայում է նրանց հետ մեր ունեցած հարաբերությունների բարեկամական լինելու մասին: Մեր հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները փակ են, ինչը հարաբերություններում առկա բարդությունների շատ խոսուն վկայություն է: (ibid.)

(Literally: Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which indicates that we have friendly relations with them. Our paths are closed with our two neighbors, which is a very eloquent indication of the difficulties in our relationship.)

The Armenian phrasing effectively intertwines the historical significance of the Silk Road with contemporary geopolitical realities, reinforcing the idea that roads are not just physical infrastructures but also instruments of diplomacy, mutual understanding, and economic interdependence. This layering of meaning strengthens the argument that peace and collaboration must be ingrained in the very foundations of connectivity between nations.

In the Russian translation, the phrase *Шелковый путь* (Silk Road) is a direct equivalent of the original term. Since the expression is already well established in Russian historical and political discourse, it carries the same connotations of economic exchange, cultural interaction, and geopolitical strategy.

Наши дороги открыты с двумя из четырех наших соседей, что свидетельствует о дружественных отношениях с ними. Наши дороги с двумя соседями закрыты, что является весьма красноречивым свидетельством сложности отношений. (ibid.)

(Literally: Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which indicates that we have friendly relations with them. Our paths are closed with our two neighbors, which is a very eloquent indication of the difficulties in our relationship.)

The phrase *дороги являлись хорошим средством для создания человеческих, культурных, экономических и политических связей* (roads were a good way to create human, cultural, economic, and political connections) successfully preserves the metaphor's core idea that roads are more than just transport routes; they serve as bridges between people, cultures, and ideologies. The metaphor remains intact, ensuring that the rhetorical significance of the original Armenian is not lost. Russian,

likewise Armenian tends to embrace repetition and metaphor in political speech, making the transition from the SL into the TL (Russian) relatively smooth. The reference to *наши дороги открыты с двумя из четырех наших соседей* (our roads are open with two of our four neighbors) accurately reflects the Armenian original both in structure and meaning. The phrase balances diplomatic tact with underlying political tension, subtly addressing regional challenges while maintaining a neutral and constructive tone. Likewise, *что является весьма красноречивым свидетельством сложности отношений* (which is a very telling indication of the complexity of the relationship) effectively conveys the intended message of the original text. The phrase *весьма красноречивым свидетельством* (which is a very telling indication) adds a sense of formality and rhetorical significance, making the statement sound polished and authoritative. The Russian version thus successfully preserves both the diplomatic nuances and the political undertones of the Armenian speech.

In the English version, the metaphorical unit “Silk Road” remains intact, ensuring that the historical and symbolic associations are preserved.

Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which indicates that our relationships with them are friendly. The roads with two of our neighbors are closed, which is clearly telling of existing difficulties in the relationships. (ibid.)

As it can be easily noted, there are subtle differences in how the metaphor and political undertones are conveyed due to English stylistic norms. The phrase *our roads are open with two of our four neighbors* accurately reflects the Armenian original, maintaining the delicate balance between diplomatic language and political implication. However, the phrase which is clearly telling of existing difficulties in the relationships presents a slight tonal shift compared to the Russian *что является весьма красноречивым свидетельством сложности отношений* (which is a very telling indication of the complexity of the relationship). While the Russian sentence employs a formal and rhetorically sophisticated structure, the English *telling of existing difficulties* sounds more colloquial and direct. The phrase *clearly telling of* could slightly alter the way the political message is perceived by an English-speaking audience. The English version still conveys the intended meaning, but it leans more towards straightforwardness, potentially making the statement feel less diplomatic and more candid.

4. Conclusion

The speech of RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered on 26 October 2023 at the Tbilisi International Forum was entitled “Crossroads of Peace.” The title itself may be regarded as a conceptual metaphor, as it conveys the idea of stabilizing the geopolitical situation in the region. In fact, it calls for open borders, peaceful dialogue, and long-term cooperation. Geographically this crossroads is located in the territory of the Silk Road, a symbol of economic prosperity, peace, and cooperation. This is why, the speaker refers to the rhetorical unit “Silk Road,” which acquires metaphorical value, to ensure the historical and symbolic associations with the period, when cultural, spiritual,

economic and political interaction together with trade relations developed among the people who inhabited the territories along the Silk Road. The transformation of the historically established unit “Silk Road” into a metaphorical device creates the conceptual structure of the speech. The device consequently becomes an integrity core, which determines the correlation in between the rhetorical elements, employed in the speech. Simultaneously, it ensures the coherence and interdependence of extra-textual socio-cultural environment and intra-textual linguistic elements, which shape the rhetorical value of the speech.

A comparative trilingual analysis of the speech revealed the need of pre-translation discourse analysis in order to specify the communicative function of rhetorical units in RA Prime-minister’s speech and to identify the techniques of their translation into different languages.

It should be noted that both Russian and English translations successfully retain the core message of the original Armenian text, though the Russian version stays closer in terms of rhetorical style and formal parameters. The English version, while effective, introduces a slight tonal shift, reflecting the language’s preference for clarity and directness over the more elaborate rhetorical structures found in Armenian and Russian. This difference in tone could subtly affect how the political nuances of the speech are perceived and interpreted by the two different audiences. English tends to favor a less emotional, more laconic and explicit style in political discourse, which can sometimes lead to a slight loss of the poetic expressiveness and rhetorical elegance found in Armenian and Russian.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.