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## Interpreting the new US President: Trumpslation

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1/28/2017

It was after I ate up my energy to simultaneously interpreting the agonizing 90-minute presidential debate in October 2016 when a colleague approached me. He was wondering if I preferred to see Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton as the next U.S. President. By then I had interpreted at least 10 election debates for CNN Türk's audience but the heated exchange between Trump and Clinton had left me and my booth buddy totally exhausted. We suffered to jumble with words, from overlapping sentences and the speakers interrupting one another. My colleague's question hit me as I came out of the simultaneous interpreting booth. It was not appropriate to drop a comment from a journalistic point of view, but I knew deep down inside that Clinton was my favorite from an interpreter's perspective. She spoke in a pace an interpreter would be comfortable with, dropped no bombs, never left her sentences in limbo, always paid attention to what she was saying and how she was saying it.

On Nov. 8, 2016, it was Trump who won the election. It was obvious he would be an unprecedented president to interpret. The test came when he delivered his inauguration speech. He ripped apart government officials, praised citizens saying "We are giving power back to you, the people." He sounded like if he was quoting Bane from the Batman movie Dark Knight Rises. He said "America," "You," and "We" 106 times and drew loud applause from the crowd.

Being someone else's voice requires the interpreter to be "invisible" which means you have to be loyal to the speaker's words and style. Interpreting Obama has been an intellectual joy for most Turkish interpreters. But there are flip sides of interpreting Trump; his broken syntax, unfinished sentences, recurring words, repetitions, off the cuff remarks and limited vocabulary. You could hear him say amazing, tremendous, phenomenal, disaster and great several times during a 5-minute segment. French interpreters are particularly in pain due to the complexity and elegance of French, as well as its dissimilarity from English; they call their plight as "an unprecedented and depressing headache."

Trump's style puts the interpreter in a position where she/he has to choose between the two: Reflect the same style or make him sound more eloquent? Do you smooth out the style or leave it? What happens when Trump mistakes a word? Do you correct it or leave it as it is?

The dilemma, which is a deeply rooted debate in interpreting theories and the challenges the new U.S President presents for interpreters, already has a name: Trumpslation. As an interpreter-turned-journalist, I was caught in this dilemma too. I chose to reflect his style. Taking the risk to sound too repetitive in the ears of the audience, I did not add/omit anything from what he said. When he repeated words, I repeated words. When he paused, I paused. When he raised his tone of voice, I followed suit. I did so because it was important for listeners to grasp his rhetoric and how he was using his words to boost U.S. citizens' patriotic feelings. His word choice, his preference for recurring phrases and style actually meant something. A large number of Americans actually found their grievances reflected in that tone and style while some totally rejected it. By the same token, it was significant to make sure the Turkish audience would feel the same tone their American counterparts did.

The next best thing to watch as an interpreter will be Trump's joint press conferences with world leaders. Turkish or French, Russian or German, let's hope – during such tumultuous times in world politics- no one will get lost in Trumpslation.