

Title Page

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The Queen's Speech: Desecuritizing the Past, Present and Future of Anglo- Irish Relations

Abstract

This article adopts the Copenhagen School's concept of desecuritization to analyse the gestures of reconciliation undertaken during the 2011 state visit of Queen Elizabeth II to the Republic of Ireland, including her willingness to speak in Gaeilge¹ at Dublin Castle. In the process, it opens new pathways to explore if, when and how desecuritizing moves can become possible. To respond to these questions, this article advances the concept of bilingual speech acts as a nuanced yet fruitful way to tease out the complexities of security speech and (de)securitization processes. It is also suggested that the concept of bilingual speech acts provides a way to respond to calls to include translation in critical security and securitization studies. However, while acknowledging the importance of these calls, it is shown that paying attention to bilingual speech acts demonstrates what can also be lost in translation. Empirically this article provides an in-depth analysis of the 2011 state visit to unpack the different kinds of desecuritizing moves that were undertaken in this context as well as the different modalities of security speech that were in play. To conclude, the merit of bilingual speech acts for understanding how to speak security in different ways and vocabularies are discussed.

Key Words

Desecuritization; Desecuritizing Moves; Bilingual Speech Acts; Translation; Anglo-Irish Relations

Introduction

This article raises questions about the possibility for desecuritization to occur. Can securitized speech acts situated between the past, present and future become meaningful to new audiences? Is it possible for securitized speech acts so deeply institutionalized and internalized as those narrating Anglo-Irish relations to ever be moved back into the political? How would we ultimately know if desecuritization had occurred? What would it look, sound or even feel like? Such queries demonstrate that, “how much could be desecuritized and how” remains “a major question” (Wæver, 1995: 54; also see Huysmans 1998).

The purpose of this article is to respond to those questions by thinking through the promises and problems surrounding desecuritization as it relates to a transformative moment in Anglo-Irish relations. In March 2011, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II,² (hereafter the Queen) accepted the invitation of then Uachtarán na hÉireann,³ Mary McAleese, to visit the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Both the build-up to and the four day state tour itself attracted enormous global media attention. As President McAleese noted, the stage was set for an “extraordinary moment in Irish history” (McAleese, 2011 a: 16 May). The arrival of the Queen and her husband, The Duke of Edinburgh, onto Irish soil at the Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell, on Tuesday 17 May 2011 signalled the first time a British monarch had officially visited the ROI since the 1911 tour of Queen Elizabeth’s grandfather, King George V (Nolan, 2012: 131). The absence of any interim state visit attests to the extremely complex relationship that has existed between these two countries, a relationship enveloped in and by centuries of enmity and conflict (Cowell, 2011: 20 May).

With these considerations in mind, this article explores the Queen's visit to Ireland as a series of desecuritizing moves. Everything about the 2011 trip, from its conception to the Queen's dress codes and the places that she visited during her stay, served as important symbolic gestures of reconciliation. They also encapsulate concerted efforts made on both sides to move security back into the political realm and, in turn, out of conflict and back into cooperation. The overall tone set by President McAleese was extremely desecuritizing. Speaking in an interview with Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) she described this visit as;

"A phenomenal sign and signal of the success of the peace process and absolutely the right moment for us to welcome on to Irish soil Her Majesty the Queen, the head of state of our immediate next-door neighbours, the people with whom we are forging a new future -- a future very, very different from the past, on very different terms from the past"
(McAleese, 2011 a: 16 May).

Such sentiments were echoed by the Irish Government, who, at the time, welcomed the Queen's visit as a way to, "mark a further improvement in the very good relations between Ireland and the United Kingdom" (Department of Taoiseach, 2011: 4 March). Despite his strong reservations to the Queen's visit, the President of Sinn Féin⁴, Gerry Adams, conceived that the royal tour could provide, "a unique opportunity" for mutual respect and equality on both sides of the Irish Sea (McDonald, 2011 a: 15 May). Desecuritizing moves were also undertaken in the United Kingdom (UK), where the Queen's visit to Ireland was characterised as a major milestone in improving the relationship between the neighboring islands. There, Prime Minister David Cameron

stressed that the, “visit will be a huge step forward”, while Prince William described his grandmother’s tour as a “huge turning point” (Ward, 2012: 6 February).

At first glance such statements appear to showcase the instigation of progressive desecuritizing steps between old enemies. Appearances, however, can be deceiving. Retrospectively it must be remembered that the presence of the British Monarch in the ROI was not a foregone conclusion. Even in May 2011 several members of the Irish public and political elite opposed the Queen’s presence in their country. For example, street demonstrations were held in Dublin city to protest against her arrival, some of which included the burning of a Union Jack flag (Cooper, 2011: 18 May). Moreover, for nationalists in particular the Queen’s visit represented an enormous mark of disrespect to all those who had died in the long fight for Irish independence. Alongside claiming that this occasion was a “unique opportunity” Gerry Adams also openly described it as “premature” (Adams, 2011: 4 March). Airing his concerns more explicitly he stressed,

“as a republican party, Sinn Féin is very aware of the symbolism of a state visit by Queen Elizabeth of England and of the offence it will cause to many Irish citizens, particularly victims of British rule and those with legacy issues in this state and in the North. We are also very conscious of the attitude of our unionist neighbours” (ibid).

Further trepidations existed that extreme nationalist groups planned to assassinate the Queen during her state tour (Hastings, 2001: 26 April). Such fears were fuelled by members of the Real IRA declaring that, “The Queen of England is wanted for war crimes in Ireland and not wanted on Irish soil” (McDonald, 2011 b: 25 April). The discovery of a viable pipe bomb on a bus travelling from County Mayo hours before Her Majesty arrived did little to alleviate concerns about the safety risks involved

(McDonald, 2011 c: 17 May). To cope with existing threats, and pre-empt others, An Garda Síochána⁵ and British guards choreographed an extensive security operation with an estimated cost of between £26 million and £30 million during the Queen's very brief time in Ireland (Cusack, 2012: 30 November; Roberts, 2011: 17 May). Taken individually and collectively, the events mentioned above demonstrate that the Queen's state visit was not guaranteed to succeed. Moreover, in the spaces where past and present memories interacted and collided, the desecuritizing moves undertaken during this time could have 'backfired' or 'misfired' to maintain hostile mentalities on each side (Åtland and Ven Bruusgaard 2009).

The Queen's visit to Ireland brings additional depth of perspective to ongoing debates about securitization and desecuritization in a second way. Crucially, it allows us to explore the role of bilingual speech acts and translation in enabling and constraining different actors to undertake different kinds of moves within these processes. Issues of translation have recently attracted renewed attention among scholars analysing the ways in which agents can and do speak security in various and varying lexicons, frames, images and voices (Stritzel, 2014, 2012; 2011 a, b; Barrinha and Rosa 2013). Whilst it is herein recognised that translation is a key tool for exploring and unlocking the interstices of cross-cultural and intra-cultural (de)securitization processes, what remains absent is a robust theorisation of bilingual speech acts within these current debates. This oversight is not only a glaring gap within the existing literature, but also creates an incomplete lens for analysing the ways in which security can be spoken, and desecuritization can be enacted. As shown, one of the most powerful and surprising desecuritizing moves undertaken by the Queen was to speak Gaelic at Dublin Castle. The Queen's speech on this occasion demonstrates the need to look more closely at

what kind of security we want to speak, what kinds of conversations we want to encourage and what kind of speech acts we want to be heard. More broadly, the Queen's speech raises nuanced insights on the significance of non-linguistic modes of communication.

The first section of this article outlines burgeoning literature on the Copenhagen School's securitization and desecuritization frameworks and its sites of critique. The next section intensifies conversations taking place about the role of translation in critical security studies. To contribute to these discussions, rather than close them down, this article encourages participants in these debates not to overlook cases when translation is not the aim of the speaker or the most powerful way for them to engage with their audiences. It is also argued that there is a need to focus on bilingual speech acts such as those uttered by the Queen in Ireland. The third section returns to empirical analysis to reaffirm the importance of studying the Queen's visit as a series of desecuritizing moves as well as bilingual speech acts that require no translation. The last section concludes by inviting further reflections on the unexpected ways that (de)securitization processes can emerge, evolve and unfold.

Securitization and Desecuritization: Making and Unmaking Security

The core argument underpinning the Copenhagen School's securitization framework is that speaking security does something (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998). Building on

John Austin's speech act theory, it is argued that speaking security enables actors to undertake a 'securitizing move' to convince an audience that a referent object poses an existential threat to the survival of "societal security" and "we identities" (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998; Vultee, 2011). Enveloped within Copenhagen School's discussions of security utterances and securitizing 'moves' is a claim that both modes of action enable agents to legitimate the use of extraordinary measures to alleviate what are perceived to be and framed as extreme dangers. To be precise, "'security' is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics" (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998: 22). The Copenhagen School argue that when an audience accepts a securitizing move, then securitization occurs; however if an audience rejects a move, then securitization does not materialise (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998: 25; McDonald 2008). The explicit requirement of audience acceptance is meant to ensure that securitization remains a socially constructed and intersubjective process (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998: 31).

While successfully securitizing an issue has many advantages, including the instigation of time efficient and rule breaking capabilities, the Copenhagen School claim that it represents a failure. This failure refers to the inability of agents to deal with or resolve an issue inside the political realm rather than through "panic politics" (Buzan, 1994: 14; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 29). Desecuritization is therefore outlined as, "the optimal long-range option, since it means not to have issues phrased as 'threat against which we have countermeasures'" (Buzan, Wæver and deWilde 1998: 4, 29; Bilgin 2007: 558). Drawing on Ole Wæver's earlier writings, the Copenhagen School define desecuritization as the, "the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the

normal bargaining processes of the political sphere”, thus, moving them out of a “threat-defense sequence and into the ordinary public sphere” (Buzan, Wæver and deWilde 1998: 4, 29; Wæver 1995).

While desecuritization is defined by the Copenhagen School it remains a contested concept. Nevertheless, there is some agreement that it concerns how security is unmade (Buzan, Wæver and deWilde 1998; Hansen 2012; Huysmans 1998; Wæver, 1995). Indeed desecuritization is often viewed as “the conceptual twin to securitization” (Hansen, 2012: 526) or the opposite of securitization (Taureck 2006: 55). In theory and practice, the concept of desecuritization appears to unmake security via two interrelated threads. Within the first thread issues are desecuritized by preventing securitization from taking place. Due to the dangers involved in and constituted by speaking security, the Copenhagen School actively encourages actors to undertake efforts to keep security off the agenda (Buzan, Wæver and deWilde 1998; Wæver, 1995). The second thread of desecuritization unfolds in a slightly different pattern insofar as securitization occurs but is then deconstructed. In the latter context, security is unmade by returning referent objects back to the political realm in a somewhat post-securitization context. A crucial idea embedded in both threads is that desecuritization oscillates between different modes of speaking and not speaking security, modalities which can take many different forms (cf. Bilgin 2007, 2011; Campana 2013; Hansen 2012; Jensen 2012; Jutila 2006; MacKenzie 2009).

Exploring Gaps and Sites of Critique

Despite the Copenhagen School's preference for desecuritization, some scholars argue that this concept remains "under-theorised" and "open to interpretation" (Floyd 2007). On this ground alone multiple strands of critique continue to be leveled at the Copenhagen School (Alkler 2006; Aradau 2004; Huysmans 1998; Roe 2012, 2004; Knudsen 2001; Salter 2008).

Starting from the charge that desecuritization is underspecified, Claudia Aradau argues that the Copenhagen School's fixation with the exceptional may negate the potential for democratic politics and/or desecuritization to actually occur. A central point she emphasises is that, "securitization needs to learn the lessons of the democratic politics of emancipation" (Aradau 2004: 390). Aradau's critique echoes other scholarly concerns about the normative-political dilemmas of desecuritization, as well as the reification of a Schmittian 'friend versus enemy' logic in securitization theory (Booth 1991, 2005; Hansen 2012; Huysmans 1998; Floyd 2011, 2007; McSweeney 1996, 1999; Wyn Jones 1995, 1999; Williams 2003).

In his response to Aradau, Andreas Behnke has suggested that desecuritization is never actually possible since security cannot be separated from politics (2006: 65). He claims, "politics is therefore always indebted to the very phenomena that Aradau tries to exorcise from it" (ibid). Taking the "zones of indistinction" (Agamben 1998; Edkins 2000; Diken and Laustsen 2002) between politics and security as his starting point, Behnke adds that "desecuritization is perhaps better understood as the fading away of one particular issue or actor from the repertoire of these processes" (Behnke, 2006: 65).

After introducing desecuritization as a fading process Behnke proceeds to say,

“desecuritization as a speech act, on the other hand, seems to be a contradiction in terms. To declare that a particular issue or actor no longer constitutes a security threat and does not require extra-ordinary measures simply opens up the ‘language game’ in which more often than not the correctness of the declaration, its implications and consequences become the topic of further debate. Hence, the issue or actor never leaves the discourse on security within which the securitization embedded it. After all, even the denial of a connection still maintains the potentiality of that connection. To sum up, an issue becomes desecuritized through a lack of speech, not through speech acts affirming its new status” (ibid).

This quotation raises a number of important questions. The crucial question is whether desecuritization can occur through a ‘lack of speech’. While the Copenhagen School’s original securitization framework offers no absolute blueprint for how desecuritization unfolds, Behnke’s suggestion stretches their definition beyond the speech act. On one level, this appears to be precisely what he is encouraging. However, it is unclear whether desecuritization can occur in this way. First, enacting desecuritization through a lack of speech may not be possible even if we stop speaking security. That is, even when there is a lack of security speech, “an issue or an actor may still not leave the discourse of security within which the securitization is embedded” (Behnke 2006: 65). Nevertheless, Behnke is correct to suggest that a lack of speech can end a language game. As Ludwig Wittgenstein⁶ clearly asserts, linguistic meanings and rules only remain meaningful when they are constantly put into use. According to this logic the lack of securitized speech acts would end the securitized game. Behnke is also correct to

highlight that by continually putting security speech acts into use, agents may reproduce securitized language games, such as terrorism (Staun 2010).

However, Wittgenstein's writings also illustrate that agents cannot simply stop speaking security or any other language, without concurrently constructing a different kind of game. This point changes the significance of Behnke's arguments because it demonstrates that the construction of any new language game, whether it is a desecuritizing or desecuritized one, cannot occur through a lack of speech. Since, "the meaning of a word is its use in language" (Wittgenstein, 1972[1958] §20: 43) the suggestion that desecuritization should occur through a lack of speech may actually prohibit the possibility for an alternative language game(s) to emerge. In short, a lack of speech may leave us without any language or sets of meanings to put into use and, therefore, simply enable a securitized language game to continue unabated. Adopting the latter outlook lends credence to the idea that, "desecuritization happens as a result of speech acts, but there is not strictly speaking, 'a' desecuritizing speech act" (Hansen 2012: 530).

Taking Behnke's arguments through to completion raises further questions. How feasible it is to leave existing language games behind? Does fading not also, "maintain the potentiality" of a "connection" (Behnke, 2006: 65)? What kind of bridging or interim language games, if any, are needed to facilitate fading? What happens when residues exist between securitized and desecuritized games? What kinds of desecuritizing games come into existence when we stop speaking security or do not speak security? Can fading occur at one level but not others? It is also worth considering if ongoing games of (de)securitization stay the same. Perhaps what warrants further recognition in Behnke's observation is that processes of securitization and desecuritization may

require and constitute far more complex kinds of language games than those which have clear beginnings or endpoints (Fierke 1998, 1996). As Lene Hansen advocates, there are interrelated dimensions at play in desecuritizing processes (Hansen 2012, 533; 2006). Put differently, it is necessary to be aware that language games of securitization and desecuritization often have multiple, overlapping and crisscrossing levels, which overlap and interact in unpredictable ways (Donnelly 2013). Now if this is the case, then potentially a securitized game can remain in existence but simultaneously transform its meanings and uses to a point that they might become desecuritized at later stages of the game. What remains open from adopting a Wittgensteinian language game approach is that the composition and outcomes of securitization and desecuritization cannot be determined. Therefore, the point of inquiry is not so much to identify 'tipping points' between two different games, or binaries between speech and a lack of speech, but to explore how security speech acts emerge, evolve and dissolve in complex ways in alternative contexts and fields (Balzacq 2011, Bigo 2001).

The issues raised above serve to reinforce Behnke's perceptive insights on the difficulties of separating politics and security. To throw all of these complexities into sharp relief requires some exploration into whether translations and bilingual speech acts hold any purchase for understanding how security is spoken and how desecuritization becomes possible.

Translation and Bilingual Speech Acts: Speaking Security in Different Vocabularies and Different Ways

In his recent work Holger Stritzel has used the idea of translation to explore how speech acts can be and are translated from different linguistic and textual milieu into others (Stritzel, 2014; 2012; 2011 a and b). Along with others, he suggests that this type of shift occurs through cross-cultural and localisation processes that are in constant articulation (Stritzel, 2011 a, b; also see Barrinha and Rosa 2013). Among the important observations that translation brings to securitization studies is that it reinforces the complex channels through which speech acts flow. Taking the idea of translation seriously demonstrates that securitization does not unfold in a linear fashion but rather, according to changing continuums (Balzacq 2005; 2011; McDonald 2008; Salter 2008; Stritzel 2007).

The focus on translation also demonstrates some of the need for the Copenhagen School to focus on cultural considerations and contexts, especially if they wish to escape from their “Westphalian straight jacket” (Collins 2005; Greenwood and Wæver, Vuori 2008, Wilkinson 2007; Williams 2007). Additionally, analysing translation reinforces the need to address difficult questions about speaker-audience relations. Various literatures have already advocated for more pluralistic dialogues that include rather than exclude multiple audiences to be imagined and created. These requests reverberate in international relations (Acharya 2011, Blaney and Inayatullah 1994; Hutchings 2011; Robinson 2011; Sabaratnam 2011; Tickner 2011) and securitization debates (Balzacq 2005, 2011; Leonard and Kaunert 2011; McDonald 2008; Roe 2008; Salter 2008; Stritzel 2007). On the surface, the promise of translation is that it could potentially

create “preludes to a conversation of cultures” where the same speech act can be spoken, discussed and heard in different voices (Blaney and Inayatullah 1994).

Hidden Dangers of Translation and Hidden Promises of Bilingual Speech Acts

There are, however, some hidden dangers of conceptualising translation solely in emancipatory or progressive terms. First, extreme caution must be taken not to conflate translation and transformation. A common understanding of translation is that the speech act or discursive utterance cannot be fully understood unless it is translated and/or transcribed from one milieu to another. Tied up in this idea is that the speech act is not fully communicative until translation occurs. Put differently, without translation there is no clear “way to know how to go on” (Wittgenstein 1972[1958]). Although translation can provide different ways for different agents to communicate and interact, it is imperative to remember that not all modes of transformation require translation. Here, context becomes very important. Returning to desecuritization briefly, we find no explicit clause within the Copenhagen School’s framework which states that desecuritization needs to be translated in order for security to be unmade. Although the nexus between desecuritization and translation warrants future investigation, the point to note here is transformations can occur without translation being required. Moreover, the function and utility of translation in enabling security to be spoken, understood and transformed will vary at different stages in the (de)securitizing processes.

Second, it is problematic to view translations only as ways to break down cultural and/or language barriers. While this can often be the case, history has also repeatedly shown that agents actively translate in ways which construct securitized narratives and

hostile 'others' (Campbell 1998; Connolly 1983; Doty 1996; Said 2003). Thus, when translating security (Stritzel 2012, 2011 a, b), it is essential to bear in mind that translatability can actually frame and narrate in ways that omit and silence people(s), even when speech acts, texts and words are not deliberately mistranslated (Baker 2010 a, b, 1992; Hermans 2006; Maksudyan 2009; Spivak 1998).

Whether by accident or design, current debates about translation contain a third potential blind spot: namely, that speakers do not always wish for their speech to be translated. A famous example here would be President John F. Kennedy saying "Ich bin ein Berliner" in Berlin in June 1963 (American Rhetoric, 1963: 26 June). Although this US President explicitly states in this speech that he appreciated his German being translated, his speech act is still an example of a bilingual speech act that did not require direct translation to be communicated to and understood by members of his audience. This example and the Queen's speech in Dublin thus provide entry points to theorise instances in which agents undertake bilingual speech acts as powerful modes of cross-cultural and trans-boundary communications.

This article argues that emphasising the multiple ways and sources from which security is spoken complements but also disturbs the boundaries of translation and potentially desecuritization. First, taking a stronger interest in bilingual speech acts highlights the overlapping sets of meanings in operation as agents attempt to make and unmake security in different spaces and places. Indeed, studying bilingual speech acts discloses the endless interplays of words, even if it is during an act of translation. A fascinating but underexplored theme exposed by conceptualising bilingual speech acts is that a conversation between two different languages (or more) can take place within the same speech act or (de)securitizing move. Indeed a bilingual speech act assumes that the

same speech act contains two languages which are interacting and competing with each other within a single utterance. Needless to say, multilingual speech acts are possible where the function of two or more languages remain powerful because they combine with each other. Likewise, when it comes to bilingual and multilingual speech acts, the presence of two or more locutionary and illocutionary acts may give them very different perlocutionary effects (Habermas 1984; also see Balzacq 2011: 5). Paying attention to these kinds of internal dynamics offers another way forward for debates about what security means and “does” (Guzzini, 2011: 330).

Second, these modes of dialogue are well situated to foster greater inter-textual and inter-visual discussions, or even a mixture of both (Hansen 2011, Stritzel 2011 a, b; Vuori 2010; Williams 2003). While some scholars have suggested that images speak by themselves, less attention has been given to theorising the interplay between images and discourses as bilingual speech acts. At first glance this suggestion appears to be a contradiction in terms. How can bilingual speech acts tell us anything about non-linguistic or visual modes of communication? Does this term not serve to reify the ‘speech’ part of the Copenhagen School?⁷ Or worse, by focusing on the verbal act of speech do we overlook “security as silence” (Hansen, 2000: 294)?

While there is no simple answer to these questions, it is argued here that bilingual speech acts are useful in bridging those interested in studying linguistic and non-linguistic security speech acts (either as separate acts or as modes of interaction). For if we are going to seriously argue that images and words can speak in and of themselves, and also to each other, the cultivation of this more nuanced and complex mode of communication should provide an important platform for those working in the fields of critical security and securitization studies. As a minimum, the concepts of bilingual and

multilingual speech acts could buttress current debates of inter-textual and inter-visual analysis by allowing further investigations into the multiple ways in which words are translated into images and images translated into words within bilingual or multilingual vocabularies. Furthermore, these modalities of speech enable more complex pictures to appear. For instance, scholars have explored how bodies can speak (Hansen 2000; Butler 1993). The importance of these insights for the bilingual speech act is twofold. First, any conceptualisation of bilingual speech acts would have to be kept open enough to allow for “the introduction of bodily aspects of the speech act” (Hansen 2000: 302). Second, bilingual speech acts would need to be refocused in ways that allow them “to account for how the speaking subject is itself constituted” (Hansen, 2000: 303).

A third contribution that bilingual speech acts bring to debates about (de)securitization is that they can include marginalized voices. Amidst a sea of possible “preludes to conversations of cultures” (Blaney and Inayatullah 1994) bilingual speech acts can help cultivate spaces wherein speakers and audiences of different linguistic backgrounds are engaged with and heard in their own native language(s). Subsequently, actors may gain greater choice in and agency over how they want to speak security and the vocabulary they choose for expression. Exploring bilingual speech acts as modes of conversation and interaction leave the endless possibilities for translation open. However, the suggestion is forwarded here that thinking about bilingual speech acts provides a way to delink the axiomatic desire to translate in ways that (re)produce the ‘other-as-objects’ rather than the ‘other-as-subjects’ (Blaney and Inayatullah, 1994: 25). On a related point, it would seem quite justified to argue that focusing on bilingual speech acts could encourage and enable scholars to come to terms with how different speakers and audiences undertake acts of resistance inside, outside and against securitized

speech acts (Huysmans 2011; Watson 2012). That is, bringing bilingual speech act(s) into our analyses may provide further acknowledgment that actors are speaking in different vocabularies and ways to challenge the status quo.

From the overarching discussions outlined above, it is important to re-emphasise three core points. First, it has been argued that it remains unclear whether desecuritization can occur through a lack of speech, as Behnke suggests. Second, teasing apart the complexities of security speech acts within (de)securitization processes might warrant further engagement with the concepts of translation. However, it has been argued that caution should be taken here not to overlook the hidden dangers of translating or the hidden promises of studying bilingual speech acts. Third, it should be remembered that bringing bilingual and multilingual speech acts into discussions about (de)securitization does not foreclose the possibility of examining non-verbal modes of communication. With all these considerations in mind, the next section turns to highlight how the incorporation of bilingual speech acts can help us explore the kinds of speech acts uttered and enacted during the Queen's 2011 state visit.

The Queen's Visit: Desecuritizing the Past, Present and Future of Anglo-Irish Relations

The official itinerary for the Queen during her stay in Ireland illustrates multiple attempts to sow the seeds for peace and reconciliation in Anglo-Irish relations. Notably, clues to these particular desecuritizing moves predated her arrival in 2011. For example, in 1993 Mary Robinson undertook a courtesy call with the Queen, one of

fifteen visits she made to Britain during her time as Irish President⁸ to deescalate tensions between the two states (Bourke, 2002:287; also see Siggins 1997). Upon taking office in 1997, President Mary McAleese set out to improve Anglo-Irish relations even further. This agenda is exemplified in her inauguration speech where she declared the theme of her presidency was 'building bridges' (McAleese, 1997: 11 November). A defining feature of the latter agenda was to gently invite, rather than push, people to cross in their own time and on their own terms (McAleese, 2011 b: 21-22). In this spirit, the incoming Irish President assured the peoples north and south of the Irish border that, "if ever and whenever" they decided to embark on this journey, they would find, "a firm and steady bridge across which we will walk together both ways" (ibid). The 1998 Good Friday Agreement and the devolved power-sharing Assembly it brokered in Northern Ireland also helped to provide an archway through which Anglo-Irish relations could be bridged in complementary ways (Neuheiser and Wolff 2003; Tannam 2001). So too did the collaborative initiatives President McAleese undertook at the opening of the Irish Peace Tower at Messines, alongside the Queen and King Albert II of Belgium in 1998. Further afield, various factors at play in the European context were critical in helping to shape and reframe Anglo-Irish questions.⁹

These contextual backdrops did not cause the Queen Elizabeth to visit Ireland in 2011. Rather they created important platforms on which further desecuritizing moves could become possible during her visit. To focus on the first two days of the Queen's visit to the ROI provides insights into how each side was trying to make and unmake security during this visit.¹⁰

Day One: 17 May 2011

On the first day of arrival the Queen travelled to the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Square East, Dublin 1. For many her presence at this particular site was, “a scene of history making that would long be remembered” (Bird, 2011: 17 May). This comment holds weight because the Garden of Remembrance is dedicated to the memory of all those who gave their lives in the cause of Irish freedom (Heritage Ireland 2014). Keenly aware of the historic symbolism steeped in this visit, the former Taoiseach, Brian Cowan noted, “I think all of Ireland will be pleased that the Queen has come and paid her respects here” (cited in Bird, 2011: 17 May). In the course of this ceremony the Queen and President McAleese laid wreaths at the base of the memorial’s distinctive sculpture. Notably, after laying her wreath the Queen also stepped back to bow her head as a mark of respect, a small gesture which did not go unnoticed. Reflecting the enormous significance of what he had witnessed, former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern stated, “I think that to see our President and Her Majesty lay wreaths here in the Garden of Remembrance is a very fitting tribute to the men of 1916” (ibid). This direct reference to the legacies of the 1916 Rising¹¹, which was a watershed for the Irish Independence movement, is emblematic of why the actions of the British monarch at this particular venue can be read as an attempted desecuritizing move in relation to a specific set of historical events. As one of the leaders of the Rising, Michael Collins, remarked,

“The Republic which was declared at the Rising of Easter Week, 1916, was Ireland’s expression of the freedom she aspired to. It was our way of saying that we wished to challenge Britain’s right to dominate us” (cited in English, 2003:3).

While the Queen's presence and actions at this site did not erase the sentiments expressed by Collins, they are suggestive that moves were being undertaken to encourage the emergence of an alternative framework for Anglo-Irish relations, moves which challenged and disturbed the older securitized game of 'us versus them'.

Day Two: 18 May 2011

The second day of the Queen's visit was further inundated with desecuritizing moves. As well as visiting the Guinness Store House and being received at Irish Government buildings by Mr. Enda Kenny (Taoiseach) and Mr. Eamon Gilmore (Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs), she went to the Irish War Memorial Garden in Islandbridge. There the Queen took part in another wreath laying ceremony, in honour of the 49,400 Irish soldiers who died during World War One (Heritage Ireland 2013). To this end, the Islandbridge ceremony set out to heal a different set of wounds. At the height of the Irish war for independence, Irish soldiers who had fought and died as part of the British Army during World War One were openly vilified as traitors to their country (Johnson 2007). This kind of stigmatization is evidenced in the unwritten places these men had in the county's history for many decades. Commenting on this erasure during her 1998 speech at the Messines Peace Tower, President McAleese described how "respect for the memory of one set of heroes was often at the expense of respect for the memory of the other" (McAleese, 2011: 255). Against this backdrop, the Queen's visit to Islandbridge highlights that active steps were being taken to rectify these omissions and to create more sophisticated vignettes for envisioning and understanding Anglo-Irish relations.

This desecuritizing move was succeeded by another in quick succession. After Islandbridge, the Queen travelled directly to Croke Park. Not only is this stadium the national headquarters and spiritual home of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)¹², it is also the grounds on which British troops fired into a crowd of supporters at a Gaelic football match on 21 November 1920. In what henceforth became known as ‘Bloody Sunday’ twelve people were killed and another sixty injured (Dolan, 2006: 789). For generations the shootings in Croke Park have inflamed hostilities on each side. From the British perspective, these actions were undertaken in retaliation for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) murdering British agents across Dublin the night before. On the Irish side,

“the events of the day had a profound impact on the people of Ireland; it seemed as if the British authorities had deliberately chosen an easy target a stadium full of innocent people to exact revenge for a military loss suffered the night before” (The GAA Library and Archive 2014).

These memories and hostilities lingered as the British Queen stood in these grounds. However, the Queen’s willingness to commemorate what occurred in Croke Park on ‘Bloody Sunday’, and the willingness of Irish people to welcome her there, made it clear that neither side was ignoring painful legacies from the past.

The Queen’s Speech at Dublin Castle

The state dinner held at Dublin Castle on the evening on 18 May 2011 in honour of the Queen continued the multiple desecuritizing moves now well underway. After formally welcoming her guests, President McAleese framed the Queen’s state visit as both “the

culmination of the peace process” and “an acknowledgment that while we cannot change the past, we have chosen to change the future” (McAleese, 2011: 18 May). What is noteworthy in this speech is that the President’s address did not silence the “difficult centuries”. Instead the “harsh facts” “grief” and “loss” were openly and candidly discussed. Tellingly, in this case, the Irish President sought to desecuritize Anglo-Irish relations through a multileveled language game, one which talked about the ‘securitized’ past whilst simultaneously attempting to transform the older sets of meanings and identities underpinning it. For while conceding that, “the past is a repository of sources of bitter division” (ibid), President McAleese addressed the Queen personally by saying,

“Your visit here is an important sign - among a growing number of signs - that we have embarked on the fresh start envisaged in the Good Friday Agreement. Your visit is a formal recognition of what has, for many years, been a reality – that Ireland and Britain are neighbours, equals, colleagues and friends. Though the seas between us have often been stormy, we have chosen to build a solid and enduring bridge of friendship between us and to cross it to a new, a happier future” (ibid).

What the above quotation outlines is that the President was trying to create a platform for connecting the past, present and future, on the one hand, and between securitization, desecuritization and politicization on the other, and without any part having to fade away completely. Instead within the contours of this speech, these different dimensions and temporalities could co-exist.

Although President McAleese’s speech in Dublin Castle was an outstanding declaration for peace, it was the Queen’s address there that stood out as an unparalleled

desecuritizing move on this occasion. The Queen's opening speech act was, "A Uachtaráin agus a chairde" (Her Majesty, 2011: 18 May). Whilst the perlocutionary effect of this utterance was absolute astonishment and surprise, the enormity of its meaning was understood. President McAleese's instantaneous response was to say 'wow' three times while the entire gathering in Dublin Castle broke into spontaneous applause (Watt, 2011: 19 May; RTÉ 2011). Although the remainder of the Queen's address was spoken in English, her initial speech act in Gaeilge signified a unique and unprecedented sign of reconciliation. For a British monarch to visit the Republic of Ireland was a desecuritizing move in itself. For a British Monarch to visit the Republic of Ireland and speak Irish was up until that point unimaginable, even within the context of the desecuritizing moves already in play during her visit in 2011 and beforehand.

One explanation for the Queen speaking Ireland's own national language was to pay her host country a diplomatic complement. Following this line the Queen's bilingual speech can be minimized to cultural gesturing and regal footing or protocol (Benoit and Brinson 1999; Ensink 1996; Finlayson and Martin 2008). A more sceptical observation could be that the Queen's speech act was 'cheap talk' to distract from the tacit legacies of the past. To stop at either of these accounts, however, is too simplistic. First, while the Queen was certainly trying to complement her host by uttering a speech act in Gaeilge, she transcended any boundaries of diplomatic etiquette. This claim is substantiated by the surprised response she received from the audience in Dublin Castle. Second, this speech act was anything but 'cheap'.

It is worth pausing here to emphasise that the Irish language was purposefully created and employed to oppose British hegemony in political and everyday life (Eriksen 1992; Watson 2002). This helps to explain why this language has the distinct name, 'Gaeilge',

in Irish while it is called Irish in spoken English. This differentiation is not a coincidence but rather part and parcel of the “violent cartographies” of Anglo-Irish relations (Shapiro 1997, also see Nash 1993). As Collin Meissner notes, “the Irish language question has been at the center of the Irish/English conflict from the start” (1992: 165). Throughout Irish history, leading republicans have sought to construct a unified ‘imagined community’ which had its own distinctive national anthem, flag, language, religion and structures of art, education and sports (Anderson 2006 [1983]). As Douglas Hyde, who later became the first President of Ireland, claimed, “a nation is made from within itself, it is made first of all by its language” (cited in Watson, 2002: 740).

The explicit national dimensions of Gaeilge have culminated in complex modes of contestation and deliberation in Anglo-Irish relations. Apart from being utilised to construct a national identity ‘from within’, Gaeilge was also a mode of resistance to oppose ‘external’ British rule. An apt example here is that Republican political prisoners deliberately choose to speak Gaeilge to communicate among themselves inside their prison cells whilst simultaneously resisting against their captors (Wills 1991). On the flip side, the overt nationalist dimensions of Gaeilge meant that it encountered several prejudices and an unequal status within Ireland, since British authorities and unionists alike openly disqualified this language as a legitimate voice within the Irish socio-political landscape for many centuries (Meissner 1992; O’ Hearn 2009).

Against this backdrop, the willingness of the British Queen to speak Gaeilge in Dublin lends itself to no easy description. Nor is it clear that translation is the best tool to capture the desecuritizing potential of this utterance. Actually, the powerful message of peace and reconciliation conveyed by the Queen’s speech act in Gaeilge emanates more strongly when it is not translated. Changing our mode of analysis to bilingual speech

here is extremely important. What is memorable about the Queen speaking Gaeilge is not just what she said, but the language in which she chose to say it. This is not to suggest that the meaning of the Queen's opening remark cannot be translated from one language to another. Within the official transcript of this speech the words "A Uachtaráin agus a chairde" are translated into the English language as "President and Friends" (Her Majesty, 2011: 18 May). However, in her actual address the Queen did not translate these words (RTÉ Player 2011). Also, unlike President John F. Kennedy, the Queen did not ask for these few words to be translated. These claims do not render the content of this speech act redundant. Understandably, if she had spoken Gaeilge to voice insult or a profanity this would have mattered.

Concentrating on what did happen, and what was said, reinforces the added value of studying the Queen's speech as a bilingual speech act rather than merely translating it. First, adopting this approach creates a novel lens for exploring how people might be, "able to bow to the past, but not be bound by it" (Her Majesty, 2011: 18 May). What this speech act signals is that speaking in a different language can help to generate new modes of understandings and act as a bridge to, for and of desecuritization. While no causal linkages exist between bilingual speech acts and desecuritization, it is important to acknowledge that the British monarch uttering Gaeilge opened up a welcome prelude to allow each side and their languages to be deemed equal whilst remaining different. More dramatically, by weaving two different and previously hostile languages into the same desecuritizing move, the Queen created a space for a different lexicography of security to be spoken.

Reflecting on the bilingual speech act undertaken by the Queen also indicates that this desecuritizing move was not carried out through a lack of speech. Rather, akin to

President McAleese, the British monarch spoke about the “weight of history” rather than leaving it unspoken. Although stopping short of explicitly issuing an apology, the Queen yieldingly acknowledged that,

“the relationship has not always been straightforward; nor has the record over the centuries been entirely benign. It is a sad and regrettable reality that through history our islands have experienced more than their fair share of heartache, turbulence and loss. These events have touched us all, many of us personally, and are a painful legacy. We can never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. To all those who have suffered as a consequence of our troubled past I extend my sincere thoughts and deep sympathy. With the benefit of historical hindsight we can all see things which we would wish had been done differently or not at all” (ibid).

This leads to reflecting on where the Queen’s bilingual speech act in Dublin Castle and other documented desecuritizing moves leave us in relation to thinking about how desecuritization becomes possible.

The Queen’s Bilingual Speech Act: Gained or Lost in Translation?

An interesting contradiction lies at the heart of the Queen's decision to speak Gaeilge at Dublin Castle. On the one hand, it constitutes an unprecedented and undeniable attempt by a British monarch to reach out to and win over different audiences. In contrast to the old language games of security framing and narrating Anglo-Irish relations, this speech act sought to cast Britain as a friendly rather than a hostile 'other'. On the other hand, however, it is unclear whether Anglo-Irish relations were fully, partially, or unsuccessfully desecuritized after the Queen's bilingual speech act (Roe 2008). Here the opening questions about what desecuritization is, what it does and how it becomes possible resurface with a vengeance.

Some qualifications are necessary. First, it is erroneous to suggest that the painful legacies sketched into and by Anglo-Irish relations have completely disappeared or that all has been forgiven. Viewed in this light, commentaries that, "Queen Elizabeth's gesture at the Garden of Remembrance was a key moment in the histories of Ireland and Britain, marking the end of Anglophobia and of the British empire's slow death" are perhaps premature (O'Toole, 2011: 21 May). Importantly there is nothing to prevent the desecuritizing moves undertaken during the Queen's visit from "slipping back into the securitized" (Hansen, 2011: 535). Hence we should not trivialise the difficulties that lie ahead or be complacent when it comes to how security is being spoken in Anglo-Irish relations. Notable contentious issues exist between the ROI and UK, especially in terms of lingering uncertainties over the peace process. For instance, reflecting on the reply Gerry Adams gave after the Queen's speech at Dublin Castle exemplifies the difficulties of breaking through habitual patterns of speaking security or leaving old language games behind. While he said that he "was taken by Queen Elizabeth's sincere expression

of sympathy to all those who had suffered in the course of the conflict" he also cautioned that

"people across the country felt she had not gone far enough in expressing sympathy for the way a century of bloodshed between Ireland and Britain had touched their lives" (McDonald, 2011: 19 May, The Independent, 2011: 20 May).

It is therefore possible to argue that the entire repertoires of desecuritizing moves undertaken by President McAleese and the Queen failed to convince hardline audiences to accept their desecuritizing moves. Returning to Behnke, it is also possible to argue that by continuing to participate in the old language games of security, "issues or actor never leaves the discourse on security within which the securitization is embedded" (Behnke, 2006: 65).

However, examining the desecuritizing moves that were undertaken suggests that the old language game of security narrating Anglo-Irish relations is transforming in subtle yet complex ways. Although much remains to be done, the Sunday Independent/Quantum Research poll recorded that an overwhelming majority of the Irish people said the Queen won their hearts during her historic four-day tour (McConnell 2012; also see Witchell 2011). Commenting on what he perceived to be a "memorable and momentous week" Ireland's Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, said that,

"naturally, there have been moments of reflection on the past. But, for me, it has also been a week filled with great hope and anticipation for the future of these islands. The Queen's visit has set a firm seal on a

transformed relationship between Ireland and Britain (Department of Taoiseach, 2011: 19 May).

Likewise, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, described the Queen's visit as a "game changer" in the relations between the countries (RTÉ news, 2011: 27 December).

Concrete evidence that the Queen's state tour was 'game changing' is that the desecuritizing moves she built upon, set in motion and accelerated during her brief stay in the ROI have continued to gain momentum subsequently. Since that time the Queen has shared a historic handshake with Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness, as part of her Jubilee tour in 2012. More recently, the current Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, became the first Irish head of state to visit the UK in April 2014, reciprocating the Queen's willingness to travel to the ROI in 2011 (Donnelly 2014; Shiel and Burke-Kennedy, 2013: 18 November). If nothing else, these events indicate that what was once considered impossible can happen. Against this backdrop, Behnke's claims that desecuritization can never really happen or occurs through a lack of speech requires further consideration (Behnke, 2006: 65).

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to analyse the 2011 state visit of Queen Elizabeth II to the ROI as a series of desecuritizing moves. Yet, a recurring dilemma this article wrestled with is whether desecuritization is possible. Within critical security and securitization studies, the Copenhagen School has been repeatedly chastised for leaving this concept underspecified and underdeveloped. Picking up the existing critiques illustrates how

complicated it is to make and unmake security lexicons in theory and practice. That said, it is worth thinking about whether preludes to new conversations are also required (Blaney and Inayatullah 1994). The point here is not to deny that desecuritization is ambiguous within the Copenhagen School's framework, or that our current sites of critique are erroneous. On the contrary, it is to demonstrate that desecuritization can take many shapes and forms, some of which fall outside our current understanding for what security means and does.

It was in this light the issues of translation and bilingual speech acts were considered. As noted, the underexplored potential for both modes of communication is that they allow for security to be spoken in heterogeneous tongues, modalities and mediums. If taken seriously, such insights could open a space for different voices to be heard not only in different languages. What might also become possible is for different voices and languages to remain different but equal (Blaney and Inayatullah 1994). While welcoming these prospects, this article also raised some hidden dangers of focusing solely on translation. A particularly difficult question for translation is how to explore and understand speech acts that require no translation.

To encourage rather than close down these debates, this article sketched a more robust theorisation of bilingual speech acts. By invoking these critical reflections it was shown that agents can and do speak security in various and varying lexicons, frames, images and voices. Keeping with the traditional understanding of bilingual speech acts as the expression of two languages, it was suggested that these modes of speaking may open fruitful pathways for scholars working in critical security and (de)securitization studies to explore the complex internal and external composition of security utterances. More broadly, the article argued that bilingual speech acts are also of concern to scholars

exploring the interrelationships between verbal, non-verbal and bodily modes of communication.

Through this in-depth analysis of the Queen's landmark state tour to the ROI, the paramount importance of trying to revise our current ways of thinking and speaking about security was elucidated. Documenting the first two days of this state tour, it was revealed that there are no easy answers to whether desecuritization is possible in Anglo-Irish relations or elsewhere. Indeed an important lesson to be learnt from this case study is that desecuritization processes are never guaranteed to succeed. While the Queen's visit to and her actions in the ROI hint at some levels of desecuritization, it is not absolutely clear that the old language game of security has faded away. In this case Behnke's argument that desecuritization is never possible remains open. Nevertheless, this article has contended that the Queen's visit challenges the idea that securitization and desecuritization can, or should, have clear beginnings and endings.

Only time will tell how the current (de)securitizing moves presently underway will evolve. Irrespective of what does happen, it would be wise to remember that desecuritization cannot be established through just one speech act, not even one as powerful as the Queen speaking Gaeilge in Dublin Castle. Returning to President McAleese's metaphor of building bridges that go two ways, the outstanding invitation before us is to explore how security is made and unmade in multifaceted, tangential and intricate ways. To do so will require the multi-layers and vocabularies of security speech to be appreciated.

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¹Gaeilge is the official national language of Ireland. It is also called Irish in spoken English. For further information see: <http://www.gaeilge.ie/Home.asp>

² Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen of Great Britain

³ The President is referred to as President of Ireland when outside the country and President McAleese when in Ireland or Uachtarán na hÉireann. For the purposes of this article the latter two terms will only be used.

⁴ Sinn Féin is a leading Irish Republican political party. Founded 1905, its stated objective is to continue to work for “the right of Irish people as a whole to attain national self-determination”. See <<http://www.sinnfein.org/>>

⁵ The national police force of Ireland.

⁶ Although Behnke does not draw on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s work, Wittgenstein is nonetheless an authoritative figure on the concept of language games within IR.

⁷ I would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for asking me to think through this point.

⁸ Mary Robinson served as President of Ireland from 1990-1997

⁹ It is beyond the scope and purpose of this article to address the complex interrelationships between Anglo-Irish relations and Europe. On these topics see Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke and Fiona Stephen (2000): “*A Farewell to Arms? From Long War to Long Peace in Northern Ireland*”: Manchester University Press; Katy Hayward (2006): “Reiterating National Identities: The European Union Conception of Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland”, *Cooperation and Conflict* 41(3): 261-284; Paul Dixon (2002): “Northern Ireland and the International Dimension: The End of the Cold War, the USA and European Integration”, *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 13: 105-120; Elizabeth Meehan (2000): “Britain’s Irish Question: Britain’s European Question? ‘British-Irish Relations in the Context of European Union and the Belfast Agreement’”, *Review of International Studies* 26(1): 83-97.

¹⁰ A full list of the Queen’s itinerary is available at

<<http://www.royal.gov.uk/LatestNewsandDiary/CourtCircular/Todaysevents.aspx>>

¹¹ On 24 April 1916 members of the Irish Volunteers and Citizen army organised a staged occupation of key strategic buildings in Dublin City to rebel against British Forces. For further information see F.X. Martin (1968): “The 1916 Rising: ‘A Coup d’état’ or ‘A Bloody Protest’?”, *Studia Hibernica* 8: 106-137.

¹² The GAA stands for the Gaelic Athletics Association or in Irish Cumann Lúthchleas Gael. It is an Irish and international amateur sporting and cultural organisation with a primarily focus on promoting Gaelic games. For more information visit: <https://www.gaa.ie/>