

Vocabulary of the Orthodox Church in Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

This article focuses on intercultural communication in the religious context. It studies the ways of rendering the vocabulary of Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches in the English-language intercultural communication. We have investigated the use of Orthodox vocabulary on the English-language websites of Orthodox churches of Romania, Greece, the USA and Canada, as well as on Facebook. The peculiarities of translating xenonyms in the process of borrowing some orthodox terms are described. Searching for an adequate translation of this vocabulary layer is sometimes quite complicated because there are no universal reference books and many of the orthodox terms are not registered in dictionaries. The investigation singles out a direct borrowing (transcription or transliteration), loan translation and the use of the “complex of parallel attachment” (the term suggested by V. Kabakchi) as the most productive ways.

Introduction

American anthropologist Edward T. Hall was the first to use the name “intercultural communication” in his book *The Silent Language* in 1959. His first target audience comprised American diplomats and development personnel whose intercultural skills had to be improved. Developing his ideas about the relation between culture and communication, Hall came to the conclusion that learning culture was necessary.

The study of intercultural communication has developed and matured as an academic field with its own theory building. Intercultural communication is defined as situated communication between individuals or groups of different linguistic and cultural origins. Mass media and the Internet created a new type of social communication due to which different peoples and nations come to a better understanding. The church has a positive attitude to advancements in the field of mass media and tries to make the best use of them [1, p.23]. The communicative function of religion is realized with the help of mass media communication. The process of virtualization involves all Christian churches including the Orthodox Church.

In different periods of the history of mankind, there have been changes affecting the mechanism of linguistic communication and its technology and having a strong influence on the development of the language situation throughout the world. Such changes are called “communicative shifts”. One of these shifts occurred in the twentieth century, when English replaced French as the main language of intercultural communication and became the language of global communication.

Objective of the study

Our investigation focuses on intercultural communication in the religious context. The objective of the article is describing the ways of rendering the vocabulary of Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox churches in English intercultural communication. As the material of our investigation, we have used the social networking sites and the groups of ROCOR (the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia), ROCA (the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) on Facebook, as well as the web pages of orthodox churches in America, including the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (<https://www.roea.org>).

As a result of the emigration of the 20th century, the Orthodox Church is no longer either geographically or demographically exclusively an “eastern” church. Orthodox parishes exist in some English-speaking countries (Great Britain, the USA, Canada, and Australia).

Christianity, like no other religion, has had a great influence on the development of world civilization. For many centuries, the Bible has remained one of the main sources shaping the outlook of a large part of the

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planet's inhabitants. Biblical quotations became the so called “winged expressions”, or catch phrases, biblical plots were the source of inspiration for many creators of artistic works. Biblical phrases have been included in phraseological dictionaries of languages and have become the foundation of international phraseological vocabulary [2, p. 28].

Communication in English in the course of international contacts includes all aspects of the activities of the Orthodox Church, both in the present and the past. This includes an introduction to the greatest examples of religious architecture, and the discussion of the difficult period of the Russian Orthodox Church after the October Revolution in 1917, and the consideration of the problem of the revival of Orthodoxy in the late 1980s. The Orthodox holidays, traditions and customs are widely discussed. That is why it is necessary for the students studying translation problems to know how to render the vocabulary of the religious context in English. Intercultural communicative competence is inseparable from language teaching.

English, as well as other languages, is potentially open to use in any communicative situation, and in terms of its application to a specific national culture of peoples of the world, the object of this application is the whole universe, all existing cultures of the present and the past. In real life, English is best understood in its internal culture, that is, for which English is the native language (culture of Great Britain, the USA, English-speaking Canada, etc.). Foreign language cultures, which in this approach can be called external, are mastered in English as much as it is necessary for a particular linguistic situation.

Review of literature

V. Kabakchi considers that English language has been developed very little in connection with the orthodox vocabulary of foreign churches [3, c. 6]. I.V. Korunets, V.V. Kabakchi, T.A.Kazakova and other linguists studied the ways of translating specific nationally-coloured vocabulary units from Ukrainian or Russian into English. V.V. Kabakchi calls these vocabulary units xenonyms. Xenonyms are names of specific elements of the foreign culture in question used only inside the place, group, or linguistic community. V.V. Kabakchi proposes to consider xenonyms as “quasi terms”, he refers them to an autonomous lexical layer that is located on the periphery of the vocabulary very close to scientific and technical terminology [4, p. 35]. Translation of this vocabulary has always posed problems at a practical level. Searching for an adequate translation is sometimes quite complicated because there are no universal reference books and many of the orthodox terms are not registered in translation dictionaries.

A case study

There are Orthodox xenonyms which are already included in the dictionaries and form the basis of the English description of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), and they are of special interest to us. Such English-speaking xenonyms include the following: *Cyrillic, D(o)ukhobor, eparchy, Glagolite / Glagolitsa, Kulich, Molokan, Old Believer, Old Church Slavonic, Old Ritualist, Onion Dome, Patriarch, Raskol, raskolnik, Skoptsy, sobor, starets*.

As we see, the list of these words is short and not completed, which reflects the modern stage of mastering the English language counterparts of Orthodox xenonyms. Translating texts of the religious discourse is not an easy task. One of the problems a translator can face arises from the fact that some words or phrases denoting objects, facts, phenomena, etc. are so deeply rooted in the source culture and so specific (and perhaps exclusive or unique) to the culture that produced them that they have no equivalent in the target culture, be it because they are unknown, or because they have not been yet codified in the target language. When discussing the problems of correspondence in translation, E. Nida writes that “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure” [5, p.130].

One of the ways of translation of religious xenonyms is the so-called direct borrowing or translation by means of transcription or transliteration. The following words can exemplify this way of translation: *Vladyka, sobor, tomos, panikhida, skete, litia moleben, Edinoversti, lampada, kliros, trapeza, typikon, riassa, Pascha*.

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Vladyka served a panikhida at the grave and returned to the car. Instead of Liturgy, they would usually serve a moleben dedicated to the feast of the day. The Edinoversti have preserved a good custom of having special clothes for prayer, designed not for physical but for spiritual labor. In some parishes, they have preserved the wonderful tradition of processing to the trapeza accompanied by the singing of the troparion of the day or feast. The new status for the Church of Greece was not recognized by other Orthodox churches until 1850, when Constantinople issued a Patriarchal Tomos that recognized the autocephaly of the Greek Church and specified that the Archbishop of Athens should be the permanent head of the Holy Synod.

This way of translation can be found most often in special English texts addressed to the reader experienced in Orthodox topics. Some of the words are of Greek origin and are a result of the secondary xenonymic naming which is established between the xenonyms of different languages originating from one etymon. Greek is the language of the New Testament and the church service in most of the Eastern Orthodox churches. Such words as *acathistus / akathist, apocrypha, autocephalous, canon, Eucharist, episcopate, diaconate, liturgy, tropar, Typikon, prokeimenon, litany, kamilavka, synod, prelest* and many others originated from Greek.

Fr. Paul pointed me to the vestments set aside for me, and then once again tried to find a kamilavka that was large enough for my head – but once again, there were none big enough. The Proskomedija is a prerequisite for the Divine Liturgy. The Holy Synod is the highest authority of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Prelest is a false spiritual state, a spiritual illness, “a wounding of human nature by falsehood” — St. Ignatius Brianchaninov.”

Some of the words translated by a direct borrowing are grammatically unassimilated and have the plural endings peculiar for the source language: *stihiri, irmosy, Edinoversti, klirosi*.

There can be two klirosi – right and left, but usually there’s one. Edinoversti approach the Divine services very tremulously.

Others underwent grammatical assimilation and acquired the plural inflexions characteristic of the English language: *sketes, icons, klobuks, posads, molebens*.

A posad was a settlement in the Russian Empire, often surrounded by ramparts and a moat, adjoining a town or a kremlin, but outside of it, or adjoining a monastery in the 10th to 15th centuries. During the 1920s administrative territorial reform in the Soviet Union, posads were converted into urban-type settlements

Transcription and transliteration are used when it is necessary to preserve a national colouring or create a word peculiar for the orthodox discourse. A vivid example is the word «подвиг» which can be translated using one of the dictionary correspondences: *feat, exploit, deed, achievement, gallant deed, heroic deed*. But the transliterated word ‘*podvig*’ is used in religious texts with the meaning «spiritual feat, ascetic struggle».

It was there, his monastic podvig began, and decades later, even when the new Emperor finally released him from imprisonment, he chose to remain in the monastery. The purpose of the competition is to increase awareness, study, and veneration of the Saints of Zaporozhye and their remarkable podvigs.

The forms of address to the Orthodox priest - «*батьюшка*» and his wife - «*матушка*» are also borrowed into English by means of transliteration.

Batushka was taken away, and Matushka went with him voluntarily saying “Wherever Batushka Mikhail goes, I will be there too!”

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Quite often the transcribed or transliterated word is accompanied by explication of their genuine nationally specific meaning or descriptive explaining. It is often the case with the Old Believers' terms such as «лестовка», «подручник», «вервица», «Домострой».

They take a special embroidered prayer mat—podruchnik—from a stack usually piled up inside the entrance. Later they lay their heads and hands on it, prostrating to the ground, to preserve them in cleanliness. The Domostroi or Domestic Order is a sixteenth-century Russian set of household rules, and instructions for various religious, social, domestic, and family matters.

The Lestovka or Ladder is a type of prayer rope, commonly made of leather, which was in general use in old Russia, and is still used today by pious Old Ritualist Orthodox Christians. The Lestovka has four Lapostki (leaves or flaps), symbolizing the four Evangelists. Laboring in isolation from civilization, monks prayed with the help of a verveets (an ancient prayer rope). But grains of these olden times, of this semi-monastic life have been preserved, by the will of God, and survived to our day in the Edinoverie (United Faith, Old Rite) parishes of the Russian Church.

V. Kabakchi uses the term «a complex of parallel attachment» instead of descriptive explaining [3, p. 423], for example: *Sluzhebник (priest's Service Book), short melodic patterns (called popevki)*. It is frequently a whole lexical and grammatical complex that refers to some specific element of an external culture. It consists of the xenonym itself, its explanation and an introductory phrase (“called”, “known as”, “referred to as”).

Sometimes the explanation of the transliterated word is so long that it is placed in the footnotes at the bottom of the page: Married women wear a povoinik[2] under their head covering—knitted bonnets, testifying to the wearer's marriage.

[2] *An old Russian headdress worn by married women, mainly peasants. The term was used for a kerchief or towel wrapped around the head on top of another headdress or a soft cloth cap, usually with a round or oval crown, a ribbon band, and strings hanging down the back.*

Another way of translation is loan translation when the components of a word (morphemes) or phrases (words) are translated by the corresponding elements of the target language: *первомученик – First Martyr, новомученик – New Martyr, чудотворная икона – wonder-working icon, умная молитва – mental prayer, литургия Преждеосвященных Даров – liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, крестный ход – cross procession, Царские Врата – the Royal Gate, чин мирянский – lay order, златоглавый – golden-domed, духовный отец – spiritual father, ангел-хранитель – guardian angel, равноапостольный Св. Владимир – Equal-to-the-Apostles St. Vladimir, Св. Андрей Первозванный – St Andrew, the "First-Called".*

We are also happy to report that prior to that, here at Orthochristian.com, we have presented the first English language translation of the lives of those remarkable saints, in an article entitled «Zaporozhye the Unconquered, the Glorious Lives of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Wild Cossack Field». Christian teaching in the territory of today's Romania goes back to the apostle St Andrew, the "First-Called" who preached in Scythia Minor, the region between the Danube and the west coast of the Black Sea.

Blessed Gerasimos (Phocas), the former Metropolitan of Kefalonia, introduced me to Geronda. It happened on the Wednesday of the Great Canon. I was seeking a spiritual father and he recommended Fr. Eumenios to me, speaking very positively of him.

Loan translation is especially productive in rendering church names and names of religious holidays: *Church of the Holy Transfiguration (Церковь Преображения Господня), Clean Monday (Чистый понедельник), The Holy Trinity Church (Церковь Святой Троицы), Forgiveness Sunday (Прощеное Воскресенье), the*

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Feast of the Elevation of Holy Cross (Праздник Вознесения Креста Господня/ Крестовоздвижение), Holy Annunciation Church (Благовещенская церковь).

Semi-loan translations are borrowings of words and expressions, which consist in part of the elements of the source language, and also of the elements of the target language: *Соловецкий монастырь – Solovki monastery, Знаменный распев – Znamenny chant (singing). Серафимом-Дивеевский монастырь – St. Seraphim-Diveyevo Convent*

The next way of rendering orthodox vocabulary in English intercultural communication is the use of functional analogues, which is often applied when translating dialectal and colloquial words: *молодка – a young wife*. The substituted element arouses a similar reaction in the target culture reader to the one aroused by the prototext on the source culture reader, though sometimes there is a need in the explanation.

I'm a young wife, 10 and young wives, as a rule, before the birth of their first child, don't have to completely cover their hair in front of people.

10 The Russian word used here, "молодка" ("molodka"), specifically means a young wife who has not yet born her first child.

A stylistically coloured word "молодка" is replaced by a stylistically neutral functional analogue "young wife". So, in the English translation there is a neutralization of this lexical unit.

Naturally, not all orthodox vocabulary is registered in translation dictionaries. Sometimes there are various options of translation. For example, the word «пустынь», meaning 'a secluded monastery' or 'monastic cell' can be translated using the dictionary counterpart «hermitage»: *We visited the Morzhhevsk hermitage.*

It can be rendered by a functional analogue: *Оптина пустынь – the Optina monastery*, as well as by a direct borrowing: *Those called to life in the poustinia were not uncommon in Russia prior to the suppression of Christianity in the early 20th century.*

Descriptive explaining alone as a way of translation is only applied when there is no other way of rendering the meaning of the source language lexical units: *моуци – relics of saints, юродивый – fool for God's sake.*

Conclusion

Translation is one of the main means of intercultural communication. The above mentioned examples point to some of the possible lexical problems in translation indicating the level of translatability of the orthodox vocabulary. The most productive ways of rendering this vocabulary layer are direct borrowings, loan translation and the use of the "complex of parallel attachment".

References

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