ФИЛОЛОГ

ЧАСОПИС ЗА ЈЕЗИК, КЊИЖЕВНОСТ И КУЛТУРУ

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TRANSLATION AND LEXICAL BORROWING – CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPONENTS[1]

Abstract: *Translation, as a complex phenomenon, includes several components which could be broadly divided into linguistic and cultural ones. Linguistic components relate to the linguistic competence of the translator (familiarity with the given language codes, ability to transfer content from one such code to another, skill to observe translational problems and to solve them etc), whereas the cultural components in general imply sensitivity to different cultural patterns as well as comprehensive general knowledge and knowledge related to specific fields. Due to the complexity of these components, the process of translation often includes both cultural and linguistic problems and dilemmas; one of such dilemmas, and a very significant one, is related to the translator's decision to borrow a lexeme or a phrase from the source language (with or without adaptation) instead of trying to find (or create) its translation equivalent in the target language. In our contemporary environment, with English being modern lingua franca, this problem is specially pronounced, particularly in certain fields like, for example, fashion, marketing, sports etc. Having these assumptions in mind, the presentation would discuss examples related to the translation from English into Serbian, trying to point out the cases when borrowing may appear to be a correct solution and when not. Finally, the presentation would provide comments on possible cultural and linguistic components which play a part in making such choices in translation.*

Key words: *borrowing, English, Serbian, translation.*

1. Introduction

Translation, as a complex phenomenon, includes several components which could be broadly divided into linguistic and cultural ones. Linguistic components relate to the linguistic competence of the translator (familiarity with the given language codes, ability to transfer content from one such code to another, skill to observe translational problems and to solve them etc), whereas the broadly understood cultural components in general imply sensitivity to different cultural patterns as well as relatively high level of familiarity with cultures included in this process of translation. Due to the complexity of these components, the process of translation often includes both cultural and linguistic problems and dilemmas; one of such dilemmas, and a very significant one, is related to the translator's decision to borrow a lexeme or a phrase from the source language (with or without adaptation) instead of trying to find (or create) its translation equivalent in the target language. In our contemporary environment, with English being modern *lingua franca*, this problem is specially pronounced, par-

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ticularly in certain fields like, for example, fashion, marketing, sports etc. Having these assumptions in mind, the presentation would discuss examples related to the translation from English into Serbian, trying to point out the cases when borrowing may appear to be a correct solution and when not. Finally, the presentation would provide comments on possible cultural and linguistic components which play a part in making such choices in translation.

When it comes to linguistc components, at least some basic linguistic education seems to be necessary for an accomplished translator: he or she should be familiar with the way language is structured and how language is analysed, so that he/she can (consciously or unconsciously) apply this knowledge when translating; translation techniques should also be familiar, because they might help to solve some of the concrete problems.

On the other hand, there are numerous pieces of evidence that the lack of cultural knowledge can make a linguistically correct translation bad. By cultural knowledge we assume a broad general, encyclopedic knowledge acquired in regular education (facts about history, geography, politics, art, literature etc.), as well a more specialized knowledge related to one specific field or several related fields. In order to illustrate this interaction between purely linguistic competence and culture-related competence, first several examples from two recently published books (translated from English into Serbian) would be mentioned, and then examples and solutions from personal translator's experience.

The first mentioned group of examples points to more or less serious mistakes due to lack of geographical knowledge or lack of concentraion:

(1) a) ...jer sam iščašio koleno na takmičenju u *Kicbuhelu*, u Švajcarskoj. (Šarma 2009: 89)

(*Kitzbühel - Kicbil*)

b) *Maginova crta* delila je mlade od starijih školaraca ... (Čopra 2008: 61)

(*Maginot line – Mažino linija*)

c) ...gurkali su se bokalčići i šoljice iz *Limogesa* tanke kao ljuske od jaja. (Čopra 2008: 105)

(*Limoges – Limož*)

d) ...u cvetni uzorak kao na *Aubusonovom* tepihu. (Čopra 2008: 291)

(*Aubusson – Obison*)

e) ...uzdignut na visokim liticama divlje *korniške* obale. (Čopra 2008: 316)

(*Cornwall, Cornish – Kornvol, kornvolski*)

The example (1a) spoiled the impression about good translation of this book into Serbian, because, perhaps in a moment of inattention, the incorrect Serbian transcription of the skiing resort Kitzbühel was used (*Kicbuhel* instead of the usual *Kicbil;* in addition, it is in Austria, not in Switzerland). Other examples (1b-e) are taken from a rather badly translated book; in these examples the personal or geographical names were obviously not properly recognized and only partially transcribed. Thus *Maginot* should be either fully transcribed or left in the original spelling, and the noun *line* is to be translated as *linija*, not *crta* (*Mažino linija ili Mažinoova linija*); as presented in the example, this NP almost becomes unrecognizable. *Limoges*, naturally, refers to a town in France famous for porcelain; this name should have also been transcribed – *Limož,* but the translator just added the Serbian case suffix to the original spelling. Then, *Aubusson* is the name of place in France famous for carpets and tapestries – it is neither fully transcribed nor written as in the original; but what is even worse, the translator added to it the possessive suffix which makes it look like a person's name. In the last example, the geographical adjective *Cornish* is used even though the correct Serbian adjective is *kornvolski*, de-

rived from the noun *Cornwall*, not from the adjective *Cornish.*

After the culture-related examples, the following examples from the same source rather drastically illustrate problems with linguistic competence in translation:

(2) a) A starac je samo sedeo, *hladan kao krastavac …* (Čopra 2008: 36)

b) Sa mnom je policajac Kalum. *Pucaj.* (Čopra 2008: 51)

c) … i pokazao dobro oblikovane mišiće na *želucu* pod sjajnom kožom boje ebanovine. (Čopra 2008: 132)

d) … i bilo jedan bilo oba *oficira* koji su u pitanju … (Čopra 2008: 241)

Even without the English original, these mistranslations into Serbian are quite obvious: in (2a) the English idiomatic expression *as cool as cucumber* is translated literally, though it is not an idiom in Serbian; in (2b), the word *shoot* is also translated literally, although in this context it is a colloquial expression for *say, speak up,* and because a policeman is mentioned the reader may get a completely wrong idea of what is going on. The example (2c) shows how absurd an incorrect translation can be if a translator does not think about its meaning: the word *stomach* is translated with a word denoting an organ for digestion inside the abdomen, although the above-mentioned example specifies that it has well-shaped muscles visible under the skin. Finally, in (2d) the word *officers* is translated to mean military officers, though in this context it means policemen on duty.

These introductory examples indicate some of the points emphasized in this paper: the need for the translator to take into account both cultural and linguistic components and even to conduct a smaller research to find out the story behind a certain personal or geographical name or an expression.

2. Stories behind culture-related expressions

To indicate the need for a translator to carry out a small culture-related research while translating, this section presents examples from the first three chapters of Lewis Mumford's influential book *The Culture of Cities* (1970, first published in 1938) which was translated into Serbian and the translation is to be published soon. These examples would provide material for comments about translation and the stories discovered in translator's researches necessary for a correct translation.

(3) a) … in a town once justly famous for its *St. Mark's bread, or marzipan.* (22)

b) *The Shambles* in York: row of shops with overhanging fronts. (38)

c) One has only to read the household recipes of *the Goodman of Paris*, who was of the well-to-do merchant order, … (43)

d) What Langland … in his long harangue on the wiles and perversities of *Lady Meed…* (72)

e) … a special officer, *the Podesta*, …. (79)

f) … the fixed proportions of *the Five Orders…* (92)

g) … *Lazarus* finds it easier to share the scrap with his neighbour than *Dives* does the surplusage of his banquet. (175)

h) *The Lex-Adickes*, which permitted the assemblage of parcels … (186)

i) … in the signs on the hoardings - for *Coleman's mustard* or *Reckitt's blue* - … (193)

j) Long before, *Faustus Verantius* in the sixteenth century had suggested … (206)

While translating these chapters, the above-mentioned examples presented a cultural challenge – in order to translate them it was necessary do a small-scale research using the Internet and some reference books. However, the effort was re-

warding, because it was an opportunity to learn something. For example, it was possible to translate quite literally the underlined segment in (3a), but the translator also has the task to explain cultural associations, in this case the point Mumford was making when he related marzipan and St. Mark's bread. According to one possible etymology (www.encyclopedia.com), the word *marzipan* was derived from the Latin expression *Marci panis* (*Marcus' or Mark's bread,* although there are also opinions that it was derived from *March bread - martius panis,* cf. *Wikipedia*) – this could be explained in a footnote. *The Shambles* in (3b) refers to a narrow winding medieval street in York, which could be also clarified in a footnote. To be able to understand the paragraph in (3c) completely and translate it, it was necessary to check the expression *the Goodman of Paris*; it turned out that it refers to the French title *Le Ménagier de Paris*, the text written between 1392 and 1394 by an elderly Parisian merchant, wealthy and learned, so that the phrase *the Goodman of Paris* actually means the householder or citizen from Paris (www.fordham.edu). Lady Meed (3d) is a character from Langland's allegorical poem *Piers Plowman* and personifies greed, which could also be mentioned in a footnote by the translator. The *Podesta* (3e) was a high official in Italian cities whose duty was to preserve peace between parties in a community (www.books.google.com); this word presented a difficulty for translation, the need to find a similar, corresponding title in Serbian or to leave the Italian word. The *Five Orders* (3f) actually indicate the five styles in ancient Greek and Roman architecture (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, composite, cf. *Wikipedia*); the story in (3g) comes from *The Bible* (Luke 16: 19–31) and relates to the rich man and the beggar Lazarus who sits at his gate. The example (3h) first required to find out that Franz Adickes was the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt on the Main at the very beginning of the

20th century and initiated the law related to land (*Wikipedia*). The story behind (3i) is even more intriguing: the Internet search (www.colmanmustardshop.com and www.oldandinteresting-com) showed that Mumford refers to advertisments for mustard (produced by Jeremiah Colman, near Norwich) and a laundry whitener (produced by Reckitt & Sons). Finally, the underlined name in (3j) presented a real translation problem, because this is a Latin version of the Italian name Fausto Veranzio, which is an Italian version of a Croatian name Faust Vrančić, inventor and humanist born in Šibenik (1551–1617); there is also a Hungarian version of his family name – Faustus Verancsics (*Wikipedia*); which version to choose for the translation?

All these examples point to translator's dilemmas and problems related to cultural component in transferring one linguistic code into another linguistic code. In other words, the translators have to familiarize with the short biographies behind the names they meet in the text to acquire a temporal and spatial background for the phrase or sentence they have to translate, because the choice of words or grammatical structure may depend on that background. Moreover, specific professional terms usually require clarification in encyclopedias or some on-line sources; these facts should be sometimes specified by the translator in the footnotes, to help the target reader to get a better understanding of the text.

3. Translating or Borrowing

The central topic of this paper, and one of the key issues in translation from the source into the target language, is the translator's decision to borrow a word, use a previosly borrowed word or a domestic word, specially when the loanword is not fully accepted and integrated in the target language. In such cases, some translators simply transcribe the word from the source

language (and sometimes use it even without transcription), making the text barely understandable for the target reader, actually leaving it up to him/her to check that word in a dictionary or encyclopedia. When it comes to Serbian as a target language, such examples abound in some registers like fashion, computers, sports, business. This paper would discuss these issues with the examples from business English.

Before discussing specific examples, it is also worth mentioning that numerous recent anglicisms used instead of translations are often unnecessary and unjustified (cf. Prćić 2005, Novakov 2008); actually, a very useful empirical research (Panić-Kavgić 2006) was carried out with 80 informants (age 20 to 60, 60 of them students at the University of Novi Sad and 20 persons with a university degree) about how Serbian native speakers understand recent anglicisms – for example *grejs period*, *trejler*, *ofšor kompanija*. The results vary for different expressions, but in some cases, for example with the *grejs period*, more than 50% of the informants did not know the right meaning, which points to the fact that they actually do not understand properly the information they get in the media. This research strongly indicates that it is important to find the right measure between translating and borrowing.

Therefore, for the theoretical framework it is useful to bear in mind that T. Prćić underlines that language should not be understood just as a simple tool for conveying messages without paying attention to the selection and manner of use of linguistic means (Prćić 2005: 33). He also proposes a five-degree scale of justification for the use of anglicisms (Prćić 2005: 130–134): a) completely unjustified (there is a domestic word or a naturalized word expressing the same meaning; these expressions often represent inertial synonyms which are semantically unnecessary), b) unjustified (it is possible to translate the foreign notion using the productive morphosyn-

tactic and semantic means of Serbian), c) conditionally justified (those offering a shorter and more economical expression than the existing domestic expression), d) justified (those introducing a new nuance in the system of Serbian) and e) fully justified (those introducing a completely new meaning and filling a lexical gap). This framework would be used while discussing our examples.

To illustrate different translators' strategies, we would use Serban sentences from economic and business professional journals which present articles in Serbian, and in some cases their English translations, if they are published together with the Serbian original. Such pairs of sentences would point both to the translator's solutions for English terminology in Serbian and to the English terms themselves. The codes in brackets refer to the professional journals. For example:

(4) a) … softverska podrška za *grupno generisanje ideja* (*brainstorming*).

b) … software tool for *group idea generation* (*brainstorming*) (M1 32)

(5) a) … može imati *nula vrednost*.

b) … can have *null value*. (M1 61)

c) … zadavanje *nula vrednosti* za obeležje, koje je imalo *ne-nula vrednost*…

d) … assigning *a null value* to the attribute with *non-null value*… (M1 67)

(6) a) Ova ograničenja se ugrađuju u korisnički *interfejs*…

b) These constraints are embedded into the user *interface* … (M1 63)

(7) …korišćenja „*first name-a*" … (M2 23)

(8) …otvoreno („*transparentno*") pokazati sebi … (M2 39)

(9) … mora se ići na standardizaciju *inputa* … i *outputa*. (M3 80)

(10) *Merchadajzeri* pokrivaju teritoriju Beograda… (M3 108)

(11) … konferencijama za štampu, bilbordima i *flayerima*. (M3 116)

(12) … sa idejom da ga „*transferišu*" na svoje proizvode… (M5 194)

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This group of examples shows what translators sometimes do when faced with an expression from English, not always aware of the translational practice and techniques. The examples (4a/b) indicate a possible solution by giving the English term in brackets (*brainstorming*); (5a/b) point to a literal translation of the English phrase without adding the proper Serbian adjectival suffix (*nultu vrednost*); moreover, examples (5c/d) repeat the same mistake and introduce a negative form (*nenula*) which is completely unacceptable in Serbian morphology. The sentences (6a/b) include a borrowed and transcribed English word (*interfejs*) – in this case it seems justified, because there is no Serbian equivalent for this notion and this borrowed word has been already used quite often. The next six examples are taken from the articles which were not translated into English in the original journals: (7) shows a possible solution of using the English phrase with quotation marks, but adding the Serbian case ending; (8) uses the Serbian translation, but also adds a borrowed word in brackets which belongs to the required register; (9) uses English words, one of them without transcription (*output*) with the addition of the Serbian case suffix; (10) includes a misspelt, half-transcribed English word with a Serbian case suffix; (11) illustrates the situation when the author used a misspelt English word (*flayer* instead of *flyer* or *flier*) with the Serbian suffix; and (12) includes a transcibed English word with Serbian verbal suffixes written within quotation marks, to indicate that is not naturalized.

The next group of examples illustrates a specific problem:

(13) a) *Upravljivost* i adaptivnost celog proizvodnog sistema zavisi od ...

b) *Controllability* and adaptivity of production system is a function of ... (M1 70)

(14) a) ... inteligentno *rekonfigurabilni* moduli.

b) ... intellegent *reconfigurable* modules. (M1 70)

(15) a) 100% *reciklabilan* proizvod

b) 100% *recyclable* product (M1 70)

(16) a) ... osobine *kontrolabilnog* nesavršenog ISPP...

b) ... properties of *controlable* imperfect ISPP... (M1 117)

The above-mentioned examples point to a significant problem in contemporary Serbian: namely, it seems that there is a need for a shorter, more condensed expression of the meaning related to the possibility an inanimate entity to be included in a certain process. In English, this meaning is expressed by adding the suffix *–able* (*reconfigurable, recyclable, controllable*), which can be seen from the examples (14b, 15b and 16b). The same suffix is imported into Serbian (*profitabilan, diskutabilan*), but cannot be added to every base; moreover, there is also a domestic, related adjectival suffix *–iv/ljiv* (*razumljiv, promenljiv*, comparable to the Latin *–bilis* and English *–able*, cf. Klajn 2003: 283). However, this suffix cannot always be added to a foreign word, so **rekonfigurljiv* or **recikljiv* are not words in contemporary Serbian; actually, this suffix cannot be added to every domestic base either, so *purchasable* cannot be translated as **kupljiv*, even though there is a derivation *potkupljiv* - one has to use a relative clause *koji se može kupiti* instead. Therefore, business English points to this problem because it needs a brief expression, not a rather long relative clause.

The final group of examples rather drastically illustrates unjustified borrowings:

(17) a) ...organizovanja *fraktalnih* kompanija...

b) ...approach of *fractal* companies... (M1 71)

(18) a) ...predstavljanje internog modela u vidu *grafa*...

b) ...representing of model in structural *graph* form... (M1 75)

(19) a) ...*kontinualna* unapređenja...

b) ...*continuous* improvements ... (M1 92)

(20) ...tržište...moglo bi se definisati kao *saturisano*... (M3 110)

(21) a) ...tržišni *gep* koji treba popuniti ... (M3 114)

b) ...često dolazi do komunikacionog *gepa*... (M4 151)

(22) ...akcija *liflet* pomocije... (M3 116)

(23) ...i *feribot* karte... (M4 143)

(24) Danas uspešni *marketingaši* prihvataju trend ... (M4 149)

The last set of examples again illustrates borrowings in the professional field which do not always comply with the derivational rules of the receiving language and/or are nontransparent to most readers. Thus in (17a) the English word *fractal* (denoting an independent-acting corporate entity within a company) is borrowed and transcribed even though there could have been a translational equivalent. The example (18a) contains a rather drastic example of transcribed anglicism: *graf* is completely unjustified because there is a standard word of the same root *grafikon* (even though *Enciklopedijski englesko-srpskohrvatski rečnik*, first published in 1955 offers precisely *graf* as the translation equivalent). Similar comment goes with (19a) and (20), because *continual* could have been translated as *stalna, neprekidna*, and *saturisano* with *zasićeno*. The next examples, (21a) and (21b) also contain a completely unjustified and unintelligible transcribed borrowing *gep*, instead of *jaz, rascep*. The examples (22) and (23) also contain two anglicisms which could be easily replaced with a standard word, *letak* and *trajekt*, respectively. Finally, the last example (24) illustrates a clumsy and unacceptable derivation *marketingaši*, with the English base and Serbian suffixes.

4. Conclusion

Every professional register has its specific terminology, with many internationalisms among the terms, so it is difficult to draw a clear line between necessary borrowing and the need to translate; however, some of the abovementioned examples showed that there are serious issues to be discussed concerning the rules which should be applied in borrowing and translating. Namely, specially in contemporary professional texts in Serbian there are several "strategies" applied, some of them being the result of the lack of linguistic awareness which leads to unacceptable solutions in transferring professional terminology. The examples discussed pointed to the cases of borrowing without or with transcription (sometimes with the original word given in brackets), partial transcription (in some cases combined with the addition of domestic suffixes or preserving English suffixes), transfer of English syntactic structures in phrasal expressions and more or less successful attempts at translation. Referring to Prćić 2005, one could say that these examples illustrate inertial synonyms, completely unjustified anglicisms, unjustified anglicisms and conditionally justified anglicisms.

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PREVOĐENJE I LEKSIČKO POZAJMLJIVANJE – KULTURNE I JEZIČKE KOMPONENTE

Rezime

Prevođenje kao složen proces obuhvata nekoliko komponenti, kako jezičkih tako i vanjezičkih, pri čemu ove druge spadaju u široko shvaćen pojam kulture. Prve komponente podrazumevaju jezičku kompetenciju (poznavanje izvornog i ciljnog jezika, sposobnost da se sadržaji prenose iz jednog koda u drugi, veština da se uoče moguće problematične tačke i da se one kreativno reše), a druge kulturološku kompetenciju (osećaj za kulturne specifičnosti, uvidi u relevantne oblasti vanjezičkog znanja itd.). Dakle, između ostalog, uspešan prevodilac treba da bude u stanju da razrešava razne stručne dileme koje se neizbežno javljaju, a jedna od njih je leksičko pozajmljivanje. Ta dilema je još naglašenija u savremenom okruženju, kada se prevodi sa engleskog jezika koji je postao *lingua franca* modernog sveta. Polazeći od tih postavki, rad raspravlja o pojedinim primerima prevođenja sa engleskog na srpski jezik, ukazujući na slučajeve kada je korišćenje anglicizama možda bolje rešenje, a kada nije. Konačno, rad komentariše primere u kojima kulturološka komponenta može imati ulogu u razrešavanju gorepomenutih dilema u prevođenju.

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