

THE PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATION OF THE POLITICALLY CORRECT VOCABULARY

Flera Gabdulbarovna Mukhametzyanova¹, Ramil Ravirovich Khairutdinov¹, Rail Ravirovich Fakhrutdinov¹, Gulnara Magsumova Kvon², Liaisan Venerovna Khasanova¹, Valeriya Pavlovna Butakova¹, Alsu Rustemovna Gaysina¹

¹Kazan Federal University, Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies

²Kazan National Research Technical University n. a. A.N. Tupolev, Department of Economic Theory and Resource Management

e-mail: florans955@mail.ru

Tel.: +79600411947

Annotation

The article presents the results of a study of the problem of translating politically correct vocabulary from English into Russian in the context of sociolinguistics. Political correctness is the practice of introducing a language policy, called upon to make changes in the lexical language system to influence the consciousness of its native speakers. The research method included the analysis of publicist texts and their translation into Russian. We translated four articles from English into Russian containing politically correct vocabulary. The experimental work was carried out on the website of the news media company BuzzFeed and on the anti-racist websites. Based on this analysis, we singled out the features of politically correct vocabulary relating to the human race, in the English language, its differences from this vocabulary in Russian, and, therefore, the peculiarities of its translation into Russian. As a research result, we found the productive ways of translating the politically correct vocabulary. We identified the potential difficulties encountered by professionals in the translation process. The materials of the article can be useful in the practice of linguists, translators, philologists, sociolinguists, sociologists, and students. The article has special significance for the activists of human rights protection organizations when working with English-language theoretical materials of anti-racist orientation.

Keywords: translation, sociolinguistics, language, translation, political correctness, euphemisms, race, subject of the activity, student

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the central problems in sociolinguistics is the problem of relationship between

language and society. From the point of view of sociolinguistics, political correctness is the practice of introducing a language policy, called upon to make changes in the lexical language system to influence the consciousness of its native speakers. S.G. Ter-Minasova believes that "the political correctness of the language is expressed in the desire to find new ways of language expression in return for those that hurt the feelings and dignity of an individual, infringes his human rights with habitual language tactlessness and/or straightforwardness with regard to race and gender, age, state of health, social status, appearance, etc." [6].

The modern societies are multicultural, multiethnic and poly-linguistic formations, where it is important to think about what and how to say in order to avoid various kinds of conflicts. Thus, the significance of the political correctness phenomenon is unquestionably great in contemporary multicultural space [1, 2].

Compared with the United States and other Western countries, a somewhat different linguistic behavior, sometimes more aggressive and sharp, has been historically developed in Russia. Failure to comply with the criteria of political correctness will not undermine the speaker's reputation and will not destroy his career, as it could happen in the US. In Russian, the term "political correctness" has a somewhat vague semantic load [5]. A politically correct expression means something reserved, polite and impersonal. The phenomenon of political correctness definitely exists in Russia, but it has not turned into ideology unlike the USA.

2. METHODS

We used the analysis of the modern English dictionary (Urban Dictionary: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/>) in the study to determine the values of units of politically correct vocabulary [11]. By the method of random sampling, we identified the articles of a publicist nature, which served as the material for analysis. We translated four articles from English into Russian containing politically correct vocabulary. By comparison, we determined the most commonly used English euphemisms related to the human race, as well as identified the options of their translation into Russian.

The experimental work was carried out on the website of the news media company

BuzzFeed and on the anti-racist websites. We analyzed the articles of a publicistic nature published in these sources, as well as their translation into Russian.

Based on this analysis, we singled out the features of politically correct vocabulary relating to the human race, in the English language, its differences from this vocabulary in Russian, and, therefore, the peculiarities of its translation into Russian.

The study was conducted in four stages:

- at the first stage - the preparatory stage - we analyzed the current state of the problem of political correctness in the social and linguistic theory and practice; we developed a program of research methods;

- at the second stage we analyzed the articles of a publicist nature for the presence of politically correct vocabulary in them and translated them into Russian, taking into account the peculiarities of the phenomenon of political correctness in English and Russian;

- at the third stage we introduced a comparative method to identify trends in the use of a particular euphemism in a certain context;

- at the fourth stage - the final stage - we systematized and summarized the study results, clarified the theoretical conclusions; carried out processing and registration of the study results.

3. RESULTS

The study uses a method of comparing the politically correct language units in English and Russian. As it was said above, a different understanding of the phenomenon of political correctness was developed in the United States and in Russia. This phenomenon manifests itself in its own way in different countries and among different stakeholders [3]. Therefore, when translating such vocabulary, it is necessary to take into account cultural features and prevailing language tradition; a practical part of our study is devoted to the analysis of such cases of discrepancy between the literal translation version and the most appropriate option in each individual context [4].

The study involved the following stages of experimental work:

- analysis of English-language articles of a publicist nature of anti-racist orientation, highlighting the most frequently used politically correct language units;
- an analysis of the politically correct vocabulary of the Russian language, a translation of these articles into Russian, taking into account the peculiarities of the euphemization of English and Russian. At this stage, we found some differences in the politically correct vocabulary of two languages, in their use and the way they were formed;
- a summary of the resulting comparative analysis and the translation of theoretical material. At this stage, we identified the reasons for the differences in the politically correct vocabulary layers of two languages, as well as the reasons for choosing a certain equivalent of English euphemism in Russian during the translation.

There is a tangible difference between the politically correct vocabulary of English and Russian. Both countries are famous for their ethnic diversity, but the nations that inhabit each country are different; the language means used in relation to them also differ. Thus, one of the most acute problems in the USA is racism towards black people, and activists, defenders of the rights, in addition to eliminating infringement of rights and discrimination at the legal level, advocate the disappearance of "racist" words and expressions from the speech [6]. If we compare with the number of representatives of ethnic minorities in Russia, the number of black people here is very small, and the problem of racism towards them is not one of the most important in Russian society. Therefore, when translating a politically correct, "non-racist" vocabulary from English into Russian, one cannot simply replace one expression with the means of another language: there may not be an established phrase for a particular term or euphemism in Russian. We have identified the following strategies used by translators when translating the politically correct vocabulary.

One of the productive ways of translation is transcription or transliteration [8]. In fact, the name of discrimination was translated in this way: "расизм" (Eng. "racism"). The following concepts can be translated by the method of loan translation or literal translation, referring directly to racism and the anti-racist movement, as well as the varieties of racism: "абстрактный либерализм" ("abstract liberalism"), "культурный расизм" ("cultural racism"), "натурализация расизма" ("naturalization of racism")

[8]. The loan translation facilitates replenishment of the lexical stock of Russian language, as well as the fullest possible transfer of stylistic and connotative components of politically correct expressions.

However, it should be remembered that the main task in the transfer of politically correct language units using the means of another language is to replace it with a polite expression [10]. It follows that a straightforward translation of politically correct vocabulary should be avoided. When translating the names of some concepts of motion, it should be used the method of descriptive translation, if the loan translation is impossible in this case. So, the phenomenon of "white guilt" is literally translated as "белая вина", however such a translation is dissonant. The method of descriptive translation or input comes to the aid in this case: the option "guilt of a white man (a white race man)" gives a Russian-speaking person a greater understanding of this concept.

The term "color blind racism" can literally be translated as "дальтонический расизм" ("color blind racism"), but the "расовый дальтонизм" ("racial color blindness") is considered to be a settled and, as a consequence, a more common option [11]. When translating such concepts, one should consult the dictionary: before applying a loan translation, one need to ask whether there is a generally accepted translation version of a given language unit [10].

There are also certain difficulties when translating the words that directly call representatives of the discriminated race. When translating the euphemism "N-word", one should use the input method: "слово на букву Н" ("N-word"). The phrase "African American" is translated by a loan translation: "афроамериканка/афроамериканец" ("African American"). However, this term is not applicable to the representatives of the entire black community, because black people who live, for example, in Europe, are not Americans. Therefore, other words and expressions appeared in the English language to call them: "blacks" and "people of color" [7]. Everything is not as simple as it seems at first glance with the first word. In Russian, the word "black", addressed to a representative of the Caucasian nationality, is offensive, and therefore its use in relation to a person contradicts the principle of political correctness. More frequent and

politically correct variants are "темнокожие" ("those with dark skin") or "чернокожие" ("those with black skin"). Also, the word "Negro", which is taboo in the English language because of its consonance with "N-word", is not stigmatized in the Russian language and is a perfectly acceptable alternative to the options proposed above, although it is not used with such frequency in the mass media, in public speeches, etc. (where compliance with the rules of political correctness is necessary) for obvious reasons.

Literally the phrase "people of color", which refers to people of a non-white race, is translated as "людицвета" ("people of color"), which is transformed into a more harmonious "цветныелюди" ("colored people") by means of grammatical replacement. Due to the presence of dissimilar grammatical categories between two languages, such as articles, a fixed order of words in English and cases in Russian, as well as due to the peculiarities of word formation, the translator may face certain difficulties at the grammatical level. Thus, when a grammatical replacement is made, the unit of the original language is replaced by the unit of the translation language with a different grammatical meaning. For example, replacement of a single number by a plural or replacement of a noun with an adjective as in the example with the euphemism "people of color".

It should be noted that this expression has not yet found an established equivalent in Russian, and therefore different translators can translate it differently in different sources. An alternative to the option obtained by grammatical replacement is the option translated by the so-called antonymous translation method, that is, the way in which the concept is replaced with the corresponding restructuring of the entire utterance to preserve the unchanged sense of content, namely, "не белое население" ("non-whites") [5]. The choice of a certain translation option (and, perhaps, the invention of one's own) depends on the nature of the text translated, context, euphony, and personal preferences of the translator.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The problem affects all spheres of human life, and this aspect of sociolinguistics is important for the communication of representatives of one culture, with the interaction

of different cultures, as these features are reflected in everyday life. The development of society, scientific and technological progress open new opportunities for epy intercultural communication, where the mutual understanding, respect, tolerance are an integral part for mutual dialogue. The politically correct vocabulary presents difficulties for an interpreter, since there are some peculiarities for its translation.

The study of this problem made it necessary to turn to various articles [1-4], Internet sources [5,6], the works of Russian scientists who devoted their works to the problem of politically correct vocabulary and political correctness in general, accounted both for specialists and wide audience [8-10].

5. SUMMARY

Thus, we considered various methods used to translate the politically correct vocabulary, as well as the terms related to racism and anti-racist movement, from English into Russian. So, the most productive methods are the loan translation, transliteration or transcription, input method, grammatical replacement, antonymic translation, and others. It was found that the choice of a certain translation method is due to the euphony of this he translation version, the goals pursued by the translator or speaker, the presence or absence of an established translation version of this language unit, the presence or absence of connotations of the equivalent of this expression in the target language. If two or more translation versions are equivalent, they are chosen according to the personal preferences of the translator, as well as under other factors.

6. CONCLUSION

We have found out that when translating it is necessary to consider not only the translation of certain elements of politically correct vocabulary, but also the remaining parts of the sentence, which may possibly affect the meaning of the whole sentence in general, although they may not be semantically politically correct. If necessary, the order of words and phrases may be subject to change or permutation during translation.

The materials of this work can be useful in practical terms for linguists, translators, philologists, sociolinguists, sociologists, as well as for the activists of human rights protection organizations while working with English-language theoretical materials of anti-racist orientation.

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