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Georgian Speech Etiquette and Translation Problems

The article considers some specific features of the Georgian speech etiquette: official and familiar addressing, politeness (courtesy) forms of verbs, verbs alternating in person, some units of phatic speech. Special attention is paid to the problems occurring in the process of translation of the units of speech etiquette in fiction. As reference material a small abstract from the Georgian ancient poem “*Vepkhistaosani*” (“The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”) is discussed using the examples from its Russian, English and German translations; necessity of knowing and considering the specific character of the politeness system for translation is underlined.

Key words: Georgian language, speech etiquette, phatic communication, addressing, translation problems.

Introduction

Communication is the main function of a language as it serves for information exchanging but it is accompanied with a number of other functions such as phatic one, i.e. making contact (expressing attention and respect to the addressee, signing that they are noted and appreciated) and conative or expressing orientation on the addressee [1, p. 350-377]. These functions are most important for daily communications among people.

Etiquette is a complex of several forms of interrelations, historically established, and speech etiquette is one of the most important among these forms. As a linguistic component of the human interrelations and inherent part of the national culture, it is studied by the several branches of science: culturology, communication theory, stylistics, speech culture, sociolinguistics, linguistic pragmatics, ethnolinguistics and linguistic philosophy. Consideration of speech etiquette is very important in the translation as well, especially when translating dialogues in fiction or in films as this helps to translate them appropriately showing the social status of the characters, their linguistic picture, attitudes and relations with other characters.

Speech etiquette is not the same in every language. It has its peculiarities, sometimes very different from others. Those peculiarities have been established during the whole history of any separate language. The etiquette is closely related to the national cultural features, traditions, rituals, system of values and certainly, to the language system.

The translator should be very attentive towards adequacy of the verbal units of the speech etiquette. They should choose the right one among the synonyms existing in a language which will best suit in the given communication situation.

Rich verbal instruments create several registers of the Georgian speech etiquette. Choice about those registers depends on the extra-linguistic factors, the most decisive of which is the social status, role of the addressee, interrelations between the communicants, environment in which the dialogue goes on (formal, informal) and so on [2, p. 202-203]. Appropriate translation of the original text aids to right interpretation of the original literary text and the linguistic characteristic of the personages.

It is possible to express one and the same meaning by several means in any language, but usually there are important differences between them. It is synonymy that conditions flexibility of a language and such phenomenon as speech etiquette could not exist without diversity of the synonyms.

1. Speech Etiquette and Politeness System in Georgian

Throughout its long development Georgian language developed the means of the speech etiquette and the politeness (courtesy) system, which involves the grammatical forms, lexical units and syntactic means: two different forms of addressing: lexical (two variations of the personal pronoun, second person: *šen/tkven* ‘you’; and of the possessive pronoun *šeni/tkveni* ‘your’; also some grammatical means such as plural forms of verbs implying the courteous address can be included there. The specifics of the addressing and assessing forms should be denoted: either familiarity (using hypocorism – addressing with pet names, caressing names) or official style

baṭono/kalbaṭono ‘sir, madam’. Certain group of verbs should also be considered as part of the lexical-grammatical means, so called alternating verbs: *mobrṣandit*, *dabrṣandit* ‘please, come here, sit down here’; *miirtvit* ‘please, help yourself’; *inebet* ‘here you are, this is for you’ and so on. With the exception of some few examples, in the verbs of such type the same root “*brḍzan*” is used and with the help of verb prefixes they obtain the different meaning [3, p. 513-515; 4, p. 76-77; 5, p. 47-50; 6, p. 162-186].

Etiquette formulas most of which have lost their original meaning (formulas of greeting, saying good-bye, sending regards, saying good-bye, blessings...) play an important role in performing the phatic function of speech. The situations they are used in, additionally to the above mentioned, are as follows: expressing gratitude, apologizing, sending regards, congratulating, inviting, and saying compliments, expressing empathy, traditional Georgian toasts and others.

The specific phrases as the units of the phatic communication represent difficulties for translators. For example, in Georgian it is not usual to use the word *getaq'va* which is usual in the European languages (Engl. please, Russ. пожалуйста, Germ. bitte). Instead of this we have some phrases in Georgian, e.g. *Gtxovt, tu ar ṣec'uxdebit* ‘Be so kind, if this does not disturb you’ – as pleading; and as an answer to thanks we have: *arapris, ras brṣanebt* ‘Not at all, it’s my pleasure’.

In order to maintain naturalness it is necessary for the translator of the literary text to use the lexical units which are original, natural for the language, to deliver the communicating situation and environment in proper way, show how the verbal means of the speech etiquette are marked.

First, the words of addressing should be marked out. Their choice conditions the choice of the communication register or tonality of the speech. In Modern Georgian the words of addressing *ṣen/tkven* ‘you’ (expressing the distance, i.e. how close or how distant the addressee is for the speaker), have been formed at the certain stage of the language development [7, p. 35-37]. It is supposed to have happened when special attention was paid to social differentiation and necessity of its pointing out during the communication process. The plural form of the personal pronoun, second person, *tkven* ‘you’ was first evidenced in the 8th century literary work by Ioane Sabanisdze “Abo Tbilelis c'ameba” ‘Martyrdom of St. Abo’. The verb form in the plural was not then used as a politeness form.

It is difficult to say exactly when the plural form of the verb, with the plural marker *t* (so called ‘taniani mravlobiti’ – plural form of the verb with the *t* marker) was first introduced as means of politeness form. It is difficult to acknowledge the data through the written sources. This can be due to the narrative character of the texts, there are no dialogues there and

consequently, there are not many vivid examples of the addressing forms expected among them.

In the famous literary poem of the medieval age “*Vepkhistqaosani*” the system of the speech etiquette is already represented as an established system which is seen not only in the pronouns and separate verbs but in the special verbs expressing politeness (courtesy). The viziers and other subordinates appeal to them with emphasized respect. They use several special expressions and special verbs, but in the texts of the most translated variations those means are lost. This problem is well observed in the work by Z. Kikvidze considering the written literary works of the medium Georgian literary works [5, p. 37-39].

The addressing system with the singular/plural pronouns *šen/tkven* ‘you’ in the Modern Georgian is the same as in Russian. The rule for choice of the plural form is also the same. Of course, there are some differences too (for example, in Georgian reality between the spouses the plural forms of verbs are never used while in the modern Russian such examples are evidenced). Modern English language does not distinguish politeness forms and colloquial forms in the second person. In the German language the plural form in the second person is by its origin the plural form of the third person. The scientists think that this related to the etiquette rules of the king’s court. When translating Georgian texts in other languages, these details can be lost.

Endearment forms should also be taken into consideration as their literal translation causes misunderstanding. Appealing to a person by their name plus father’s name which is natural when communicating in Russian, can sometimes be met in Georgian speech too, but only as a way of stylization, a way to characterise a personage; for example: in the Soviet period, a subordinate person used to appeal to their superior in rank or to elder person only by mentioning their father’s name, like that: *Ivanič, Zazaevič, Ivanovna* and so on.

Nowadays, in official situations appealing to a person is done by the words *baṭono/kalbaṭono* ‘mister/missis’ + name: *bat’ono Giorgi, bat’ono Vakhtang, kalbat’ono Natela...* In European languages, after appealing with the words mister, missis, they usually appeal to a person by surname (it is the same when professors and students are communicating). In Georgian appealing to a person by their surname is not natural in the official circumstances.

The linguists noticed that in Georgian everyday reality the so called reflexive appealing is usual, i.e. when a person calls the addressee by naming their own status, e.g. mothers and fathers call their children using the words: *mama/mami/ma* ‘dad’, *deda/dedi/de* ‘mom’; *bebi, bebik’o* ‘grandmother’, and so on [8, p. 11-20; 7, p. 33-34].

It is also characteristic for Georgian to use a wide range of the caressing words, endearments such as: *šeni č'irime, šen genacvale, šen šemogevle*. It is impossible to translate such words so the translator should always seek for corresponding similar words or expressions.

II. Specifics of translation of Georgian speech etiquette

Difficulties of translating such specifics as Georgian addressing forms and verbs expressing respect can be better seen by the example of one strophe from the epic poem "Vepkhistqaosani". In the first chapter of the poem the subordinates appeal to Rostevan, the king of Arabeti, using the plural form of the personal pronoun *tkve* 'you'; before this episode the author uses the verb *hk'adres* 'dared to say' which is always used in this poem when appealing to a person of the higher social status, i.e. to the King or Queen, to a patron:

(1) *vazirta **hk'adres**: "mepeo, rad **hbrzanet tkveni** beroba?
vardi tu gaxmes, egreca gymartebis misive žeroba:
misisve hmet'obs q'ovelsa suli da t'urpa peroba.
mtvaresa mcxrala varsk'vlavman vitamca hk'adra mt'eroba?!*
*"magas nu **hbrzanebt**, mepeo, žert vardi ar dagč'nobia,
tkveni tabiri avica sxvisa k'argisa mžobia;
xmda ganayamca sakmnelad, raca **tkven** gulsa glmobia"*
[9, p. 15, strophes: 37-38].

It is notable that in this verse the plural pronoun *tkven* 'you' (II person, pl.) and polite (honorific) forms of verbs are used such as *hbrzanet* 'please, say' or *hbrzanebt* 'as you will say', instead of *tkvit* or *ambobt* 'as you say'.

Let us compare Russian, English and German translations of this abstract in which this specially underlined courtesy and respect is lost.

In the Russian translation by N. Zabolotski, in the addressing, the singular pronoun of the second person is used:

(2) *Но вазирь **отвечали**: "Царь, с ущербною луной,
Как бы звезды ни сияли, не сравниться ни одной...
Что ж **ты сетуешь** на старость и зовешь ее бедой?
Нет, не вянет наша роза, не **тверди** нам, царь, об этом!
Но совет **твой**, даже худший, не чета другим советам.
Делай так, как **ты** задумал, коль другой исход неведом.* [10].

The same is in the translation version by P. Petrenko:

(3) *Изрекли царю визири: "Не **терзай** себя тоской!
Если роза отцветает, то венец ее сухой,
И тогда, благоухая, все цветы затмит красой.
Царь, **твоя** не гаснет роза, много лет не вянуть ей!
Твой приказ, недобрый даже, доброты других добрей.* [11].

Among all the translations of the poem from Georgian to Russian, only in the translation by Shalva Nutsbidze the politeness form expressed by the pronoun *tkven* (pl.) is maintained:

(4) **Отвечал совет:** «Про старость, царь, напрасен разговор...
«Царь, еще не свяла роза! Так судить **вам** для чего же!
«**Ваш** совет, пусть даже строгий, лучших, но чужих, дороже. [12].

In the prose translation of the poem by Marjory Scott Wardrop certainly due to the language specifics, the plural form *tkven* (pl.) is used; though the variations of the of the verb *tkma* ‘to say’ are not evidenced:

(5) **The viziers said:** "O king, why do **you** speak of your age?
Even when the rose fades we must needs give it its due...

"Speak not then thus, O king. **Your** rose is not yet faded.

Even bad counsel from you is better than good counsel from another [13, p. 7].

The same is in the translation version by Venera Urushadze:

(6) **The viziers answered:** "O King! Speak not of age and of darkness!

You are still mighty and wise, **your** subjects still adore **you!**..

"Speak not of death, O King! **Your** blossom retains its perfume.

One bad counsel from **you** is better than a hundred good counsels from others.

You have done well to unload your heart of its onerous burden.

[14, p. 19-20].

In the German translation by Arthur Leist the appealing pronoun *šen* ‘you’ (sing.) is marked graphically (with a capital letter) so respectfulness is expressed. It is also interesting that the form *utxres* ‘they said to him’ is replaced by more pathetic *p’asuxad miuges* ‘they gave the answer so’:

(7) Zur Antwort ihm nun die Wesire geben:

Warum sprichst **Du** von **Deinem** Alter, Herr?

Mag auch die Rose welke Blätter haben,

Bleibt sie der Blumen schönste doch und leer [15, p. 2].

As it is seen from the above mentioned, out of the several foreign translated versions of the poem only the Russian translation by Shalva Nutsbidze retained the peculiarities of the speech etiquette. As for the other translations it is unwillingly lost. One more detail is notable: this is despite the fact that the languages such as Russian or German have always had the linguistic means to express it. Thus the text lost its one very interesting feature showing how the subordinates appealed to the king, with respect, with veneration and courtesy, but this is seen not only from the subordinates but the author’s side as well. It becomes obvious that in any translation, no matter how perfect it can be, the nuances however are difficult to maintain.

Conclusion

Finally it should be underlined that when translating a piece of a literary work, the translator should take into consideration not only the content of lexical units and phrases, but the specifics of the speech etiquette of the language in which the literary piece is written. When delivering the dialogues of the characters it is necessary to use the units of the speech etiquette properly, to merge the different registers of communication, which will aid in preserving the style of the literary piece and will help in better understanding of the author's aims.

Though many of the interesting details of the original version are usually lost in the process of translation, it is desirable to pay special attention to translation of the speech etiquette units using the means which are natural for the language into which this text is translated.

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Ethnocultural Semantic Components in Forming Commercial Naming

It is a well-known fact that commercial names play a dramatic role in attracting new audience. The article investigates two trends in contemporary Russian naming: using lexis with ethnocultural semantic components (e.g. exotic vocabulary, precedent phenomena, and national onomastic elements) and applying creative linguistic techniques. The sphere of commercial naming is characterized by increased linguistic creativity determined by pragmatic reasons. Commercial names appear as a result of this extraordinary linguistic creativity.

Key words: commercial name, urbanonym, ethnocultural semantic components, linguistic creativity, toponyms.

Nowadays Russian linguistics is focused on the spheres in which solving theoretical problems is of practical use. Onomastics and especially its new subdiscipline named urbanimics are among one of them.

The scientific interest in urban naming increased in the late 20th century, when political realities and changing of forms of ownership had led to the active development of commercial names. This onomastic group was principally new, and the term *artificial onomastic naming* was suggested by M. Golomidova. According to the scientist, it is defined as “an act of naming, which belongs to the field of functional communication and aims at creating a name” [1, c. 14].

Thus, urbanonyms have been studied in the aspect of artificial naming, as advertising names, elements of the urban onomastic landscape [6, c. 137].