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Peculiarities of Translation Realionyms into German

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Abstract

This article considers translation techniques of endemic units in the modern German language which are challenging in terms of translation issues and include the Tomsk realionyms possessing prominent local stylistic color and referring to the realias of toponymy, history and architecture of Tomsk and Tomsk region. German translation of these lexical units seems relevant due to the special status of the German language in the Tomsk region, as well as for the actual needs of the translation and lexicography. Functionally Tomsk realionyms represent intermediate class within a categorical scale of the nomen class ranging from appellativity to propriality – nomen realium, which combines features of serial and individual categories.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the following article is to reveal the peculiar features related to German interpretations of endemic lexems referring to the Tomsk and Tomsk Province history description. The main impetus for this research was the work of the author as translator and editor for the digest-guide to the city of Tomsk in German (Tomsk: Publishing house “D-Print”, 2012). Besides applicative value the importance of realionyms’ translation into German lies in intercultural communication: within the Tomsk region the German language has the status of not only the language of education, but also the language of ethnic German immigrants from the former Republic of the Volga Germans, and the language of the country – historical partner. Long-standing tradition of the German language makes many

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German compatriots interest to get acquainted with the history and culture of Tomsk and Tomsk region. Translation of Tomsk realionyms also has a high theoretical significance especially for bilingual lexicography. Drawing areal toponyms thesauri, onomasticon, realionyms dictionaries, contrastive toponymy, etc. is not the prerogative of a special lexicography, but acts as an important problem in the theory and practice of intercultural communication. Many denotations/significations refer to detect the status of reality, i.e. units of the intermediate category between a proper name (nomen proprium) and a appellative/common name (nomen appellativum), thereby detecting a categorical signs of uniqueness (the name) and seriation (noun, appellation), which cause considerable difficulties in their interpretation. These lexical units are conventionally designated as endemic, i.e. belonging to a particular linguistic distribution and possessing persistent differences referring to the local distribution from the similar units (possibly the same form of the language) in other areas of distribution.

Nomenclature

N.P.	nomen proprium (proper name)
N.A.	nomen appellativum (appellative name)
N.R.	nomen realium (realionyms)

2. Features and definition of realionyms

In modern German and Russian categorical attributes of proper names vary between N.P. and N.A. classes. Although there is a strict demarcation of these classes of nouns on the grounds of identity (unique identification) and seriation (mass applicativity) respectively; there are intermediate links which complicate greatly categorical definition of nouns. These links appear either in the process of transposition of a noun's substantial component or in the direction of the individual categories (N.P.), or the opposite – seriation (N.A.). The scale of the transition from appellatives to propriation can distinguish the median value that combines categorical attributes of individual and mass character – a realionym: NA ↔ N.R. ↔ N.P.

Realionyms or culture-bound terms [Lat. realia = real things, facts] are specific substantive elements of the political, institutional, social or geographical character adopted in any particular country or culture, as well as units of the corresponding vocabulary. As of today, the realia is understood as a term not found in any of the existing dictionaries. The outdated discourse realia (especially in German, Realien) is often referred to as objects of reality (realia), or subject knowledge (awareness), the latter often applied to the humanities, which is a basis for every kind of education. It should be emphasized that the word is previously used only in the plural form. Today, “a realia” – a stable unit of conceptual and terminological apparatus of onomastics being a section of lexicology, texts studies, translation studies and other linguistic disciplines. Realionyms accumulate and consolidate the results of human cognitive activity in the narrow confines of their society. They are a kind of a tag, available and understandable only to a limited number of language users and the determining a specific cluster of linguistic reality.

Here are the schemes showing the transition of these noun classes in the category of N.R.

Assuming that N.R. is a function of a name, then N.A. (N.P.) = N.R. (N.A. as N.P. equals N.R.)

1. «Tempo» meaning <Geschwindigkeit> N.A. («Tempo» meaning <Nasentuch> N.P.) = N.R., e.g.: *Hat jemand ein Tempo?*

2. «Mauerspecht» meaning <Vogel> N.A. («Mauerspecht» meaning <Abreißer der Berliner Mauer> N.P.) = N.R., e.g.: *Noch am Abend begannen in Berlin die «Mauerspechte» mit Hämmern, Feilen und Meißeln ihre Tätigkeit.*

Assuming N.A. is a function of a name, then N.P. (N.A.) = N.R. (N.P. as N.A. equals N.R.).

1. «Plyushkin» <character of N.V. Gogol> N.P. («Plyushkin» meaning <miser> N. A.) = N.R., e.g.: *You are a real plyushkin!*

2. «Alfonse» <character of A. Dumas> N.P. («alfonse» meaning <a man paid for or kept by a woman for having a sexual intercourse with her> N. A.) = N.R., e.g.: *Found herself an alfonse!*

With the time writing with a capital letter can be gradually lost, as it happened with the word “Alfonse”, compared with “napoleon”, “Apollo”, “sodom”, as well as the nouns with (partially) obscured or dead etymon, such as “jazz” (the name of the musician Jaz = Charles). Capital letter writing substituted by lower-case letters can be conditioned by metonymy and synecdoche (*pars pro toto*): “perun” (Ukr. thunder), “damast” (cloth from “Damascus”); however, in the German language a capital letter writing is common to all nouns.

In the process of appellative transformation into a proper noun the opposite trend can be revealed: “*kremlin*” (town castle) – “the *Kremlin*” (a historical fortress in the center of Moscow), “*krivoy rog*” (crooked horn) – “*Krivoi Rog*” (city), “*der schwarze Wald*” (black forest) – “*der Schwarzwald*” (Black Forest). This trend should not be confused with the compounding i.e. when an adjective, becoming the component of the German composite word, is written with a capital letter, e.g.: *das kleine Kind* – *das Kleinkind*.

2.1. Types of realionyms

We single out the basic functional types of realionyms.

1. N.A. as a function of N.A., where the specialization of the meaning is performed by the eksemy, for example: “*Molotok!*” (in the sense of “well done”), “*botanic*” (colloquial., vulg.: the person having unquenchable thirst for knowledge).

2. N.A. as a function of N.P. (*Vera, Nadezhda, Lyubov*’ as the women's names compared to English: *Gloria, Gracia, Victoria*). Neogrammarians considered it one of the ways for semantic change of words and thought that the common name becomes a proper name. Today, however, we can confidently assert that these realionyms were not formed by conversion, but are merely a function of boundary classes of nouns, as a lexical unit does not disappear in its primary meaning and is a means for the emergence of another unit or the new meaning through the eksemy.

3. N.P. as a function of N.A., where one can observe appellativization – the phenomenon opposite to appropriation, for example: “*There is a napoleon cake on the table.*”

4. In rare cases the proper names can be detected in the N.R. category. They are used by the eksemy as a function of other names of their own proper names, e.g.: “*Dosya*” (powder) – “*Dosya*” (slang.: MS DOS operating system). This realia is limited exclusively to sociolectal thesaurus.

2.2. Categorical properties of realionyms

Category of *propriation* is acquisition of characteristics referring to a proper name. *Propriality* – a semantic description of the name, which means confinement to some place, name, event, time, and others (to indicate ownership, identity). In Russian, the latter is expressed by joining adnominal adjective, such as *orenburgskie platki* (*Orenburg shawls*), *vizantiyskaya eparkhia* (*byzantine eparchy*), *platonicheskaya lyubov*’ (*platonian love*). In German this can be expressed by:

a) adding the adnominal adjective of two types (first, to the geographical or institutional concepts which are indeclinable, with *-er* suffix, with or without an umlaut, for example: *die St. Petersburger Eremitage*, *das Hasseröder Bier*; and secondly, to appellatives requiring indication of the name or the author's name, declined on *-sch*, *-isch*, *-esch*, *-anisch*, such as: *der ohmsche Widerstand*, *das elisabethanische Drama*; sometimes to geographic or institutional concepts if indeclinable adjective sounds insulting, e.g.: *die hallesche Kirchenmusikschule*; adjectives formed from proper names are written with lowercase letters, according to the new rules of German spelling);

b) adding toponym as an attribute in postposition in the so-called flexionless genitive (previously in the dative with the preposition *zu*); in some cases, when the use of the article is necessary, genitive takes biflexion, for example: *die Universität Marburg* (flexionless genitive), *die Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg* (double toponym in flexionless genitive), *die Universität des Saarlandes* (biflexion), *die Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin* (obsolete).

The latter method of propriality expression (b) is characteristic for official names. Before the 1996 reform the proper names were attributed through adnominal adjectives in postposition, and with the time the adjectives changed capital letters to lowercase, e.g.: *die Botkinsche* (also *botkinsche*) *Krankheit*, *das Ohmsche* (also *ohmsche*) *Gesetz*.

It is incorrect to use indeclinable attributive adjective to refer to the territorial or institutional concepts in the translation into German, for example: **die Tomsker Polytechnische Universität* or **das Moskauer Gebiet*. Although the Germans use in their speech *die Saarbrücker Uni* or *die Münchner Uni*, these combinations are of deflated style and are inadmissible in the German writing. Translators often confuse categories of propriality and affiliation, though the difference between them is very clear: affiliation – whose? which? (e.g.: “Which beer?” – “Tomsk one”) and propriality – the name (after all, the beer can be called the “Krueger” and “Old Tomsk”).

Affiliation or *possessivity* (German *Zugehörigkeit*, *Possessivität*) – the category designating affinity or origin (to indicate authorship), thus: *das Tomsker Bier*, *das Tomsker Heimatkundemuseum*, *das Tomsker Planetarium*, i.e. what belongs to Tomsk and is present in the singular number (and can not be presented twice!), but: *die Polytechnische Universität Tomsk*, (*das*) *Gebiet Moskau*; *der* ehemalige *Bezirk Treptow*, (*der*) *Rayon Leninski(j)* (not **Leninski(j)* *Rayon*).

I.e. in the first case, these are the common nouns where adnominal attributive adjective can be easily replaced by the attribute in postposition expressed by prepositional phrases, such as: *das Heimatkundemuseum von Tomsk*, *das Bier aus Tomsk*. In the second case, when a propriality category appears, two first examples form proper names (full name of the university: *Polytechnische Universität Tomsk*, where the first component refers to the specialization, the second – the type of the higher educational institution, the third – the location, all three together – the full name of the university). The following two examples are of nominal unit (nominal phase in generative science), consisting of *genus proximum* and *differentia specifica*, e.g.: *Rayon* (*genus proximum*) *Oktjabrski (j)* (*differentia specifica*), *Schloss* (*genus proximum*) *Charlottenburg* (*differentia specifica*) (not **Charlottenburg Schloss*), where the sequence of the nominal unit components is fixed by the norm of the literary German language.

Affiliation is characterized by frequent appellative omission especially if a realia was formed e.g.: *das Hasseröder* (*Bier*), *das Bitburger* (*Bier*).

Categories of affiliation and propriality are closely intertwined with each other, and the translator must make a great effort in order to distinguish between them in the translation, e.g.: *Leninskiy trud* (*Lenin's work*) – *das leninsche Werk* (aff.); *Leninsky district* (*rayon*) – (*der*) *Rayon Leninski (j)* (propr.); *Londonskie universitety* (*Universities of London*) – *die Universitäten von London* (aff., also *die Londoner Universitäten*); *shef londonskoy politsii* (*London police chief*) – *der Londoner Polizeichef* (aff.); *londonskiy universitet* (*University of London*) – *die University of London* (propr.).

Difficulties in determining the appropriate category stem from habits of speaking, such as *londonskie universitety* and *londonskiy universitet* whereas the correct form is: *universitety Londona* and *Londonskiy universitet*.

The use of a borrowing “*die University of London*” as the name proves the affiliation of university names to the category of propriality. According to a recent tradition of exoglossy, emerged in the mid XX century. (Kobenko & Sharapova, 2015), the Germans retain the original spelling of such names. Earlier in the German language the propriality was expressed by a specific form which used to be a part of the name: *zu + Dat*, cf. in the names of guesthouses: *Gasthaus zu den drei Eichen*; in parts of the proper names *Graf zu Mansfeld*. Later this form became obsolete and merged with possessive form: *von Heine*, *Heines*, *heinesch*.

According to the composition the considered endemic units can be divided into simple and complex (composite); the latter are represented by combinations of two or more lexems (“*kelya startsa Feodora Tomskogo*” (The cell of startsa Feodor Tomskiy)), blendings (“*Tsar Bell*”), aphorisms (“*Count, your ancestors helped to conquer Siberia not with bread and salt, help now to conquer it spiritually, via the book!*” (V. Florinskiy)).

Functionally and stylistically the majority of Tomsk realonyms are units of onomasiological crypto-classes: archaisms (“*prisutstvennyye mesta*” (public offices) – “*die Gouvernementsämter*”), the terms of the various areas of human activity (architecture, art, religion), regionalism (“*Elan*” – “*Jelan*”). Genetically the considered units have a high percentage of borrowed morphemic material (“*kelya*” (a cell) – “*die Zelle*”, “*kostel*” (a church) – “*das Kastell*”, “*arkhiereyskiy dom*” (a bishop’s house) – “*der Erzbischofssitz*”) or by means of loan translations (“*Talovskie chashi*” (bowls) – “*die Kalksteinbecken von Talowka*”, “*sobornaya mecheta*” (Cathedral mosque) – “*die Stiftsmoschee*”).

2.3. Criteria and translation techniques of Tomsk realonyms

It should be emphasized that the translation techniques strictly comply with the aim of the translation – *skopos* (Reiß, 1991, p. 29). Thus, for example, during the translation invited Germanists had to find a compromise between preserving the literary value of the text and visual (explicative) potential of endemism. Designations of Tomsk realonyms revealed in the speech of many external German native speakers (in particular representatives of the academic elite) such as “*Auferstehungskirche*” (Resurrection Church – *Voskresenskaya tserkov*), “*Petrus-Paulus-Kathedrale*” (Peter and Paul Cathedral – *Petropavlovskiy Sobor*), “*Gründungsstein*” (Foundation Stone – *kamen’ osnovaniya*) are undoubtedly normative and equivalent, but cannot be used without any considerations by translators for the guide to the city of Tomsk because of its reference to another historical space. It is easy to imagine the

outcome of the situation, when a German tries to ask Tomskovites, who do not speak the German language, the way to “Auferstehungskirche” or “Weißsee”. Thus, Tomsk realonyms designations should reflect the cultural component of their origin, i.e. literally quoting foreign culture reality to simplify orientation in it, which is the essence of the skopos translation, for example: Upper / lower Elan – *Oberjelan / Unterjelan (Niederjelan)* (without an article as a proper name); Rimskiy Katolicheskiy Kostel (Roman Catholic Church) – *das römisch-katholische Kastell*: a unit “*Kastell*”, descended from Latin *castellum* – a fortress, combines both the first and fourth possibility of realonyms’ interpretation, as well as genetically related to the archaism “kostel” which creates an additional iconicity.

In translation studies there are four main (out of six) ways to translate realonyms (Luxemburg, 2009, pp. 18-24): transliteration (*Tschudskoje ozero*), transcription (*T(s)chutskoe ozero* – in accordance with the standard language, cf. French bibliographic transcription, transcription by B. Steinitz and modern phonetic transcription based on the norms of international English language), reconstruction (*Tschudskoje-See*) and historical tradition (Peipussee). In the case of Tomsk realonyms the translation is entirely focused on skopos, i.e. the function of the target text (a translate). Therefore, the strategy of translators should be based primarily on the first and second techniques and should exclude the third and include the fourth as the auxiliary one (to clarify and retain transparency of a generic aspect: *-kirche, -gebäude* etc.). The general translation criterion is the adequacy, suggesting a functional and meaningful reconstruction of the volume of the source text (Kobenko & Ptashkin, 2014). These translation techniques of Tomsk realonyms are not the final variant and may vary according to skopos translation. Nevertheless, the practice of translative interpretation of these endemisms proves the validity of the criteria selected as the basis for the translation strategy.

3. Conclusion

So, as realonyms are a middle category between appellatives and proper names we are not talking about creating a new designation but about a semantic transposition as a word-building type of nomination. Despite the steady tradition continuing since the Neogrammarians, the examined cases of the word use are the product of a word semantic change – the eksemy which is aimed at expanding the semantic functionality of appellatives. This knowledge explains the phenomenon of instability of characteristics in the selected classes of nouns in modern Russian and German, and therefore translation challenges of correlated units. From the functional aspect Tomsk realonyms are intermediate values of boundary categories on the N.A. and N.P. interval. In terms of composition these units range from simple units to the citations that have prominent local coloring. Interpretation of Tomsk realonyms in the German language is connected with the reconstruction of both functional and content sides, as well as synchronization of a translate with the skopos (goal) of translation.

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