



Problems of translation of Orthodox non-equivalent lexis to English

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Abstract: Cultural elements and systems often do not match up between two cultures which use different languages, which represents one of the main problems in the domain of translation. This paper is focused on the problems in translating non-equivalent lexicon specific to the Eastern Orthodox Church. The paper presents an overview and a detailed explanation of translation procedures used in dealing with this issue. The author begins with the non-equivalent words in Serbian, as the source language, since it is the language of the community which has been for many centuries back predominantly Eastern Orthodox and thus possesses an appropriate language “apparatus”, and observes their translation equivalents in English, as the target language. The research will show that the choice of the translation procedures is often not exclusively a matter of language. The good translator must not only have a good knowledge of the target language, but also must be familiar with the specific features of the religion and culture of the given society and the source language. Besides, we will point out that the target audience is also an important factor that must be observed in the process of translation.

Keywords: English language, non-equivalent lexicon, Orthodox Christianity, Serbian language, translation procedures

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1. Introduction

Although the end of 20th and the beginning of the 21st century marked a shift in linguistics towards cultural or anthropocentric point of view,¹ the questions of language and culture were discussed long before this.² Linguists used different terms like realities, non-equivalent lexicon, lacuna, cultureme, linguocultureme, culturally marked lexis to define lexical units that have no verbal equivalent in one of the languages being compared, due to the absence or concepts in a certain linguoculture

¹ Discussed in: Rajna Dragičević. Verbalne asocijacije kroz srpski jezik i kulturu (Beograd: Društvo za srpski jezik i književnost Srbije, 2010), and Danko Šipka. Budi se Istok (i Zapad): uz antropocentrički zaokret u lingvistici krajem dvadesetog veka. *Лингвистичке актуелности* 1/2 (Beograd: SANU, 2000), 7-11.

² Sergej Vlahov, Florin Sider. *Neperevodimoe v perevode* (Moskva: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1980).

or lexical unit expressing this concept, which raised the problem of untranslatability resulting in a process of the semantic presentation of these lexical units³.

There is neither one uniform and generally accepted definition of translation, nor division of translation procedures. Different authors point out different definitions and divisions, but they would probably all agree with the opinion of Katičić that although it is not possible to translate, it is necessary to translate.⁴

According to Bugarski translation is a form of communication in which some extralinguistic content, previously expressed in one language, is transferred to another language.⁵ Speaking about lexical gaps – when one language possesses a lexical unit that expresses a certain aspect of extralinguistic reality, while another language does not have such a unit, Ivir points to the important social role of a translator who is the first to encounter them and to find a suitable expression for it in the target language.⁶

The translator encounters not only the problem of finding equivalent units, but also the difficulties of comparing two different cultures in which communication is carried out in different languages.⁷ The most common problem is to preserve the original reference during translation, and certain translation procedures are suggested in confronting it.⁸

³ O. S. Palchevska, Translating Culturally Marked Vocabulary, <http://catalog.liha-pres.eu/index.php/liha-pres/catalog/download/65/742/1619-1?inline=1>, (accessed November 22, 2024).

⁴ R. Katičić, 1972:3, as cited in R. Bugarski, *Lingvistika u primeni* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2007), 141.

⁵ Ranko Bugarski, Translation Across Cultures: Some Problems with Terminology. *Scientific and Humanistic Dimensions of Language*. Ed. Kurt R. Janowsky (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishings Co, 1985), 159-163. He explains the lack of the term "transfer of linguistic units" over the term "transfer of extralinguistic content" by saying that the main criterion would then be equivalence of meaning, which is difficult to achieve between different languages. The main problems in the field of translation is the fact that cultural elements and systems often do not coincide between two cultures expressed in different languages, making, therefore, the translation not only an interlingual but also an intercultural operation. The intercultural nature of translation is most obvious in the field of terminology, which covers lexical and phraseological areas related to specific aspects of organized life in a given community (sociopolitical organization, economy, education, and others). In this area the author encounters the largest number of so-called "cultural" concepts, expressed in local terms that often do not have corresponding equivalents in the languages used by other cultures. Finally, he concludes that the comparative study of culturally specific terminology could be of importance for contrastive studies of languages as carriers of the cultures expressed by them, and that careful and culturally sensitive translation would reduce the imposition of one's own values and ways of thinking on concepts that are characteristic of other cultures, which would lead to improved mutual understanding.

⁶ Vladimir Ivir. *Teorija i tehnika prevođenja* (Sremski Karlovci: Centar "Karlovačka gimnazija" Sremski Karlovci, 1978), 111-128.

⁷ Dubravko Škiljan. Pogled u lingvistiku (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1980), 143-144. The author distinguishes literal, from non-literal translation in which case the translator, in searching for content equivalents, significantly deviates from the isomorphism of the expression plan

⁸ B. Hlebec, *Opšta načela prevođenja* (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1989), 129-130. In order to realize the references to these specific elements of the culture of the source, the author suggests the following procedures: 1. copying of names and expressions, 2. transcription, 3. transliteration, 4. adaptation (foreign or loan word), 5. replacement of an unknown name or expression with a known

The emphasis of this paper will be on the problems that arise when translating a non-equivalent lexicon which is specific to the Eastern Orthodox Church, that is, on the translation procedures that are used in solving problems that are often not exclusively a matter of language. It will take into consideration the terms for those realities that do not exist in other Christian denominations. For the purpose of this paper, the author has chosen the translation procedures proposed by Hlebec (see footnote 8), with their partial adaptation, since they provide more layered and thus more detailed distinction between them and allow us to analyse the non-equivalent lexicon in the most complete and comprehensive way. The author will present an overview and more detailed explanation of each of the translation procedure, and each procedure will be accompanied by appropriate examples from the source and target texts, that is, from Serbian as the source language and the translation equivalents in English as the target language. Namely, the author begins with the above-mentioned terms in Serbian, being the language of the community, which has, for many centuries back, been predominantly Eastern Orthodox and thus has the appropriate language “apparatus” and observes the translation equivalents in English.

The issue of religious terminology has been dealt with by theolinguistics, and the furthest development of the issue has been made in Polish linguistics; in Russian and Ukrainian linguistics the author also finds dissertation research, monographs, studies and articles in this area, while in Serbian linguistics it has remained almost unexplored⁹.

The science of translation has proven to be an interesting area of research from a theological-linguistic point of view. In the Serbian language area, however, the works in this field are few and deal mainly with the issue of translating lexicon from the sphere of Christian Orthodox spirituality, the New Testament¹⁰ and the Liturgy of

foreign one, 6. literal translation or calque, 7. translation-definition (description, paraphrase or interpretative translation), 8. neutralization (replacement with a neutral expression), 9. omission, 10. neologisms or creative borrowings (construction of a new name or expression), 11. replacement with an analogous domestic or foreign name or expression.

⁹ K. Končarević, *Pogled u teolingvistiku* (Beograd: Jasen, 2015), 53-112.

¹⁰ Radomir Rakić, O sinodskom prevodu Novoga zaveta, In. *Godišnjak: časopis za teološko-filosofska i tekuća pitanja*, 4/4 (Foča: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet "Sveti Vasilije Ostroški" u Foči, 2005), 275-285; Ksenija Končarević. Lingvistička problematika prevođenja Svetog Pisma u ogledalu Srpske pravoslavne crkvene periodike (1868-1970). *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati: zbornik sa naučnog skupa* (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2008), 27-34; Tatjana Samardžija-Grek, Glagolski prilozi sadašnji govoreći i odgovarajući u „Novom zavjetu“ Vuka Karadžića i njihovi ekvivalenti u originalnom naučnom tekstu i nekim francuskim prevodima. *Naučni sastanak slavista u Vukove dane*, 40, 1. (Beograd, 2011), 543-556; Darko Todorović, Jezik Vukovog prevoda "Novog zaveta" i vernost originalu. *Naučni sastanak slavista u Vukove dane*, 40, 1 (Beograd: Filološki fakultet, 2011), 557-56; Nikola Todorović, Etika kritike u pravoslavnom diskursu. *Pravoslavna teologija i kultura* (zbornik sa naučnog skupa održanog 25. i 26. decembra 2008. u Nišu) (Niš: Centar za crkvene studije (Niš: Punta, 2009.), 137-144; Predrag Dragutinović, Značaj kritike teksta za srpske prevode Novog zaveta. Deo prvi: Teorijska postavka. *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati: zbornik radova naučnog skupa*, 11 (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet,

St. John Chrysostom¹¹. The translation of lexicon from the sphere of Orthodox spirituality was discussed in one paper, but in the field of translation from Russian to Serbian.¹² The lexical-semantic and stylistic problems of translating theological texts and texts from the field of Orthodox spirituality are the subject of one monograph¹³ and several works by the same author¹⁴.

The author with this paper brings a novelty since it is unique research and a pioneer in dealing with interreligious translation issues in the lexicological field of Serbian and English languages. It seeks to explore and propose solutions for translating non-equivalent Orthodox Christian lexicon, focusing on both linguistic and cultural adaptation. It shall open for further discussion some problems in lexicographic studies of domain-specific languages, and hopefully help the translators realise some of the aspects that such a process requires to be taken into consideration, as well as offer them solutions for potential doubts and problems.

2. Research Methods

In treating the issue of non-equivalent words and trying to bridge the gap between different religions, cultures and language systems, the author studied the translation procedures commonly used by the translators. Most common translation procedures and language elements are the following: transliteration, transcription, loan words, calque, translation definition or interpretive procedure (description or paraphrase), neutralization, analogous native word, omission, neologisms or creative loan words, use of the form of a foreign word from the source language. In some cases, these procedures can be combined with other procedures. They can also be combined with explanations in footnotes. Besides, unlike the combining of the procedures in transferring one concept, the mixing of procedures, that is, combining procedures related to the transfer of various terms within one message can be also applied.

2012), 31-41; Predrag Dragutinović, Značaj kritike teksta za srpske prevode Novog zaveta. Deo drugi: Recepcija u srpskoj prevodilačkoj teoriji i praksi. *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati: zbornik radova naučnog skupa*, 12 (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2012), 31-39; Predrag Dragutinović, Značaj kritike teksta za srpske prevode Novog zaveta. Deo treći: Perspektive za budući rad. *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati: zbornik radova naučnog skupa*, 13, (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2013), 36-42.

¹¹ Vladimir Vukašinović, Prevodi svete Liturgije oca Justina Popovića. *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati: zbornik radova naučnog skupa*, 5 (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2010), 30-41.

¹² Ružica Bajić, O problemima prevođenja nekih leksema iz oblasti pravoslavne duhovnosti sa ruskog na srpski jezik. *Naš jezik* 39, 1/4 (Beograd: Institut za srpski jezik SANU, 2008) 35-42.

¹³ I. Knežević, *Teološki diskurs engleskog i srpskog jezika: leksičko-semantički i stilistički problemi prevođenja* (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Institut za teološka istraživanja, 2010).

¹⁴ Knežević I. Interkulturalni problemi prevođenja. *Stil* 9 (Beograd, 2010a), 437-447; Knežević I., Religijski stil kao predmet teolingvističkih poučavanja. *Srpska teologija danas: prvi godišnji simposion 2009* (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2010), 403-407.

Crystal claims that the process of translating religious texts in general is a very hard job, because translators must meet two criteria, which are always incompatible because one is directed backwards, and the other forwards. The translation, primarily, must be historically accurate, to accurately convey the meaning of the source text to that extent in which it is known and to incorporate into the religious tradition which it is a part of. Furthermore, the translation must be adequate for the target readers. It must be understandable, aesthetically likable and in accordance with modern trends of religious thought, social influences, and language changes.

However, all translations are to a certain extent controversial because no translation can satisfy the requirements of all readers.¹⁵ Besides, it is impossible to achieve perfect semantic equivalence between the source language and target language because no translator can produce a translation that by rhythm, phonosymbolics, wordplay, cultural allusions is an accurate reflection of the source language. There are several types of incomplete equivalence that in practice on a certain level can be successful. There is no such thing as “the best” translation, and depending on the purpose of the translation, the best translation in certain circumstances can be quite inappropriate in some others.¹⁶ However, Bell disputes that the choice of suitable equivalent will not depend only on the linguistic system(s) being handled by the translator, but also on the way both the writer of the source text and the target text translator choose to manipulate the linguistic systems in question.¹⁷

The research will be based primarily on the corpus obtained by extracting terms in the Serbian language for realities that are specific to the Orthodox Church, and finding their proper translation equivalents in English in language-for-specific-purposes bilingual dictionaries and glossaries published at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. They are as follows: *Rečnik pravoslavlja*, by Branko Vukičević, *Srpsko-engleski i englesko-srpski teološki rečnik* (Serbian-English and English-Serbian theological dictionary) by Aleksandra Dobrić, *Glosar religijskih pojmova* (Glossary of religious terms), and monolingual glossary *A Dictionary of Orthodox Terminology*, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America. The list of terms in the Serbian language for the realities specific only to the Orthodox Christian Church was also provided by using the following literature: *Rečnik Pravoslavne Teologije* (Dictionary of Orthodox Theology) by Jovan Brija, *Rečnik Crkvenih Pojmova* (Dictionary of Church Terms) by Ljiljana Stošić, *Pravoslavna Liturgika* (Orthodox Liturgics) by Lazar Mirković, *Kalendar Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*

¹⁵ Dejvid Kristal, *Kembrička enciklopedija jezika*. Translated by Gordana Terić, Boris Hlebec, et al. (Beograd: Nolit, 1996), 384-385.

¹⁶ Kristal, 344.

¹⁷ R. T. Bell, *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 18.

u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama i Kanadi za prestupnu 2000 godinu (The Calendar of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the United States of America and Canada for 2000), *Opći Religijski Leksikon*.

Next, the author will analyse a representative corpus of Orthodox Christian authors from the 20th century who created or are creating in Serbian and English and their translations into English and Serbian. A comparative analysis of the non-equivalent lexicon was performed on the originals and translations of the following works: *The Life of Saint Sava* and *Život svetog Save* by bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, *For the Life of the World* and *Za život sveta* by Aleksandar Shmeman, *The Orthodox Way* and *Pravoslavni put* by Bishop Kallistos Ware, *Prolog* and *The Prologue from Ochrid* by Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, and *Manastir Studenica (monograph)*, *Studenica Monastery* by Mirjana Šakota.

The mentioned literature belongs to different genres. The consequence of this diversity is the rich array of terms that the author finds in these different genres, as well as different solutions to the researched linguistic problems that are offered depending on many factors (translation recipients – nationality and level of expertise; style characteristics of a given type of text). For the sake of comparative study, only works that exist in both languages, Serbian and English, were taken into account. Based on the above-mentioned analysis, the author observed how individual authors of theological texts and texts from the field of Orthodox Christian spirituality were translated from Serbian to English, that is, how the translators of those works solved the problems of non-equivalent lexemes. The author also observed the creation of such texts in English by authors who profess the Orthodox Christian faith and who are no strangers to this terminology.

The authors of this group of works are members of different Orthodox Churches: Russian, Greek, and Serbian. This allowed us to see the influence of foreign languages, namely Russian, Greek and Serbian, as the native language of the mentioned authors, on the English language in the translation process.

3. Results and Discussion

Transliteration and Transcription

Among the most common translation procedures are transliteration and transcription. Translation is the transmission of a source form by searching for corresponding graphs in the target language, that is, the act of converting a written language from one writing system to another. Transcription means transmitting these forms by the process of transphonemization. There is also the possibility of combining these two methods, but none of them provides the preservation of source meaning because the difference may occur considering the valeur which the word has

in the target language system.¹⁸ However, both these procedures should be avoided when it comes to culturally specific lexemes, when the context does not reveal what it refers to. What could justify the use of both these procedures would be to use footnote or intratextual expansions. The same procedure will be applied when it comes to a lexeme that is not specific to the culture of the source language speakers but is a little known in the milieu of the final recipient. Both procedures are acceptable if the used source lexeme should mark and identify a specific item functioning as a proper noun. Transcription and transliteration depend on the relationship toward another, different culture from which the terms come, where puristic tendencies or environment closedness towards foreign influences can play a major role.

In the analysed corpus the transliteration procedure can be found in some words as: *slava*, *Vidovdan*, *popadia*, *protinica*, *plastanica*, *Nomocanon*, etc. The transcription without transliteration is used in the transmission of the word: *datcha*, *dacha*, *starets*, *diakonitsa*, *sratchiza*, and others. In most cases, these words are taken over together with their endings from Greek, i.e., from Slovenian languages, so their plural endings are mainly of foreign origin, such as is the case with the words of Menaion and Mineya. The author rarely notices cases where, as possible translation, the author is given foreign words with endings characteristic of English language, such as the word *heirmology* (instead of common English form *heirmologion*).

When translating some of the terms, some more complex procedures or combinations occur. In translating the words *panakamilavka*, one of the possible solutions is *skouphos* with a veil. In this case, a foreign word is used for the translation of the foreign word with an additional explanation using the words of English origin.

Loanwords or Foreign Words

Loanwords or foreign words, according to Škiljan, are language units taken from one language system and transferred to another. He differs: 1. phonological loanwords, which represent the use of phonemes from another language which never fit into the new system; 2. morphological loanwords, which are very rare; 3. syntactic loanwords, where the syntactic structure of one language system is authentically transferred to another; and 4. lexical loanwords, which are most common, and refer to any word taken from some foreign language. Certain lexical loanwords that are necessary in communication practice will become an integral part of the language in which they are introduced.¹⁹

¹⁸ Relational meanings, that is, *valeur* or *value* according to Saussure's terminology, is the difference in terms of the place that two units occupy in the system of two given languages in relation to other units of that language, no matter how similar they are in terms of their systemic meaning. (as cited in B. Hlebec, *Opšta načela prevođenja*, 22.

¹⁹ Dubravko Škiljan, *Pogled u lingvistiku*, 141.

Most of the words used to translate names for specific realities of the Orthodox Church into English are foreign words or borrowings. They have mostly come from the Greek language, or rarely from Church Slavonic, that is, Russian. The words of the Church Slavonic source are especially important, although they are felt as archaic, because that language had a missionary function, and it was important that the words were comprehensible in the wide Slovenian region. It was precisely because of such an orientation, that the Church Slavonic words should be approached having the broader context in mind.²⁰ They adapted to English by a kind of “adapted transliteration”, or by combining transcription and transliteration procedures. Due to the discrepancy between the graphological systems of English, as the target language on one hand, and Greek, Church Slavonic, and Russian, as the source languages on the other, the process of transliteration could not be consistently implemented. The same is the case with the process of transcription, which would rarely be used alone, because there are also limitations in the transfer of all phonological values from one language to another.

By combining these two procedures, or, as the author named it, “adapted transliteration” the following loanwords have been obtained: *Typicon*, *Typikon* – *Tipik*, *Ustav* (Constitution); *Hieratikon*, *Liturgikon* – *Služebnik*, *Služabnik*; the *Archieratikon* – *Arhijerejski činovnik*, *Arhijeratikon*; *Menaion*, *Mineya* (Greek pl.) – *Minej*, *Mesečnik*, *Mesecoslov*; *Anthologion* – *Antologija*; *Triodion* – *Triod*; *Pentekostarion* – *Cvetni triod*; *protinica* (the wife of a protopresbyter) – *protinica*; *synkell*, *sincellos* – *sinděl*; *stavropegion* (stauropegial monastery) – *stavropigija*; *starets* – *starac* (meaning elder, usually in a monastery); *aposticha*, *apostikha* – *apostiha*; *antidoron*, *antidor*, *anaphora* – *nafora*, *antidor*.

Calque

A large number of words appeared in various languages in the world for the first time in the form of calque, a literal, semantically motivated translation, to become in time the property of other speakers as well. According to Cristal calque refers to a type of borrowing, where the morphemic constituents of the borrowed word or phrase are translated item by item into equivalent morphemes in the new language.²¹ Calquing refers exclusively to polymorphemic words, and a subcategory of calquing or structural translation is partial calquing or partial structural translation (loan blend). In this case one part of the form is of foreign, and the other of native origin. In most cases, a foreign prefix is added to a word that is of native origin.²²

²⁰ R. Dragičević, *Srpska leksika u prošlosti i danas* (Beograd: Naučno delo, 2018), 36-44.

²¹ Dejvid Kristal, *Enciklopedijski rečnik moderne lingvistike* (Beograd: Nolit, 1999), 156-157.

²² Tvrtko Prčić, *Engleski u srpskom* (Novi Sad: Zmaj, 2005), 179.

The translation process of calquing has been rarely applied in translating the non-equivalent lexicon observed in this paper. However, the author shall single out the following words obtained in this way: Six Psalms – *šestopsalmije*; the Holy Door, Royal Door – *carska vrata, sveta vrata*; Presanctified (Gifts/Liturgy) – *Predeosvećeni* (darovi/liturgija); name-day – *imendan*; antefeast, forefeast – *predprazništvo*; afterfeast – *poprazništvo*.

In order to transfer non-equivalent lexical units from one language to another, translators prefer using foreign words to calquing. Calquing is a far more eligible procedure when translating for average translation recipients. It is easier for such readers to follow the basic content of the text without being burdened by referring to explanations in the footnotes or to excessive and uninteresting information added in the text itself. It would be advisable for the most compounds, such as foreign words which came from Greek or Church Slavonic, to be calqued, or translated by native elements, that is, the elements from English language, by copying the structure of the original word, so that in such form they enter English.

The reasons are many. First, they would easier and more quickly be assimilated and adapted into the general vocabulary of the English language. Secondly, their use and comprehension would be facilitated both for non-Orthodox and Orthodox believers who do not know Greek or Church Slavonic, and do not know the meaning of the foreign compounds coming from these languages. Thus, for example, the name for the hymn *mnogoljetstvo* could be translated as for/on-many-year-song or long life!, instead of *polychronion*. The word *stavrofor* could be translated as cross-bearer, instead of the *stavrophor*. There are also compounds that should not be calqued because they entered other languages (Serbian, Russian) from Greek or Church Slavonic with the necessary adaptation by transliteration or transcription. In the case of such widely accepted terms, which in their original form are already known and established in other languages, the creation of new words by calquing would lead to unnecessary accumulation of synonyms and potential misinterpretation. The example is the term *Panagia* that was formed from the Greek word meaning “All-holy” and refers to the depiction of the Virgin not only on the icon but also to the bishop’s medallion (*Encolpion*).²³

Translation-Definition or Interpretive Procedure

For the translation-definition or interpretive procedure (description or paraphrase), the component analysis is used.²⁴ Descriptive translation is not acceptable as a technique for translating text parts at a sentence level or larger than a sentence. However, there are several circumstances when it must be applied. The first

²³ A Dictionary of Orthodox Terminology.

²⁴ Boris Hlebec, *Opšta načela prevodenja*, 133.

is the case when the end user of the translation requires that. He wants to have a translation with explanations and descriptions, and the goal is to adapt the text to the level of the end-user's level of knowledge. Another case is when in the target language there is no appropriate equivalent for adequate translation of a part of a text, and it would take several neologisms, which would make such a translation incomprehensible, non-functional, and inappropriate. The third case is when it comes to (first) translations of philosophical texts from different cultures and civilizations or scientific texts whose content is difficult to understand.

A large number of terms of non-equivalent lexical units is translated descriptively or by translation-definition, and they are the following: Book of Needs – Mali Trebnik; Book of Offices – *Služebnik, Služabnik*; liturgical book for each month – *Minej, Mesečnik, Mesecoslov*; Pre-Easter liturgical Book – *Triod*; Book of the Eight Tones – *Oktoih, Osmoglasnik*; All Sacred and Divine Canon – *Krmčija, nomokanon*; extended prayer – *yektenija*; Trinity ode – *trojičan*; theme song – *irmos*; model stanza – *podobn*; hymn of light – *svetilan, svjetilen*; first covering of the altar – *sračica*; the Holy Bread (imprecise and inappropriate translation) – *agnec*; sacramental fan – *ripida*; vice-altar – *antimins*; Holy Shroud – *plaštanica*; five-bread vessel – *petohlebnica, litijarijum, litijarija*; book stand, folding stand – *analogij, analogion, analonj, nalonj*; double-branched candlesticks – *dikirije*; triple-branched candlesticks – *trikirije*; Memorial Monday – *Pobusani ponedeljak*; small and secluded monastery – *skit*; monastery under the direct control of the Patriarch, patriarchal monastery – *stavropigija, stavropigijalni manastir*; Christian Prayer Movement – *bogomoljački pokret*; not of human making – *nerukotvoren*; a Holy image, a Veronica Image, an icon not made by hands – *nerukotvorena ikona*; spiritual guide – *starac*; funeral meal – *daća*; blessed bread – *nafora*; revenue land – *metoh*.

These translations are based mainly on componential analysis. They describe a reality by pointing to its appearance and quality: double-branched candlesticks, triple-branched candlesticks, extended prayer, folding stand etc.; or by pointing to its use and content: Book of Needs, Book of Offices, funeral meal, liturgical book for each month, book stand; or to those qualities, i.e., elements obtained by the componential analysis of the given lexeme that would allow the translation recipient to understand the meaning of the translated term in the easiest and most comprehensible way.

Neutralization

Replacement with neutral term or neutralization is a procedure that inevitably leads to reducing the precision of word when transferring from the original, thus losing colourfulness and vivacity and reducing faithfulness towards style. The translator neutralizes the elements of the foreign culture, which leads to the

deconcretisation.²⁵ Levi also wrote about the loss of emotional coloration of the means of expression by using blank and neutral words.²⁶

Analogous Native Elements

When in the target language the translator searches for those words which relate to objects, beings, and phenomena that have the same or similar use or function as objects, beings and phenomena in the source culture, he looks for analogous native elements, bearing in mind the contextuality, in this case the sacral context. For example, for the Greek word *katapetasma* in the Slavic Gospels appears the translation *zavesa* (curtains). The primary meaning of the lexeme *zavesa* was a drape, usually made of cloth hung over a window that serves as a cover or partition, but in the Gospel texts *zavesa* represents an item of a sacral object – the church.

Translators in English, in some cases, find in the English language analogous native words. Such words often concern similar objects and phenomena as the words of the original, that is, Serbian language, but not the same because these are realities that are specific to the Orthodox religious communities. This translation procedure is also imprecise, because the exact meaning of the concepts is lost, as well as special coloration of Orthodox spirituality, culture, and teaching. As the use of analogue native words often involves this neutralization of the coloration of the original words, the author will perceive here these two translation procedures – neutralization and analogous native term – as one. This group includes the following terms:

Service-book – *Služabnik*, The author finds this term in the general dictionary of the English language as a synonym for Ordinal which refers to the Roman Catholic church book that contains instructions with the order of services in church worship, while *Služabnik*, according to the definition is in the Byzantine rite of Church Slavonic tradition, is a liturgical book containing Church services for evening, morning, and some specific services²⁷. Their use is similar, so they are equivalents, but each of these terms names a specific reality of the Eastern Orthodox, that is of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the term Service-book is not precise enough even in the Anglo-Saxon speaking area, its use in the translation neutralizes the value of the mentioned term in Serbian.

Hymn – *tropar*, One definition of the term hymn the author finds in the dictionary, is a “Christian song of praise sung to God or a saint”, and the second “a similar song praising other gods, nations, etc.”.²⁸ The term *tropar*, however, refers exclusively to a short hymn to a saint in the Byzantine rite. Therefore, the given

²⁵ Hlebec, 133/134.

²⁶ Jirži Levi, *Umjetnost prevodenja*, Translated by Bogdan L. Dabić (Sarajevo: “Svjetlost”, OOUR Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1982), 144.

²⁷ Opći religijski leksikon.

²⁸ Collins English Dictionary

Serbian word does not contain this second, broader meaning of the English term, and its meaning is narrower even than the first meaning of the word hymn. It should also be taken into account that this term also appears in the dictionaries as one of the translation equivalents for the Serbian word *stihira*. This solution is not appropriate, since both *stihira* and *tropar* differ both in structural and functional features, as well as in the way they are performed. Such is also the case with the term anthem as a translation for the word *stihira* (anthem, hymn – *stihira*).

Shrove Week – *siropusna sedmica*, the dictionary²⁹ states that the word shrove occurs only in compounds or as an adjective and means “lent”, for example, Shrove Sunday – *nedelja Velikog posta*; Shrovetide – *Veliki post*. Therefore, it is not sufficiently precise and does not mention the nature of the fast.

Glebe – *metoh*, The English term glebe refers to church land given to a clergyman to be used for additional income, and a potential common characteristic with the meaning of the Serbian term *metoh* would be “monastery land”.

Deacon’s stole – *orar*, For translation of this piece of ecclesiastical vestment, specific to the Orthodox deacon, translators having in mind an average reader, will be forced to describe and clarify the meaning of the name for this item by using an analogous term in the target language. Stole in its appearance, purpose and symbolic quality does not correspond to the same characteristics of the *orar*. In other words, the semantic content of the term stole does not correspond almost at all to the semantic content of the term *orar*, but the descriptive adjective deacon’s connects these two terms which would otherwise be difficult to accept as analogous.

There are some more examples where the use of neutral or analogous native term can cause the misinterpretation or loss of specific meaning of the term:

biretta – skufija

The offered analogous domestic term refers to the cap of a Roman Catholic priest, which, moreover, does not even in its description correspond to the definition of the term *skufija*. The closest replacement for the Serbian term would be skullcap (according to a dictionary “a rounded brimless hat fitting in the crown of the head”³⁰).

shrove week – siropusna sedmica

The word *shrove* occurs only in compounds or as an adjective and means “fast”, e.g. Shrove Sunday = *nedelja Velikog posta*, Shrovetide = *Veliki post*.³¹ Therefore, it is not precise enough and does not say what kind of fast it is. *Siropusna sedmica* is the last preparatory week before the beginning of the Easter Lent, during which meat is not eaten, but it is permitted to use eggs, milk and dairy products.

²⁹ Enciklopedijski englesko-srpski rečnik.

³⁰ Collins English Dictionary

³¹ Enciklopedijski englesko-srpski rečnik

The case is similar with the following examples: hermitage – skit; clapper, mallet – *klepalo, bilo*; chancellor, bishop's chaplain – *protosinđel*; Oblation, Offertory – *proskomidija*; corporal – *antimins*; calotte (of a Priest) – *kamilavka*.

Based on the analysis of the abovementioned terms in Serbian and their analogous words in English, the author can conclude that the terms in English cover only partially or do not cover at all the field of meaning (semantic content) of the terms in Serbian. Such translation equivalents are acceptable only when the text is intended for an average reading audience or when the target text does not have primary referential function. In other cases, the above-mentioned foreign words should be used in translating these terms.

In order to provide a proper translation considering the target audience, the translator is required to have not only a good knowledge of the target language but also to be very well informed about either the nuances of gaps in the meaning of the term in the source language. In the case of translation of Orthodox Christian texts, the translator must have more than a basic knowledge of the Orthodox Christian religion or have the assistance of the scholar in the given field. Moreover, he must be prepared and willing to expand and further education in the specific field.

Omission

Omission is a radical procedure that modifies the original message. It enables the translation recipient to avoid foreign elements of culture towards which he can feel lack of interest or even dislike. Jovanović distinguishes the following types of omissions: 1. mandatory (which he divides into systemic and semantic); 2. optional; and 3. unnecessary omission. Mandatory systemic addition is caused by differences between the linguistic systems of the target language and the source language, while mandatory semantic addition, which is basically also systemic, serves to “cover” the differences in the meaning between the source language and the target language. Optional omission depends on the needs of the end user of the translation. A good translator must not use these procedures intentionally. However, they are necessary because of the differences between the source language and the target language. The decision to omit (or add) something is solely the translator's and is mostly intuitive.³²

In translating some theological texts, especially those on the border of artistic works, such as sermons, epistles and the like, omission of one of the terms can be justified, especially if they are irrelevant to transfer and comprehension of the basic content of the message, or when their description can be uninteresting, confusing, or burdening for the reader himself.

³² Mladen Jovanović, *O prevođenju: tehnika prevođenja: s primerima englesko-srpskog i srpsko-engleskog prevoda* (Beograd: Udruženje naučnih i stručnih prevodilaca Srbije, 2001), 56.

Neologisms or Creative Loanwords

Neologisms or creative loanwords involve the construction of a new name or expression. These are new words, phrases or constructions which have recently entered the language, and have not yet been widely accepted or standardized in the language. They are usually created to describe new terms, cultural or social trends which have not had an appropriate expression in the language. Neologisms, according to Nida and Taber, are often used expressively, i.e., to achieve the impression of novelty or individuality.³³ The translators are language creators whose creation is limited to the sphere of the language. The translator enriches his language by creating such new means of expression or by assimilating in his environment some foreign expressions – exoticisms. Neologisms are a means of translation, but also the subject of the translation process.³⁴ However, in the process of translation, depending on the current situation in the source and target languages, the author will be forced to translate some neologism by using a common word that is not neologism, while in some other situation, the author will have to translate a word that in the source language is not a neologism by using a neologism if it does not still exist in the target language.³⁵

However, neologisms occur more often in literature that allows greater freedom of expression and creativity. It is important to bear in mind that it is possible to analyse neologisms from the perspective of their status in the lexicon of the modern language, but it is also possible to approach them from the point of view of the situation within the lexical system at some other time. But when translating the terms which referential function is important, the use of neologisms would create additional difficulties for the target readers, especially non-experts for the given area. One of rare neologisms, for example, was created when translating the title for the collection of services and short hagiographies of Serbian saints, *Srbljak – Serbicon*. This is a lexical neologism, created by analogy with the words of Greek origin which have entered English translations together with their Greek suffixes. Semantic neologisms, that is, old native words with a new added meaning, are more numerous. This particularly applies to the realities specific to the Orthodox Church, such as church objects and vessels, which are named by words from the general dictionary of the Serbian language, and as such they also exist in the English lexicon. Unlike such English words, however, the equivalent words of the Serbian language, in addition to this common general meaning, have a narrower meaning, or indicate a certain type of an object or phenomenon.

³³ Eugene Nida and Charles Taber: *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 203.

³⁴ Jovanović, O *prevodenju: tehnika prevodenja*, 89.

³⁵ Sibinović, Miodrag, *O prevodenju: priručnik za prevodioce i inokorespondente* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva Beograd, 1983), 42.

In the Serbian language, these words also have mostly their archaic forms. They originated in Church Slavonic and have been retained in this form until now. This is the very *differentia specifica* that distinguishes them from their contemporary form created due to the word evolution. Such is the case with the following words: Rudder of the Orthodox Christians – *Krmčija*; Air – *vozduh* (liturgical vessel); warmth – *teplota, toplota*; lance, spear – *koplje*; sponge – *guba, sunder*; ladle – *sud za toplotu*; bowl, ewer – *lahan*; elder, old man – *starac, starec*; Lamb – *Agnec*; winding sheet, shroud, Holy Shroud – *plaštanica*.

Furthermore, the name for collection of ecclesiastical and secular regulations for Church administration and judiciary in the Orthodox Church, *Krmčija*, is of the Church Slavonic origin and means “steering book”. One of the translations offered in English is Rudder, whose meaning corresponds to the Serbian one.

The above-mentioned words in the English language relate mainly to realities from everyday life and do not have that narrower meaning as their equivalents in Serbian. However, in the context of theological texts and those from the field of Orthodox spirituality, these terms receive their new, narrower meaning even in their translations into English. Yet, to an average translation recipient this new meaning may still remain unfamiliar.

This difference in the meaning, in relation to their general meaning, can be emphasized by orthography, by writing them in a capital letter, such as the word Rudder, Air, Holy Shroud. If the term, which has a general meaning “air”, is in a translated text written in a capital letter, it gains a specific, more narrow meaning of a liturgical vessel in the given context. In some cases, it would be desirable to further explain the term in the target text itself. Thus, *lahan* can be translated as church vessel bowl or just church vessel, which would indicate that it is a church vessel for special purposes. The term Rudder, e.g., is followed by the addition – “of the Orthodox Christians”, which points to a different, new meaning that this word has gained, and thus clearly and more precisely indicates the reality itself.

One of the translation procedures is to copy the form of a foreign word. Such words are unfamiliar to the target language system, but in some cases their meaning can be comprehended from context or explanation, as well.

Combination and Mixing of Procedures

Each of the translation procedures can be combined with others. Each can also be combined with explanations given in footnotes if the translator describes the term which he has used in translation or gives information of the original term. However, one should be careful with using such references and explanations since an average reader may be disinterested and disheartened for further reading. Levi warns that footnotes below the text are not always justified because the semantic unit, which is an integral part of the work, is taken outside the boundaries of the work and ends in

the publishing apparatus of the book, so it is more advisable to insert the explanation within the target text itself.³⁶

Nida argues that such additions are justifiable only in strategic parts of target text where they will facilitate the comprehension of the text, but not in all parts of the translation where they appear.³⁷ Basically, such changes in the text will only be performed if: 1) the recipient of the translation can misinterpret the text; 2) the text will not have any meaning for the recipient; or 3) if the translation is so “overloaded” that it is too hard for an average reader to understand and follow it.³⁸

The translator shall combine the procedures depending on the target text recipient. If a translation is intended for the general public and an important part of the text is to be translated, the translator will unite extreme procedures. If the recipient is an expert in the given area, the translator should rather combine procedures such as transcription, analogous native term, literal translation, and definition. In addition to the translation recipient, the differences between two cultures will also play an important role in the selection of translation procedures. The more different the cultures of the source text and target text recipient are, the translator will use less extreme procedures, such as paraphrase and description, omission and creation of neologisms. More extreme procedures would produce a stronger effect on the target text recipient. On the other hand, the closer the mentioned cultures are, the procedures for getting closer to the original culture will lose their edge and will become more appropriate in target texts. As much as cultures are more similar to each other, the transcription, transliteration, and literal translation procedures will be more acceptable.³⁹

The texts with the dominant referential function, that is, in which the information on culture is important and cannot be replaced by a target language equivalent without changing the essence, will require to get closer to the culture of the source text. In this case, foreign words, relating to realities specific to a particular cultural environment, are less prominent in the target text.⁴⁰ Nida argues that “foreign associations” can rarely be avoided in translation of the terms that identify culturally specific concepts and things. He lists examples from translations of Biblical texts and says that it is impossible to remove foreign “objects” such as Pharisees, Sadducees, Solomon’s temple, cities of refuge or Biblical themes as Lamb of God, anointing, living sacrifice, adulterous generation because these expressions are deeply rooted in the very thought structure of the message. Nevertheless, these cultural differences are just a minor problem, particularly if the translator uses footnotes to explain the

³⁶ Levi, *Umjetnost prevodenja*, 117.

³⁷ Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 230.

³⁸ Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice*, 110.

³⁹ Hlebec, *Opšta načela prevodenja*, 135-136.

⁴⁰ Hlebec, 138.

reasons for certain cultural differences. It is clear to all people that other people behave differently from themselves.⁴¹

Unlike the combining of the procedures in transferring one concept, Hlebec points out the mixing of procedures, that is, combining procedures related to the transfer of various terms within one message. Mixing extreme procedures within the same text is almost unacceptable, particularly if it concerns equivalents for the same source words. Mixing extreme with neutral is more acceptable because cultural and stylistic inconsistency is avoided.⁴² None of these procedures will provide direct transmission of references, nor should the reference be changed due to them, but will depend on the cooperation with the context. Each of these procedures testifies about the stylistic-expressive intentions of the sender of the message because a referent cannot be referred to without articulating expressiveness.⁴³

4. Conclusion

The author can argue that language is not sufficient for understanding the sublime truth of religion, since according to Apostle Paul “the kingdom of God is not in words.” (1Cor 4:20). Many theologians question the foundations of hermeneutics, namely, they wonder whether it is possible to clothe an unreal truth in a real language. The language of Christianity, as well as all written traditions of the Orthodox faith, has an indicative: invoking character and a denoting meaning. Yet, this Truth, which is hypostatic, cannot be fully reached within language itself. Thus, any language itself is not perfect for transferring the truths of God, which makes translation even more impossible and harder. However, although it is impossible to translate, we must.

From all the above stated, the author comes to the conclusion that the knowledge of the target language is not the only prerequisite that guarantees the most appropriate translation of non-equivalent vocabulary. The translator must be well acquainted with the specific features of the culture and religion in question. He must be able to find the best solution in transferring the semantic contents of the terms. Besides, he must be aware of the target audience in order to be able to use and adjust the translated text to the level of knowledge and needs of the target reader. It would be advisable for the translators working on Orthodox Christian texts to be ready and even eager to expand and continue their education in this particular area, to gain as much as possible the detailed information about the Orthodox Christian religion and its teaching, and all the aspects of everyday life of a true Orthodox Christian.

The practical application of this paper is to help and guide translators on how to overcome obstacles in their work, so that they do not give up on the demanding

⁴¹ Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 167-168.

⁴² Hlebec, *Opšta načela prevodjenja*, 136.

⁴³ Ibid., 8.

path they have embarked on. Translation is a place where cultures and religions, previously distant, come closer, merge, and the translator acts as an intermediary between two different languages of different cultures. He is a link that needs to bridge cultural and linguistic boundaries. Words have power. They are used to convey and express the transcendental, the heavenly in a way that is receptive to the human intellect. The semantic content of the word reflects Heaven itself. The translator's role is to bring that semantic content closer to the recipient of the translation in the best possible way, to open a window for him to recognize and receive that heavenly. The translator can influence the reader, shape him and his opinion, bring two cultures closer together or separate them. Therefore, a great responsibility lies with the translator as a mediator between cultures, religions, and Heaven.

Furthermore, the paper calls the linguistic scholars to continue and strengthen cooperation with theologians and other experts to an interdisciplinary level in order to create specialized dictionaries, glossaries and textbooks and thus provide steady and standardized sources of knowledge for the translators looking for the most appropriate corresponding translation equivalents.

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