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## UKRAINAIN SWEARING IN THE MIRROR OF GERMAN TRANSLATION

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the problem of swearing and its translation from Ukrainian into German. It provides the analyses of the previous researches covering the topics “foul language”, “obscene language” and “swearing”. Swearing is a language taboo that conveys the negative energy a speaker wants to get rid of by the means of shifting it on the recipient. It is not always the recipient who is the addressee of the swearing, since language taboo includes the usage of an address-free swearing, the latter one belonging to the parenthetical words which are language incrustations and which do not carry semantic meaning. But in the language there are also other obscene words with the semantically-lowered connotation. The article reveals the differences in the usage of swear language by different nations, it also provides the comparison of the Ukrainian, Russian and German swearing. It is pointed out that Russian obscene language is more connected to the rude names of genitals, sexual intercourse and sexual deviations, but it is less connected to the physiological ejections. The article studies the influence of the Russian culture on other nations’ cultures, including the Ukrainian one. In the Ukrainian and German languages, contrary to the Russian language, obscene words are mainly connected to the physiological ejections (scatological humour). After careful study of the certain scholars works the author of the article also demonstrates the ways obscene words come up in the Ukrainian language. The article also demonstrates the ways of translation of the swearing the examples being provided from the from the post-modern literature works.

**Keywords:** swearing, obscene words, translation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

An obscene language is a linguistic taboo that bears the negative energy a speaker passes to the recipient. It is not always the recipient who is the addressee of the obscene language, since linguistic taboo includes the usage of an address-free swearing, the latter belongs to the parenthetical words which are language incrustations carrying no semantic meaning. Though, in the language there are also other obscene words with the semantically-lowered connotation.

The analysis of taboo words is dealt with in the works of both foreign and national scientists. It was studied by V. Mokiienko, T. Nikitina, V. Khimik, B. Uspensky, V. Bykov, V. Zhelvis, L. Stavytska, O. Gavryliv, O. Golod, L. Bilokononko, A. Danylenko, L. Kleputs, O. Kulchytska and others.

The translation of obscene words viewed as an indecent language that goes against morals, values and decency belongs to poorly explored fields of Translation Studies. The aim of our article is to compare the Ukrainian, Russian and German obscene languages while illustrating the ways of translation of a foul language, supported by the examples from works of the postmodern literature. The main objectives of the article are the following: to demonstrate how a swear word got into the Ukrainian language considering Russian and Ukrainian scientists' studies, to show the difference in using swearing vocabulary by different ethnic groups, to provide examples of translating a foul language from Ukrainian into German.

There are different versions concerning the penetration of a considerable part of the obscene language from the Russian language into the Ukrainian and other Slavic languages. As V. Mokiyenko and T. Nikitina note modern Ukrainians, Poles and Czechs, for example, are sure that rude swearing that can be heard in the streets of Kyiv, Lviv, Warsaw, Krakow or Prague – is “the hand of Moscow” [5, p. 8], explaining this fact by migration processes in the post-perestroika period. “Needless to say, the influence of the Russian culture and Russian lack of culture on modern world became “obvious and rude” indeed [...]. One can hear – there is no point in pretending otherwise – our famous Russian swear word, which long time ago was referred to as a FOUL LANGUAGE by the Russians themselves [5, p. 9]. Historian V. Balushok mentions the fact that the Russian swear word comes from the Russians: “I found the confirmation of this in the Samiyo Velychko's Chronicle. The author, describing the defeat of the Russian troops from the Cossacks of Ivan Vygovsky and the Tatars in the Battle of Konotop in 1659, wrote that the captive Prince Pozharsky abused the Khan “using swearing”. Velychko emphasized that Pozharsky made it “customary for Moscow” [1].

Up to now, the origin of a Russian swear word has remained controversial. One of the most popular versions claims that the Russian swearing takes its origin from Tatar. In one of the interviews, L. Stavytska disproves some statements concerning this issue: “In Ukraine, swearing has never been public to the extent it was, for example, in Russia. In Russia, such words have been recorded since the end of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. The proof of it is “Emblematic-and-Encyclopedic Dictionary of Tatar Swear Words and Phrases”, which gave birth to the myth about foul phrases being of Tatar or Mongolian origin. They were called Tatar not because they came from the Tatar language. The word “Tatar” also meant “foreign”, “hostile”, “unusual” [6]. The same version was fixed by L. Stavytska in her dictionary “The Ukrainian Language without Taboos”. In their introductory article to the Russian dictionary “The Russian Foul Language. Brief, but Expressive Dictionary”, V. Mokiyenko and T. Nikitina write about the finding in 2005 during excavations in Veliky Novgorod where two birch bark manuscripts of the first half of XII century with texts written in “true Russian swearing” were excavated (one text was even written by a woman), which changed the opinion that a Russian swear word is of Tatar-Mongolian origin. “Yes, now we definitely know, - it [a swear word – M.T.] is not a heritage of the Tatar yoke, but our native foul language, our eternal national patrimony” [5, p. 8]. Researchers consider that Russian swearing is “a birth mark of our common Slavic society” [5, p. 10].

Despite the fact that swear words of different peoples have very much in common, “foul language differs in different ethnical groups and has been changing throughout different historical periods. The essence of many stereotypes of a nation's behavior and the way of thinking is seen through it” [1]. The Russian swearing is considerably different from that of Ukrainian and German. As V. Khimik points out: “In the Russian swearing, the idea of obscene language refers rather to rude names of genitals, sexual intercourse and sexual deviations than the vulgar names of physiological ejections, and even less to some rudest and most detractive calling people by their ethnical and racial characteristics” [11].

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the Ukrainian and German languages, contrary to the Russian language, obscene words reflect rather the physiological ejections and names of a derriere (scatologisms) than a sexual intercourse. For example, Scheiße, Arsch, Arschloch, *zi\*ho* etc. Let's compare, Ukr.: «... я намагався все ж упіймати її

за задницю...» – Germ.: «... versuchte, ihren Hintern zu fassen zu kriegen...» (Yu. Andrukhovych, «Perversion»).

As L. Stavytska points out, the notion “obscene language” is broader than the notion “foul language”: the latter is the constituent of the first one. All swear words and their derivatives can be called obscenisms. Nevertheless, obscenisms like *сп\*рка*, *зі\*нюк* are not swear words [8, p. 20]. Today, apart from its native vocabulary the Ukrainian language comprises also vocabulary borrowed from the Russian, Polish, English and other languages. Swear words as a foul language, in a historical retrospective, evidently, were not particular for Ukrainian linguistic culture.

According to L. Stavytska “everything that did not fit into the canon of the norm, beauty of the Ukrainian language, up until recently, has been regarded to be a potential menace for existence of the language, the ethnos” [8, p. 11]. The right of taboo language to existence has also been argued in literature. Other devotees of the purity of the Ukrainian language resorted to other extremities and their wish was to interfere with foul words. Yes, N. Snyadanko provides examples about the fact that in the 90s popular Lviv weekly “Post-Postup” made an attempt to substitute foul words of the Russian origin with invented Ukrainian equivalents by printing on its pages “A Small Dictionary of Ukrainian Foul Language”. Nevertheless, as we can see now, this attempt failed and people in the streets swear using “the borrowed language” as before [7].

Wide discussions were held in mass media concerning the dictionary of L. Stavytska “in the form of unprofessional comments and unqualified conclusions of journalists” [9, p. 249]. It sometimes is interpreted as “a handbook of a selected Ukrainian swear word” [12]. However, such lexicographic source “does not regulate or legitimize the use of foul language, it only gives professional linguistic interpretation of it” [9, p. 251].

In times of linguistic censorship only a small part of substandard vocabulary was included to dictionaries. That is why, the presence of appropriate equivalents made the work of a translator easier (a fool (дурень) – der Dummkopf, der Blödmann, an idiot (ідиот) – der Idiot, a stupid (дурна) – die Dumme). There were no equivalents for obscene language in lexicographic sources: in the Soviet period the obscene language was tabooed. In pre-Soviet period, the obscene language was not banned.

The issue of translation of obscene language was raised only in the 90s of XX century when works of Ukrainian postmodern writers Yu. Andrukhovych, S. Zhadan, O. Zabuzhko, I. Karpa, V. Izdryk and others began to imerge. Releasing works from taboo was the kind of protest against the totalitarian regime and existence of different restrictions, censorship etc., including those on a thought and language. As L. Stavytska mentions in her interview “when it all began, anti-totalitarian moods were expanding and a writer could express his resistance to the limitation of freedom – linguistic as well as spiritual – by means of this language. This obscene layer had to represent a modus of verbal freedom. Linguistic means became the form of resistance”. Consequently, in linguistics there was a need to develop strategies of translating such language. Though, scientists didn’t share views as to the ways of obscene language translation. They even mentioned the need to represent obscene language with the help of euphemisms. Nowadays, one can state that there are ways of translating taboo language, and translators use them while interpreting them into different languages.

When analyzing translations of postmodern writers’ works, the following ways of obscene language representation should be distinguished: 1) rewriting of lexical units (as a rule, we speak about foreign interspersions), or going back to a source language: «shit!» – «shit!» (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Secret»), «О шіт! – «Oshit!» (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Secret»); 2) a translation with the help of adjective intensifier: «До дідька прикро» – «wahnsinnigleid» (Yu. Andrukhovych «Perversion»); 3) with the phraseological unit: «До дідька лисого» – «hinter die sieben Berge zu den sieben Zwergen» (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Twelve Rings»); «Дідько з ним!» – „Sei’sdrum!» (Yu. Andrukhovych «Moscoviada»); 4) with the help of scatologisms: бл\*ь – Scheiße (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Secret»); «до дідька зимно» – «scheißkalt» (Yu. Andrukhovych «Perversion»); до холери – arschviel (Yu. Andrukhovych «Perversion»); «курва мама» – «verdammte Scheiße» (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Secret»), «О, курва» – «Oh, Scheiße» (Yu. Andrukhovych «Perversion» (let’s compare: Ukr.: «О, курва, такі мудрі думки, що сам собі немилій!» – Germ.: «Oh, Scheiße, ich rede so oberschlau daher, dass

es mich selber ankotzt!» (Yu. Andrukhovych «Perversion»); 5) with the help of word describing “damned”, “hateful”, “the one who is severely censured”: курва – verdammt (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Secret»); курвамать – verdammt (Yu. Andrukhovych «The Secret»), холера – verdammt (Yu. Andrukhovych «Perversion»). There are cases when scatologisms are omitted while translating. For example, Ukr.: «Мамку взяли за ж\*пу в Італії, старий казюл пропав з кінцями в Росії.» – Germ.: «Die Mama ging in Italien hoch, der alte Bock war in Rußland untergetaucht» (Yu. Andrukhovych, essay).

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the ways of obscene language translation demonstrates a broad freedom of a translator and the opportunity to step aside from repetitions when reflecting the same lexical units, which makes the translating process easier. The research confirms the need for further scientific studies of translating the obscene language as one of the representatives of cultural heritage of a nation.

As a conclusion it should be mentioned that one of the biggest problems of a translator is the fact that not every lexical unit of the obscene language can be found in lexicographic sources. And it is not because lexicographic sources do not catch up with the rapid pace of the language. The latter should not be neglected, though. When reflecting obscene language, we encounter the lack of the appropriate bilingual dictionaries, while the Russian language doesn't have such a problem.

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Ткачівська М.Р. Українське лихослів'я у дзеркалі німецького перекладу. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 2 (2-3) (2015), 66–70.

У статті розглядається проблема лихослів'я та його перекладу з української мови на німецьку. Дається аналіз попередніх досліджень на тему лихослів'я та мату. Лихослів'я розглядається як вербальне вираження негативної енергії, від якої звільняється мовець, перекладаючи її на плечі реципієнта. Реципієнт не завжди є адресатом лихослів'я, оскільки мовне табу передбачає також і використання безадресного лихослів'я, що належить до вставних лексем, які є мовними інкрустаторами і не містять семантичного навантаження. Стаття демонструє різницю використання лихослів'я у різних етносів. На прикладі досліджень науковців демонструється потрапляння в українську мову мату. У статті подаються способи перекладу ненормативної лексики на прикладах із творів постмодерної літератури.

**Ключові слова:** лихослів'я, обценна лексика, мат, переклад.