

TRANSLATION CHALLENGES OF THE TERM “ПОРИЦАНИЕ”

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Rezumat: *Traducerea termenilor specializați prezintă, adeseori, o adevărată provocare care reiese din dificultatea de a găsi echivalentul potrivit din variantele posibile de traducere.*

Prezentul articol analizează fenomenul lingvistic порицание din perspectiva traducerii terminologice. Considerăm că modul de traducere a cuvântului rusesc порицание prezintă interes nu doar pentru lingviști, dar și pentru traducători, fiind un termen ambiguu, cu mai multe semnificații. Este cert faptul că dicționarele bilingve nu pot soluționa problema traducerii, variantele necesitând o permanentă verificare în context și dicționarele explicative.

Scopul studiului este de a prezenta variantele optime de traducere a cuvântului порицание și a descrie semnificațiile termenului.

Cuvinte cheie: translation, equivalent, significance, balme, reprimand, negative reaction

The article touches upon a number of issues concerning the speech act called in Russian *порицание*. We would like to discuss the variants of its translation into English, which turned out to be rather thought-provoking and disputable. Having studied the translations of the word under discussion in a number of academic articles⁴ and scientific works written by Russian researchers, we came to the conclusion that different variants have been used to describe the same notion. In this respect, translators face quite a challenge – which equivalent to give priority to when translating it, because it seems to be an umbrella term for a large number of connotations.

We have decided to start with the consideration of the definitions provided for it in Russian and English explanatory dictionaries. So far, we will use the Russian term *порицание* in the article aiming at determining the closest meaning after analysing all the explanations.

At the beginning we will discuss the definitions found in a number of Russian explanatory dictionaries. According to the description given by Ojegov the meaning of the word is “*Выражение неодобрение,*

⁴ Note: in the provided Abstracts in English.

осуждения; выговор”, i.e. the expression of disapproval, condemnation; rebuke /reprimand. Efremova suggests the following explanation “1. Выражение неодобрения, осуждения. 2. Мера взыскания за какой-л. проступок.”, i.e. “(1) the expression of disapproval, condemnation. (2) the penalty measure for a wrongdoing. Ushakov proposes for “Осуждение, выговор, неодобрение. Выразить порицание. Вынести кому-нибудь общественное порицание” the following variants: condemnation, reprimand, disapproval; express censure; render someone a public reprimand.

We can easily conclude from the above that the meaning the word *порицание* renders is a quite negative reaction to somebody’s actions, deeds or words – the key connotations being disapproval, condemnation, rebuke /reprimand, censure. Still, we have to admit that the term *порицание* in Russian conveys a broad number of meanings and implications with a diverse range of disapproval levels – from the slightest to the strongest.

We thought it might be of interest to see how the word *порицание* is translated into English in a number of Russian-English dictionaries. It is worth mentioning that within the time more translation equivalents are being added. For instance in Alexandrov’s *A Complete Russian- English Dictionary*, published in 1904, only 4 variants are specified: blame, censure, reproach and reproof (Alexandrov 1904: 440). Smirnitsky’s *Russian-English Dictionary* (1981) also gives 4 options of translation: (порицание/упрёк) blame, reproach, censure (official), reprimand (public reprimand) (Smirnitsky 1981: 458).

In contrast, modern on-line dictionaries provide more translation variants. For example, in Dic.academic.ru for the word *порицание* ten words are presented: censure, blame, reprobation, reproof, reflection, animadversion, reproval, reprehension, dispraise and reflexion.⁵ In the Bab.La Russian-English Dictionary online, eleven words are provided: animadversion, blame, blaming, censure, disfavor, excoriation, impeachment, reflection, reprehension, reprobation and reproof. In the Open Russian dictionary on-line only three words are suggested: blame,

⁵<https://translate.academic.ru/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5/ru/en/>

reproach and censure. The Russian-English Dictionary online gives 21 words for *порицание* – animadversion, censure, condemnation, blame, criticism, deprecation, disapprobation, reprehension, reproof, admonition, commination, damning, denunciation, disapproval, impeachment, judgement, objection, reflection / reflexion, reproof, dispraise, reprobation, while in Collins Russian Dictionary only one equivalent is suggested – reprimand.

We have selected sixteen words which connotations are closest to the meaning of the Russian word *порицание*, furthermore to make the understanding of the meanings easier we offer their definitions, most of which are taken from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary or online as well as their Russian⁶ and Romanian⁷ equivalents.

1. **Admonition**= admonishment – (formal) a warning to sb about their behavior (p.17); предостережение, увещание, замечание, указание (p. 23), наставление, предупреждение; dojană, mustrare, admonestare (p. 11)
2. **animadversion** – criticism, a critical remark; порицание, критика (p. 37); imputare, critică, dojană, mustrare, dezaprobare, reproș, comdamnare (p. 24)
3. **blame** – responsibility for doing sth badly or wrongly; saying that sb is responsible for sth; (p.116); act of criticising; порицание, упрек (p. 78), вина, ответственность, обвинение, упрек; dojană, mustrare, blam, reproș (p. 69)
4. **censure** – (formal) strong criticism (p.188); the act of blaming, criticizing, or condemning as wrong; reprehension; порицание, осуждение (p. 117); criticare, comdamnare, blam (p. 111)
5. **condemnation** – an expression of very strong disapproval (p.254); act of condemning or pronouncing to be wrong; осуждение, приговор (p. 151), неодобрительное мнение, порицание; dezaprobare, blamare, blam, înfierare, motiv de comdamnare, vinovăție, vină (p. 147)

⁶ Note: translations from Muller, V. K., English- Russian Dictionary, Moscow, Russky Yazyk, 1989 and from online dictionaries

⁷ Note: translations from Dicționar englez- roman, red. Leon Levițchi, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1974

6. **criticism** – the act of expressing disapproval of sb/sth and opinions about their faults or bad qualities; a statement showing disapproval (p. 298); критика (p. 171) ; crică (p. 173)
7. **dispraise** – reflection, reflexion ; осуждение, неодобрение, порицание; dezaprobare, blam, dispreț (p. 214)
8. **deprecation** – (*formal*) words or behaviour that show you do not approve of somebody/something); act of deprecating; осуждение, неодобрение, возражение, протест (p.195); dezaprobare, critică, obiecție (p. 197)
9. **disapprobation** – (*formal*) disapproval of sb/sth that you think is morally wrong (p.355); неодобрение, осуждение (p. 205), резкое неодобрение; dezaprobare, blam, mustrare (p. 208)
10. **disapproval** – feeling that you do not like an idea, an action or sb’s behaviour because you think it is bad, not suitable or going to have a bad effect on sb. else (p.355); неодобрение, осуждение (p. 205); dezaprobare, reprobare (p. 209)
11. **reflection / reflexion** – no entry for this meaning in Oxford dictionaries ; порицание (p. 587); blam, mustrare, dezaprobare (p. 598)
12. **reprehension** – (*formal*) morally wrong and deserving criticism; (p. 1082); порицание осуждение (p. 595); blam, mustrare (p. 604)
13. **reprimand** – to tell sb officially that you do not approve of them or their actions (p.1083); выговор, замечание (p. 595); mustrare, dojană, ceartă, observație (p. 604)
14. **reprobation** (*formal* or *humorous*) – a person who behaves in a way that society thinks is immoral (p.1083) ; порицание осуждение (p.595); dezaprobare, reprobare (p. 604)
15. **reproof** – (*formal*) blame or disapproval (p. 1083); порицание, выговор, укор, упрек (p.595); reproș, dojană, observație (p. 604)
16. **reproval** – sth that you do not approve of p.1083); порицание, выговор; mustrare, dojeană, ceartă, condamnare e unei fapte (p. 604)

To put it differently, the meaning of the Russian term *порицание* is, in fact, the manifestation of disapprobation and criticism for doing something wrong, but its positioning on the scale measuring the intensity of the negative assessment depends on the ‘type’ of the wrongdoing and the ‘harm’ it has made. Therefore, due to the fact that its semantic field is so broad it is rather difficult to distinguish between the above-mentioned translation variants.

Consequently, translators face quite a challenge which word to give priority to in certain contexts because although they all seem to express the same thing, the propositional content and the illocutionary orientation are similar, the meaning they convey is really different. However, a number of substantial differences in their pragmatic characteristics can be distinguished. Particularly, attention should be paid to the degree of emotionality they convey that can be higher or lower. As a consequence, the use of emotive words, expressives, invectives is not the same, and the perlocutive reaction to them also differs mainly in their rational character. Thus, translators should thoroughly ‘dive into’ the context and try to identify the meaning that suits the given situation best.

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