

PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATING PROVERBS IN RUSSIAN INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract

The main aim of the article is to give the reader a range of lively, spoken Russian proverbs and sayings. The article is based on recordings made mainly in the 1930s and, partly, earlier. Our contemporary proverbial repertoire includes a huge number of original Russian proverbs. This age-old stock of folk wisdom does not remain unchanged. In the process of the growth and development of social relations and the abolition of remnants of capitalism in the minds of people some proverbs are forgotten and others are created.

Key words: Russian proverbs and sayings, growth and development of social relations, stock of folk, sharp words, socio-historical experience.

The main aim of the article is to give the reader a range of lively, spoken Russian proverbs and sayings. The article is based on recordings made mainly in the 1930s and, partly, earlier.

Our contemporary proverbial repertoire includes a huge number of original Russian proverbs. This age-old stock of folk wisdom does not remain unchanged. In the process of the growth and development of social relations and the abolition of remnants of capitalism in the minds of people some proverbs are forgotten and others are created. For example, the proverbs expressing the old slave relations between people based on exploitation of man by man: about servile labour, about dishonest merchant trade - "You won't cheat - you won't sell" («He обманешь — не продашь»), about woman's stupidity - "The hair is long but the mind is short" («Волос долог, да ум короткий») disappeared; the proverbs about matchmakers, about bringing up children with a stick. In their place proverbs reflecting new social relations appear, and old proverbs are filled with other contents.

The new proverbs we have recorded express the Soviet people's assessment of life in the 30s, their attitude to the new forms of work, to the whole Soviet system.

Proverbs figuratively express the ideas living in the minds of the people, summarizing its vast socio-historical experience. This is their artistic and educational value.

Speeches of statesmen, works of writers are often interspersed with proverbs, seasoned with their salt; sharp words enter into memory as new proverbs, are repeated and kept on by all the people.

Proverb is one of the most popular forms of folklore.

Soviet life has created a lot of new verbal formulas, slogans and proverbs. However, traditional proverbs and sayings have not been forgotten, because they reflect the "life, social and historical experience of the working people".

For Soviet people, for example, traditional proverbs such as:

Земля — что тарелка, что положишь, то и возьмешь.

Поле труд любит.

На поле—на крепком якоре.

На что и клад, коли в семье лад!

Land is like a plate, whatever you put in, that's what you take out.

The field loves labour.

In the field - on a strong anchor.

What a treasure if the family is well off!

The old images of "family", "peace", "artel" are used to express judgments about new life and the work of the collective.

"Artel is good to beat the enemy too," («Артельно хорошо и недруга бить») says the new proverb, which uses the old folk term "artel".

An artel fights and one grieves.

The artel cauldron boils denser.

Артель воюет, а один горюет.

Артельный котел гуще кипит.

It is clear that the old proverbs are also in use with us, they figuratively formalize the thoughts of the Soviet man about the power and importance of the consensual collective.

The proverbs reflect the spontaneous materialistic world view of the people, which arose as a result of human labour activity ("Dung will also deceive God"). They reflect the people's intelligence and diligence. Therefore, traditional proverbs have not lost their significance in modern times:

Ум впереди.

Не кроя, не шьют.

Плохая снасть — отдохнуть не даст.

Дело мастера боится.

The mind is ahead of the curve.

No cutting, no sewing.

Bad tackle won't let you rest.

The craft fears the master.

This is what the proverbs say about the importance of the plan, the calculation, the quality of the tool, the skill of the worker.

The fight against absenteeism, against chatterboxes and slackers finds in the folk proverb a lively and effective reinforcement. The proverb painfully punishes the slacker, the braggart and the idler:

Нынче Симоны, завтра Гулимоны, а потом по кабакам крестный ход.

Дуть и кивать, и зимой мошку гонять.

Ехал к обеду, а приехал в среду.

На словах города строит, а на деле ничего не стоит.

И мыла, и стирала, и гладила, и катала — все языком.

Наделала синица славы, а моря не зажгла.

Работа с зубами, а лень с языком.

Today the Simons, tomorrow the Gulimons, and then a procession through the taverns.

Blowing and nodding, and chasing away midges in winter.

He was on his way to lunch and arrived on Wednesday.

He says he's building towns, but in reality he's worthless.

She washed, washed, ironed, rolled - all with her tongue.

A tit has made a glory, but the sea is not lighted.

Work with the teeth, but laziness with the tongue.

The modern reader should not be discouraged by such images in proverbs, as a chain, ploughshare and axe. They have become conventional signs of labour processes.

A chain in hand and bread in the teeth.

It is not the axe that wears, but the carpenter.

Цеп в руках, и хлеб в зубах.

Не топор тешет, а плотник.

The living conditions, the forms of work of the old village created these proverbs, but their meaning is also clear to us, and we will say about the masterly work of the architect, worker, technician, editor - "not an axe is woven, but a carpenter" («не топор тешет, а плотник»).

The proverbs contain many images suggested by the work of the blacksmith, the handyman, the labourer. But of course the proverbs, originated as a result of agricultural work, dominate.

Among the defensive proverbs stand also our native proverbs:

Ваша воля, а наше поле, драться не хотим, а поля не отдадим.

На печи не хабришь, а в поле не трусь.

Your will and our field, we don't want to fight, but we won't give up the field.

Don't be brave on the cooker, but don't be cowardly in the field.

Proverbs describing the old system have found their place in this collection. They were also written down in the 1930s. It should be made clear in what sense such proverbs are used nowadays, as:

Человек человеку зверь.

Моя хата с краю, ничего не знаю.

Закон — дышло: куда повернул, туда и вышло.

Кому чай да кофей, а нам чад да копоть.

Man to man is a beast.

My house is on the edge, I don't know anything.

The law is a stick in the mud, and that's how it turns out.

Tea and coffee for some, chad and soot for us.

Such proverbs describe the past and are an instrument to fight against the remnants of the past.

The language keeps such words as landlord, tsar, serfdom, bondage as a part of its vocabulary, which have irreversibly died out in our country, but the verbal signs remain as far as there is a need to characterize the past or the remnants of the past in the present.

The same is true of proverbs such as "you keep your shirt closer to your body" («Своя рубашка ближе к телу».).

The observations accumulated over the centuries have been cast into an inexhaustible number of sayings about poverty and ruin, animal customs of the class society, and are of great historical and cognitive interest.

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