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Особенности использования личного
местоимения «Я» в английском и русском языках

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The peculiarities of personal pronoun „I“ usage
in the English and Russian languages

Статья посвящена особенностям использования личного местоимения «Я» в английском и русском языках. Статья раскрывает насколько выражен индивидуализм в культуре Америки и России, а так же какие проблемы возникают перед переводчиками при работе с понятиями и терминами из области психологии

Ключевые слова: личное местоимение «Я», индивидуальность, психология, самокопание

The article is devoted to the peculiarities of personal pronoun „I“ usage in the English and Russian languages. The article shows what is the level of individualism expression in America and Russia, and what problems the translator can face when dealing with the terms concerning Psychology

Key words: personal pronoun «I», individualism, psychology, self-searching

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The psychology glossary, terms referring to human mentality and to the word «I» have had a great impact on English language for decades. In the Soviet Union there was a proverb «There is no I in team» and in America at that time the motto of the human personality was «Me, Myself and I». Natural American individualism is brought up on the introspection and world view through their own «I». Zigmund Freud's ideology had the great influence on this.

In Russia the situation was quite different. As for more than half a century the wave of Freudianism, his follower's psychoanalytical jargon were ignored in the Soviet union, the Russian language often lacks the terms, that can convey the concepts of psychology. Though today there are calques from English (most often of Latin origin), the common mentality and the way of thinking remain different. Consequent-

ly, it often causes a number of problems for translators to solve when dealing with English terms, the main meaning of which is obsession on self-searching [2, 75].

«If the 70s were dubbed the Me'decade, this era could well be a My Decade» – the New York Times wrote. Young people of those times were called «the me generation». They were people who set their own needs above the needs of the society or any group, including a family. That mentality remained in 1990s when the culture of virtual communications and electronic ways of communication created its fashionable words, such as eTrade, eCommerce, eBay (the website of electronic actions for goods purchase and sale). Today American user's attention is focused on their «I» on the computer screen: e.g. «My computer», «My documents», «Mobile me».

People buy mobile phones through the company MyClick, have refreshing drink Mycoke, and chat with their friends on the popular website MySpace. Using the personal adjective in advertisement some commercial companies try to impart the aura of something personal and «sincere» to their products.

The cult of "I" is sometimes brought to extremes and logic distortion in the language.

e.g. «My dog Rosy was in the wedding. She wore a thistle collar. It was very me».

The speaker sees in her dog wearing that collar the reflection of her personality and character.

"I" has touched the human's mind not only through psychoanalysis. Within many years the most popular «hit» in America was the song «I will survive» of the popular singers Donna Summer and Gloria Gaynor. The words of the other song belong to the singer Johnny Carson: «I'll do it my way». Americans didn't forget Bush's philosophy: My way or the highway – «do the way I want or don't do at all». The former president's arrogant «I» revolted the newspaper «New York Times»:

e.g. «The president's hyperpartisanship and my way or the highway arrogance is now close to paralyzing his own administration».

However lately the favorite word «my» has lost its real meaning. It has been replaced by narratives and novels, containing a lot of fictitious stories about so-called «my experiences», written with only purpose – to earn the fortune for the author and publishing houses. When everybody found out that Monique De Wael's story about her sufferings during Holocaust is a forgery, she calmly replied: «The story is mine. It is not actually reality, but my reality, my way of surviving».

The person, who really thinks, that his subjective reality – my is objective reality is not an adequate person, but the one, being on verge of psychotic condition [1, 36].

In American conversations and media the expressions "a feel good or touchy-feely experience" and "I feel your pain" have become very common. Many TV programs show television series about feel-good, redemptive experiences – inspiring, emotional feelings that keep the audience in a good mood and make them feel satisfied, though the content of these series is just a fiction. And the audience, used to the art forgeries, badly distinguishes true to life stories from made-up ones. The main thing is that it enjoys superficial feelings, expressing on the screen.

e.g. «He referred to the touchy-feely television psychologist Phil McGraw...»

e.g. «It's great to see this couple in such feel-good movies...»

The second «sincere» sympathy expression – I feel your pain (I sympathize, take your pain hard, and understand what you're going through with all my heart). For example, one of the former presidential candidate told the active worker of the campaign against AIDS: «I feel your pain, but if you want to attack me personally, go support someone else for president». These words meant «I'm sorry for you, but that's your problem and I'm not going to do a damn thing about it». But sympathy – with reason or without it – refers to everybody without exception. A journalist wrote about the plans of the budget cuts on New-York public transport:

«This means less money in the system, which means everyone feels the pain».

Common phrases from the pop-psychology language also clearly show how «emotional words» lose their first meaning. «I've gotta do what I've gotta do» literally means: «I must do my duty». In the past the essence of this phrase was to ensure, that extremely harsh living conditions sometimes caused extreme reactions and incredible actions. In the war, concentration camp, after the earthquake people often appeared to be in the situations that needed inhuman efforts and courage. People sometimes even had to become deserters, betrayers and thieves. However today «I've gotta do what I've gotta do» is more often used for self-justification of someone's egoistic and immoral behavior. That's why now it has a meaning «I'm afraid I have to do that despite of unpleasant consequences for the others»:

e.g. «I know I shouldn't badmouth John- he's my former colleague, and he's a friend. But I've gotta do what I've gotta do – I'm desperate about this job».

There is one more word, that has more than one meaning – inner. Today this word is overused, talking about the feelings in the meaning of something unconscious, hidden inside a person:

e.g. «Embrace your inner grouch. Optimism is not always the best solution».

Psychological field of the English language sets for a Russian translator two quite different problems. The first one appears when he deals with the words and expressions, reflecting rugged American individualism. The personality of a person, whose mentality is formed by the principle "me, myself and I" is characterized by overselfishness, so popular in Western countries. Besides, taking into account the difference of the Freud's influence on Americans and Russians, psychological terms are quite the same in both countries. So different modern dictionaries should be resorted to while analyzing terms connected with American psychology.

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