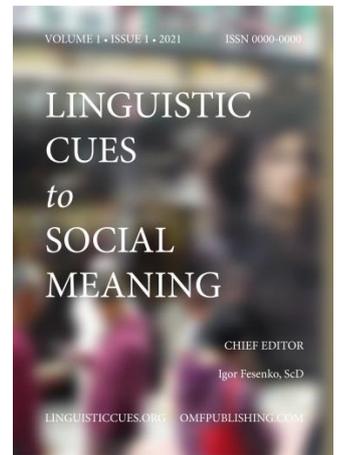


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EDITORIAL

An FBI Negotiator Uses Plural Addressing

Igor P. Fesenko

SIR TOBY: *If thou “thou”-est him some thrice,
it shall not be amiss...*

–William Shakespeare, 1601

An American handbook of negotiating – *Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It* by Chris Voss and Tahl Raz in Ukrainian [1] – gives us another example how careful an editor must be to the number of addressing when the translated text gives some advise to possible negotiators with such unforeseeable and highly aggressive counterparts as terrorists, kidnappers or bank robbers. As authors stress, every word and intonation is important in sensitive situations like these. From Shakespeare’s time up to now, using singular number of addressing to the unfamiliar person is irritating both in the English and Ukrainian languages. The wrong number of addressing is counterproductive producing additional aggressiveness and may be the last straw crushing a hardly maintained negotiating process. So, using singular addressing by an FBI negotiator in New York in a telephone conversation with a bank robber keeping hostages (p. 38, 41) is not an unimportant fault of a translator, but a critical error, because this

inadequately translated way of speaking may be used in a real situation. On the other hand, negotiating in a polite manner using plural addressing, as in the English original text, may be crucial for accomplishing the uneasy conversation.

Nevertheless, the difference between singular and plural addressing is often neglected even in the academic society, especially when translating from one language to another, e.g. from Russian to English [2].

Our Journal aims at dissemination of knowledge about importance of such linguistic cue as a number of addressing a person, trying to make clear the difference between the two ways of addressing – polite plural and humiliating singular, thus making social climate free of unnecessary portion of abuse. We will be happy to publish articles on the subject, and especially on ways of controlling the purity of translated texts from inadequate interpretation.

Yours Chief Editor

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