

The Problem of Translating Phraseological Units

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ABSTRACT

In this article we will analyze some problems which may occur during the translation of phraseological units. Moreover, we will explore idiomatic and phraseological expressions structurally, lexically and semantically.

Key words: translation, idiomatic expression, phraseological unit, lemmata, phraseologism,

Introduction. Interest in phraseology has grown considerably over the last twenty years or so. While the general linguists' view of phraseology before that time can probably be caricatured as "idiom researchers and lexicographers classifying and researching various kinds of fairly frozen idiomatic expressions", this view has thankfully changed. Nowadays, the issues of identifying and classifying phraseologisms as well as integrating them into theoretical research and practical application has a much more profound influence on researchers and their agendas in many different sub-disciplines of linguistics as well as in language learning, acquisition, and teaching, natural language processing, etc.

Main part. One of the main problems in the art of translation is phraseology. In this context, it is a disheartening fact that most of the language-pair-related phraseological dictionaries are unidirectional (source language to target language) and based on a selection of the target language's phraseological units. The problem with the unidirectional approach is the very important fact that phraseological units cannot simply be reversed. It is necessary to make a new selection among the idioms of the former target language in order to achieve a central, adequate corpus of lexical units (**lemmata**).

It is needed to mark that these not numerous articles are of common character only. Moreover, cooperation of languages at a phraseological level is also explored not enough, in our opinion. This question, mainly, was examined in a complex with other linguistic problems.

Idiomatic or phraseological expressions are structurally, lexically and semantically fixed phrases or sentences having mostly the meaning, which is not made up by the sum of meanings of their component parts. An indispensable feature of idiomatic (phraseological) expressions is their figurative, i.e., metaphorical nature and usage. It is this nature that makes them distinguishable from structurally identical free combinations of words.

On rare occasions the lexical meaning of idiomatically bound expressions can coincide with their direct, i.e., not transferred meaning, which facilitates their understanding as in the examples like: to make way *дать дорогу*; to die a dog's death *здохнуть как собака*; to receive a hero's welcome

встречать как героя; wait a minute/a moment один момент; to tell (you) the truth сказать правду.

Translation of phraseologisms is a very complicated problem. Right translation is stipulated with finding the most concordant and equivalent words that is usually deprived of coloring in the translation as a usual lexical unit.

Besides it, there is also the possibility of a non-phraseological translation of an idiom. This choice is preferred when the denotative meaning of the translation act is chosen as a dominant, and one is ready to compromise as to the presentation of the expressive color, of the meaning nuances, of connotation and aphoristic form.

In the case of non-phraseological rendering, there are two possibilities: one can opt for a lexical translation or for a calque. The lexical translation consists in explicating through other words the denotative meaning of the phraseologism, giving up all the other style and connotation aspects. In the case of the "hammer and anvil" idiom, a lexical rendering could be "to be in an uneasy, stressing situation".

The calque would consist instead in translating the idiom to the letter into a culture where such a form is not recognized as an idiom: in this case the reader of the receiving culture perceives the idiom as unusual and feels the problem to interpret it in a non-literal, metaphorical way. The calque has the advantage of preserving intact all second-degree, non-denotative references that in some authors' strategy can have an essential importance. It is true that the reconstruction of the denotative meaning is left to the receiving culture's ability, but it is true as well that the metaphor is an essential, primal semiotic mechanism that therefore belongs to all cultures.

One should notice that translating realia in one or another means it is wanted to lose a trope accordingly phraseologism. Trope should be transferred by tropes, phraseologism by phraseologism; only "filling" will differ from the origin one.

In each cultural context there are typical modes of expression that assemble words in order to signify something that is not limited to the sum of the meanings of the single words that compose them; an extra meaning, usually metaphorical, becomes part and parcel of this particular assembly. "To find oneself between hammer and anvil" does not literally mean to be in that physical condition; it means rather to be in a stressing or very difficult situation. In our everyday life we seldom find the hammer or anvil in our immediate vicinity.

Phraseologisms – or expressions that would aspire at becoming so – are formed in huge quantities, but do not always succeed. Sometimes are formed and disappear almost simultaneously. The only instances that create problems for the translator are the stable, recurrent lexical idioms that for their metaphorical meaning do not rely only on the reader's logic at the time of reading but also, and above all, on the value that such a metaphor has assumed in the history of the language under discussion.

Translating of national idiomatic expressions causes also some difficulties at a translator. Being nationally distinct, they cannot have in the target language traditionally established equivalents or loan variants. As a result, most of them may have more than one translator's version in the target language. It may be either a regular sense-to-sense variant (an interlinear-type translation) or an artistic literary version rendering in which alongside the lexical meaning also the aphoristic nature, the expressiveness, the picturesqueness, the vividness, etc. of the source language phraseologism/idiom.

Some phraseological expressions singled out by the Acad. V. Vinogradov as unities and having mostly a transparent meaning may reflect various national features of the source language. The latter may be either of lingual or extra lingual nature, involving the national images, their peculiar picturesqueness or means of expression with clear reference to traditions, customs or historical events, geographical position of the source language nation. Such phraseological expressions are often of a simple or composite sentence structure.

Conclusion. Within a single phraseological-semantic field, which is thematically quite extensive, the phraseological units are grouped into smaller sections. The smallest section consists of phraseological units which express one single concept or one extralinguistic characteristic.

The creation of phraseological-semantic fields can serve as a method of description of certain national and cultural specifics. That is, such a description can give us some insight into how phraseological units display a special, nation-specific perception of the world. The fact that a certain phraseological unit appears in the language and remains current in it indicates that the unit contains a generally comprehensible, typical metaphor (or symbol).

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