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Basic approaches and techniques for translating phraseological units

Основні підходи та прийоми перекладу фразеологічних одиниць

Summary. *The article focuses on the concept of “phraseological unit” and the features of this concept. The analysis of difficulties in translation of phraseological units and methods of overcoming these difficulties in translation is conducted. The aim is to study the use and translation of phraseological units in English and their semantic value. In addition, the aim is to identify the semantic characteristics of phraseological units. The importance of the research lies in the necessity to analyze the issue of translation of the aforementioned notion, while this process is complicated by many factors, described below. A significant factor of the research is the systematization of theoretical features of phraseological units. In order to solve the issue and achieve described goals, a set of scientific methods is used: comparative to collect the data and define the strategies of translation and empirical method. The issue of translation of phraseological units is investigated in the articles of such linguists: N. Kuzenko, D. Wicaksono, A. Adelnia, A. Ardhiani, C. Séguinot etc. The subject of the article is the means of ensuring an adequate translation of phraseological units, which are used to ensure a sufficient translation. The article highlights the strategies that can be applied to translate phraseological units correctly. These are equivalence, calques, borrowing, literal translation, transposition, modulation, and others. The analyzed research of translation transformations and its results can be used in the field of translation and linguistics. The conclusions of the article highlight the importance of further research, while the phenomenon of phraseological units remains extensive for investigation.*

Key words: *phraseological units, idioms, strategies, methods, fixed expressions, adaptation, word-to-word translation.*

Анотація. У дослідженні зосереджено увагу на понятті «фразеологічна одиниця» та його особливості. Проаналізовано труднощі перекладу фразеологічних одиниць та методи подолання труднощів при перекладі. Метою дослідження є вивчення вживання та перекладу фразеологічних одиниць в англійській мові, їхню семантичну цінність. Крім того, метою є виявити семантичні характеристики фразеологічних одиниць. Актуальність роботи полягає у необхідності дослідження фразеології в англійській мові та застосування методів перекладу для забезпечення адекватного перекладу фразеологічних одиниць. Важливість дослідження полягає у необхідності аналізу проблематики перекладу вищезгаданого поняття, оскільки процес перекладу є ускладненим через багато чинників, описаних нижче. Значущим чинником дослідження є систематизація теоретичних особливостей фразеологічних одиниць. Для вирішення питання та досягнення описаних цілей застосовуються такі наукові методи: порівняльний для збору даних і визначення методів перекладу та емпіричний метод. Питання перекладу фразеологізмів досліджуються в статтях таких лінгвістів: Н. Кузенко, Д. Вікаксоно, А. Адельнія, А. Ардіані, К. Сегіно та ін. Предметом дослідження є засоби забезпечення адекватного перекладу фразеологічних одиниць, які застосовуються для забезпечення достовірного перекладу. Викладений теоретичний матеріал перекладацьких трансформацій та результати дослідження можуть бути використані у перекладацькій сфері та у лінгвістиці. У висновках представлено важливість подальших досліджень, оскільки явище фразеологічних одиниць залишається обширним для досліджень. У статті висвітлено методи, які можна застосувати для достовірного перекладу фразеологізмів. До них відносяться еквівалентність, калька, запозичення, дослівний переклад, транспозиція, модуляція та ін. Проаналізовані дослідження перекладацьких трансформацій та їх результати можуть бути використані в галузі перекладу та лінгвістики. Висновки статті підкреслюють важливість подальших досліджень, а феномен фразеологізмів залишається обширним для дослідження.

Ключові слова: фразеологічні одиниці, ідіоми, стратегії, методи, стали вирази, адаптація, дослівний переклад.

Introduction. Translation – is an activity that aims at conveying the meaning or meanings of a given linguistic discourse from one language to another. This process may be accompanied by several difficulties, caused by differences between SL and TL. Some of them include the structure of language, polysemy, missing terms and cultural differences. Translation of phraseological units is a difficult task for a translator. Moreover, the translator is often confused with choosing the appropriate strategy for rendering the idioms. The translation of phraseological units is quite extensive and that is why there is a necessity of its research.

The topicality of the research lies in the need to study phraseology in English and the use of translation methods to ensure an adequate translation of phraseological units. The theoretical background was supplied thanks to many linguists, who shed light on the topical issue, such as A. Newmark, N. Kuzenko, S. Hassan, L. Masimova etc.

Methodology and methods of research. To analyze the issue, a set of scientific methods is applied: comparative and empirical methods. Within the framework of the study the comparative method is used to investigate the differences and methods of the translating phraseological units. The corpus for the analysis is constituted by the novel “Alice in Wonderland” and its German translation by Antonie Zimmerman [4; 5]. A comparative analysis was conducted to define which translation strategies the translator has followed. The corpus is carefully researched and examined in order to find meaningful themes and general patterns. The aim of the analysis is to describe the collected data and make generalizations and conclusions on the basis of the findings. A comparison of the translation of a phraseological unit in the source language and target language highlights the precision of the rendering of the meaning. This method, which is characterized by precision, validity, and verifiability, provides an overview of the most frequently applied strategies and the least frequently applied ones. The empirical method is operated in order to observe the phenomenon of a phraseological unit. Moreover, it is applied to collect the data and analyze it.

It was concluded that the most common strategy of translating of phraseological units is the word-to-word translation. The less common strategy is the transposition.

Results and Discussion. The position of translation is fundamental in many spheres. The adequate translation cannot be conducted without the knowledge of many peculiarities including semantic and grammatical of source language and target language. The phraseological unit is considered as one of the peculiarities of languages, which causes a lot of difficulties in conveying the meaning in the process of translation.

To begin the research on translation of phraseological expressions there is the necessity of defining the notion of “translation”. “Dictionary.com” explains it as: “*Translation is the rendering of something into another language or into one's own from another language*” [12]. As for the “phraseological unit”, it is defined as “idiomatic word groups with a fixed lexical composition and grammatical structure however, their meaning, is ubiquitous for to native speakers of the target language, and is generally figurative and cannot be derived from the meanings of the phraseological units”, according to Lala Masimova. She states, that phraseology is the branch of linguistics dealing with stable word combinations characterized by a specific transference of meaning from the component parts of the word [7].

The main task of a translator is to extract the figurative meaning of idioms and proverbs and to find a parallel expression in the target language. Idiomatic expressions make the target language sound natural and

meaningful, that is why the translator must be aware of all strategies and methods to accomplish an adequate translation.

The majority of researchers presented their researchers, dedicated the exploring of methods and strategies for translating the idioms into English. The most prominent ones are: A. Newmark, C. Séguinot, N. Kuzenko, S. Hassan.

N. Kuzenko in the manual “The world of interpreting and translating” identifies several strategies to a faithful rendering of idioms:

1. By Choosing Absolute/Complete Equivalents

She states this strategy of translating by which every component part of the source language idiom is retained in the target language unchanged. This method can be applied in a case when the idioms originate from the same source in the SL and TL. These sources may be:

1) *Greek or other mythology*: “Augean stables – авгієві стайні (занедбане, занехаяне місце); a labour of Sisyphus – сізіфова праця (важка і марна праця); Pandora’s box – скринька Пандори (джерело всьляких лих)”;

2) *ancient history or literature*: “an ass in a lion’s skin – осел у левовій шкурі; to cross (pass) the Rubicon – перейти Рубікон (прийняти важливе рішення); the golden age – золотий вік (золоті часи); I came, I saw, I conquered – прийшов, побачив, переміг”;

3) *the Bible or works based on a biblical plot*: “to cast the first stone at one – першим кинути у когось каменем; the golden calf – золотий телець/ідол; a lost sheep – заблу́дла вівця; the ten commandments – десять заповідей; the thirty pieces of silver – тридцять срібняків; prodigal son – блудний син”.

The author confirms that translated equivalents may differ a bit in the word order and the structure from the SL [1, p. 60–61].

2. Translation of Idioms by Choosing Near Equivalents

N. Kuzenko affirms that the concept of an idiom originated in several languages (in the common source) may have some components different in the TL. That is why the quality of rendering the originating concept may not be identical, e.g. baker’s/printer’s dozen – чортова дюжина; love is the mother of love – любов породжує любов. Some components of translated idioms can differ in such aspects:

a) “*in the construction of the target language version*: to make a long story short – сказати коротко;

b) *in the omission (or adding) of segment part in the target language*: a lot of water had run under the bridge since then – багато води сплигло відтоді;

c) *in the replacement of an element (or image) of the SL fixed expression for some other (more traditional) in the TL*: as pale as paper – блідий

мов стіна; to know smth. as one knows his ten fingers – знати як свої п'ять пальців;

d) *in the generalization of the features of the source language idiomatic expression*: one's own flesh and bone – рідна кровинка;

e) *in the concretization of some features of the original*: a voice in the wilderness – глас волаючого в пустелі; you cannot catch an old bird with chaff – старого горобця на полові не ввіймаєш”.

3. Translation by Choosing Genuine Idiomatic Analogies

A huge number of idioms with the same connotation have full equivalents in the Ukrainian language. Such idioms have the same conception and connotation in SL and TL: like father, like son – яблуко від яблуні далеко не падає, danger foreseen is half avoided – якби знав, де впадеш, соломи б підстелив, not all that glitters is gold – не все то золото, що блищить.

1. Translating Idioms by Choosing Approximate Analogues

The linguist claims that the components of the idioms may have peculiarities. Some of them can have a hidden concept, which is comprehensive sometimes for a translator and a foreigner. That is why the translator shall find approximate analogies and apply descriptive way: e. g. “kind words butter no parsnips – годувати байками солов'я; a round peg in a square hole – бути не на своєму місці, to draw the wool over someone's eyes – водити когось за ніс” [1, p. 62].

2. Descriptive Translating of Idiomatic and Set Expressions

The major part of phraseological units is rendered in an explicable and descriptive way. There are some ways how to express the concept:

1) it can be rendered *by a single word*: “call it a day” – закруглятися, “bite the bullet” – терпіти, “let the cat out of the bag” – бовкнути, “to go on about” – гелготіти, “give up” – здаватися, “bring up” – виховувати, “to burn one's fingers” – помилитися, “to throw the book at sb” – засудити, in the dark – в невідомості;

2) *with the help of free combinations of words (the most frequent)*: “a big shot (cheese)” – дуже важлива персона, “a little bird told me” – пташка на хвості принесла, “between the devil and the deep blue sea” – опинитися між двома вогнями, “head over heels” – закохатися по самі вуха, “to cut off with the shilling” – залишитися без нічого.

3) *when the lexical meaning of an original idiomatic expression is nationally based and unfamiliar to the TL, the idiomatic expression may be rendered by the whole phrase or a sentence or explained*: “a king for a day” – особа, яка отримала владу на короткий час, “an old hand” – людина, яку важко надурити, котра має величезний досвід, “a bull in a china shop” – поводитися незграбно etc [1, p. 62].

Another researcher S. Hassan in the paper “Strategies of translating idioms” considers additional ways for faithful rendering.

– Reading different translations of different kinds of texts to enliven the research.

By knowing both the source language and target language. Translators read different genera and expand his/her knowledge.

Writing is the main and vital step of a translator.

A good translator has the competency to understand a number of connotations, grammatical functions, concepts, and cultures.

A translator has a command in both languages it does not mean that he can generate a perfect translation but he faces difficulty in comprehending tenses as the English past perfect is used for that has happened in the morning but in Spanish, it is used as the past participle.

He should be aware of registers, dialects, and sociolect that create problems for him.

Machine translation cannot translate ambiguous word structures, idioms, and collocations [6, p. 16].

Furthermore, he focuses on the methods that are to be used in translating. These methods are:

Equivalence

The author states the process of an adequate translation is difficult because of the complexity of cultural material and linguistic one. The equivalent or pragmatic translation is applied when the translator deals with phraseological expressions and when the use of these idioms is pragmatic.

Borrowing

The researcher S. Hassan assures this method helps to enrich the language and the lexical aspect of it. Moreover, it is practiced often in explanation.

Calques

With this method, the SL manifestation is changed into a literal variant of translation. Calques and borrowing are incorporated in the TL by semantic changes that may cause false friends of the translator. This method is common in translating the idioms.

Literal translation

The method is connected with the syntactic aspect of idioms. This approach is word-for-word translation it is mutual between languages of the same family.

Transposition

According to this method, one part of the speech is transformed, while the meaning is unchanged. It can be obligatory and optional. “Upon her arising” will be translated in a past context as “as soon as she got up”, “it will be obligatory”. By employing reverse direction it is translated as “as soon as she got up” and it is an example of optional. It focuses on grammar and there is the replacement of SL word or structure with a TL word

or structure. Translators often change the structure and there are categories of ways of the method:

1. Verb into the noun.
2. Adverb into the verb.

The scientist C. Séguinot identifies three different types of global strategies applied by translators. These strategies include (a) Uninterrupted translation for a period of time; (b) Instant correction of apparent errors; and (c) Postponing correction of errors related to the quality or style of the revision [9].

Furthermore, researchers Vinay and Darbelnet classify two main strategies to be applied in translation. The first strategy is described as direct and it includes literal translation, calque, and borrowing. The second one is the oblique translation which encompasses modulation, equivalence, transposition, and adaptation [10].

A. Newmark explains different translation methods and procedures, including:

- Word-for-word translation, and literal translation: In both types of translation, the translators need to follow the same order of the words or the word structures as in the original and the use of the word is more generic and non-contextual.
- Faithful translation: This type of translation requires the translators to follow precisely the meaning of the word in its context.
- Adaptation: When the aesthetics of the translation is emphasized, it is referred to as adaptation.
- Semantic translation: Semantic translation takes place when the structures of the grammar of the target language are maintained.
- Free translation: comedy plays or poetry is usually translated using free translation as it focuses on reproducing the intended message of the original text with all the other aspects like form, style, or content being of less importance.
- Transposition: This strategy involves maintaining the contextual as well as the language aspects of the original text in its translation. The text being translated should give the same thing as the original and this should be understandable by the readers as well [8, p. 26–27].

Additionally, the omission strategy also should be mentioned. According to the author A. Adelniaof the article “Translation of Idioms: A Hard Task for the Translator”, “The time that there is no close match between the languages' items or the time that the translator cannot find any equivalents, this strategy is used to completely omit the idiom from the target text” [2, p. 882].

According to D. Wicaksono and E. Wahyuni in the article “An analysis of the strategies used in translating idioms in Indonesia into English found in Indonesian legends” omission is allowed only in some following cases:

1. First, when there is no close comparison in the target language;
2. Secondly, when it is not easy to paraphrase;
3. Finally, an idiom may be omitted for stylistic reasons. This strategy is not used very frequently [11, p. 50].

A. Newmark in the book “A Textbook of Translation” adds additional information about the aforementioned strategy of translation. This type of translation keeps the SL word order; words are translated out of context according to their most common meaning. Such kind of translation can be used as a preliminary translation step but it is not applied in real translation tasks. This method or type of translation takes the meaning of each word in isolation regardless of differences between both languages in grammar, word order, context, and special usage.

Moreover, this translation focuses on the source language and the target should follow it step by step. Hence, it seems a very easy way to translate and it is common among students. However, this method is very risky because it does not consider the target language and relies on the source language only.

Furthermore, this method does not take both languages word order into account. This method also neglects the context which is very important to understand the meaning of a given sentence. Likewise, it ignores the metaphorical use of words that represents the culture of the language. Finally, this method cannot find equivalents that do not exist in the target language [8, p. 1–2].

The results of collecting data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Word-to-word translation

Source language	Target language	Category of idiom
“But they have their tails in their mouths; and the reason is –” here the Mock Turtle yawned and shut his eyes.	“Aber den Schwanz haben sie im Maule, und der Grund ist” – hier gähnte die falsche Schildkröte und machte die Augen zu.	Literal idiom
Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity...	sprang Alice auf; denn es war ihr doch noch nie vorgekommen, ein Kaninchen mit einer Westentasche und einer Uhr darin zu sehen. Vor Neugierde brennend...	Literal idiom
Alice did not at all like the tone of this remark...	Alice gefiel diese Bemerkung gar nicht...	Pure idiom
The Dormouse shook its head impatiently, and said, without opening its eyes.	Das Murmelthier schüttelte ungeduldig den Kopf und sagte, ohne die Augen aufzuthun.	Literal idiom
This seemed to Alice a good opportunity for making her escape; so she set off at once.	Dies schien Alice eine gute Gelegenheit zu sein, fortzukommen; sie machte sich also gleich davon.	Pure idiom
“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice.	“Verquerrer und verquerrer!” rief Alice.	Literal idiom

In the analysis, there are 6 identified instances of translating idioms. In Table 1, the meaning of the source language is fully transferred into the target language. In comparison with the English original the German translation, the original text seems to be more stylistically and emotionally colored as it contains a higher number of idiomatic expressions “burning with curiosity” or “high time”, “at all”, “at once”, “took the opportunity” etc.

The examples of the next strategy, translating by communicative approach, are presented below in Table 2. This translation method attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are “readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership” [3, p. 12].

Table 2

Communicative translation

Source language	Target language	Category of idiom
“Keep your temper, said the Caterpillar.	“Sei nicht empfindlich,” sagte die Raupe.	Semi idiom
A bright idea came into Alice's head.	Dies brachte Alice auf einen klugen Gedanken.	Pure idiom
“That was a narrow escape!” said Alice.	“Das war glücklich davon gekommen!” sagte Alice.	Pure idiom
“That's none of your business, Two!”	“Das geht dich nichts an, Zwei!”	Pure idiom
It flashed across her mind...	...denn es war ihr doch noch nie vorgekommen...	Pure idiom

The next method that was applied in the translated version of “Alice in Wonderland” is transposition. The examples of idioms, rendered by this strategy, are presented below in Table 3.

Table 3

Translation by transposition

Source language	Target language	Category of idiom
“What a pity it wouldn't stay!” sighed the Lory, as soon as it was quite out of sight.	“Wie schade, daß es nicht bleiben wollte!” seufzte der Papagei, sobald es nicht mehr zu sehen war.	Pure idiom

The strategy of transposition is applied when it is difficult to express the meaning of the idiomatic translation. In this case, the translator rendered the sense of the idiom in a more acceptable and simple phrase, which would be easy to perceive.

Conclusions. The examination of linguists` and researchers` studies confirmed the role and impact of the faithful rendering of phraseological units on English discourse. The article highlights the strategies that can be applied to translate phraseological units correctly. These are equivalence, calques, borrowing, literal translation, transposition, modulation, and others. Furthermore, the conducted research is based on the comparative method. The paper illustrates the strategies, applied by the translator of “Alice in Wonderland” – Antonie Zimmermann.

Thanks to the research, the use of strategies is analyzed in English and German. On the basis of comparison, there is a suggestion that these two languages have many similarities, both grammatical and lexical ones. Hence, it is a valuable shift in the area of research of phraseological units.

In sum, this paper contributes to further research on phraseological units, and exploration and plays a part in better awareness of such linguistic categories and their spheres of expression. Additionally, this paper would be useful for the research of the aforementioned notion while this phenomenon remains to be an issue of an adequate translation and there is a necessity to investigate it from all aspects of linguistics.

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