

NON-EQUIVALENT PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS TRANSLATION: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH, SPANISH AND RUSSIAN

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ABSTRACT

The paper is concerned with the methods for translating non-equivalent phraseological units (hereinafter, PhU) from English and Spanish into Russian. The study is dedicated to the consideration of the linguistic aspects of interlingual speech activity, in other words, translation, as well as a comparative analysis of the methods of communication of the meanings of phraseological units that do not have correspondences in the language of translation. The article presents phraseological units from fiction of the 19th-20th centuries by English and American (Harriet Beecher-Stowe "Uncle Tom's Cabin", Maugham S. "The Moon and Sixpence") and Spanish authors ("The Hive" by Camilo Jose Cela). The authors selected phraseological units from the above sources, carried out a comparative analysis of the original and translation in order to identify the ways of conveying the meanings of the units under consideration. All examples are accompanied by linguistic commentary by the authors. A comparative analysis of the ways of translation from different languages to Russian showed a difference in preferences when choosing a translation method. The problem of non-equivalent phraseological units can be solved by using lexical correspondence, modulation or description, which allows to convey the meaning of phraseological units in order to preserve an understanding of a literary work, despite the fact that sometimes the national-cultural specificity of the considered unit may be lost.

Keywords: non-equivalence, phraseological unit, Spanish, English, Russian, methods of translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The national originality of English and Spanish phraseology is most vividly manifested during its detailed study, in particular, it can be traced at the semantic level (Colson, 2008; Arsenteva & Kayumova, 2014). Any phraseological unit reflects national character traits, distinctions in psychology, way of thinking, specific conditions for the development of material and spiritual life of native speakers (Arsenteva et al., 2019; Byiyk et al., 2017; Varlamova & Safiullina, 2015). The absence of correspondences in the

phraseological system of the target language suggests non-equivalence of phraseological units of the source language. When considering non-equivalent PhU in Spanish, English, and Russian, these features of different cultures are especially prominent. The presence of non-equivalent PhU does not mean that their meaning cannot be delivered or that they are translated with less accuracy than the units that have one-to-one correspondences. There are various approaches to the classification of methods of translation of non-equivalent phraseological units (Komissarov V.N., Arsentieva E.F., Dobrovolsky D., Corpas Pastor). Non-equivalent PhU are characterized by certain differences at the grammatical level. For example, certain morphological and syntactic changes possible for phraseological units of the source language are unfeasible for phraseological units of the target language. The level of pragmatics implies a stylistic difference, differences in the cultural component and the frequency of usage of PhU in speech (Pastor, 2000).

2.METHODS

The actual material of the study was 103 English phraseological units and 335 Spanish phraseological units. These phraseological units were selected from the fiction of the 19th – 20th centuries by English and American authors (Harriet Beecher Stowe “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”, Maugham S. “The Moon and the Sixpence”), Spanish fiction of the 20th century (Camilo Jose Cela “The Hive”) (Stowe, 2009; Maugham, 1919; Cela, 1971). The methods of definitional and component analysis, the descriptive and comparative methods, and the method of statistical calculation were used within the framework of the study. The theoretical basis of the work was the ideas developed in the works on translation by E.V. Breus, S. Vlahov, V.N. Komissarov, S. S. Kuzmin, R.K. Minyar-Beloruhev, A.D. Schweitzer, P. Newmark et al. ; on phraseology by E.F. Arsentieva, V.V. Vinogradov, D. Dobrovolsky, A.V. Kunin, L.K. Bayramova, G.Z. Sadykova, Corpas Pastor, etc.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing our sample, we identified the following ways of translation of non-equivalent phraseological units from English and Spanish into Russian: calque, modulation, translation equivalents, description, omission, compensation.

Calque is one of the effective ways of translating of phraseological units in case of the problem of lacunarity since the essence of loan translation is to create a new word or a fixed combination in a target language that copies the structure of the source lexical unit. Calque is one of the most common ways of translation of Spanish phraseological units into Russian. The main reason is the distinction between the cultures of the two countries, their history. So, if we compare the following pair of phraseological units esp. ¡Tú vales un imperio! – Rus. Ты стоишь целого царства! then we will see that the Spanish word “imperio” is translated into Russian as “царства”. The words “империя” and “царство” denote a state with a form of government, but everyone knows that the Russian Empire was formed considerably later than the Empire in Spain, which was a country actively pursuing imperialist policy already in the 15th century. Besides, in Russia for a long time the king had been at the head of the state, and in many tales, we find the designation of something very valuable through comparison with the kingdom. Consequently, when translating these phraseological units, one may need to convey

precisely this cultural information. Calque is applicable for translation of both Spanish and English non-equivalent phraseological units. Among the analyzed examples, by means of loan translation from Spanish into Russian 16 PhU were translated, and from English into Russian – only 1 PhU.

Descriptive translation consists in reproduction of PhU descriptively. An apparent advantage of this method of translation is the full revelation of the essence of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, when using this method of conveying the meaning, the expressive and emotional component may be lost. As a rule, in the descriptive translation the component composition expands, significant changes occur in the structural and grammatical organization. When considering the following example, it is necessary to remember that PhU is a fixed combination of words with a figurative meaning that is not the sum of the meanings of its components. So, the English phrase “To know somebody in the flesh” can be translated into Russian by means of description “кто изо дня в день встречался с ним”. This translation method enables to convey the meaning of the combination “in the flesh” (“живой, во плоти”) and the meaning of the verb “to know” (“знать”). The descriptive way of translation is also indispensable when translating PhU of the Spanish language. So, a pair of phraseological units Esp. hombre muy corrido – Rus. человека, отлично знающего жизнь is translated via description, thus, having conveyed most fully the semantics of the adjective “corrido”, which according to the “Great Spanish-Russian Dictionary” is translated as “бывалый, опытный”. However, this translation method has not preserved the functional-stylistic connotation of phraseological units. Spanish phraseology is used in colloquial style. Even though when using this way of translating, expressiveness is lost, it is this way that allows to avoid the ambiguity of the meaning of phraseological units arising as a result of calque. We give a quantitative proportion of non-equivalent phraseological units of Spanish and English, in translation of which the description is used: from English – 3 PhU, from Spanish – 28 PhU.

In descriptive way of translation, the translation method such as **modulation** is also used. Modulation or meaning extension is the replacement of a word or a phrase from the source language with a unit of the target language, the meaning of which is logically inferred from the meaning of the source unit (Komissarov, 1990). The following pair of phraseological units illustrates an example of modulation: Engl. If he'll do that, we'll let bygones be bygones. – Rus. Если он вернется, я все забуду. In English, the word “bygones” means “past, past insults”, and the PhU “let bygones be bygones” is translated into Russian with the proverb “кто старое помянет, тому глаз вон”. Therefore, when translating this PhU in this context, we modulate its meaning and translate it with a rather simple construction “я все забуду” (I will forget everything), that is, a person will not remember old insults and leave everything in the past. From the point of view of modulation, the following Spanish phraseological unit is interesting – “sin más ni más”, which according to “The Great Spanish-Russian Dictionary” can be translated as “не задумываясь, очертя голову”. However, in the Russian variant of the novel “The Hive” we find a completely different translation:

Esp. A doña Rosa lo que le gusta es arrastrar sus arrobos, sin más ni más, por entre las mesas. Rus. Самое большое удовольствие для нее – таскать взад-вперед свои килограммы вот так, прохаживаясь между столиками. In this case, modulation was used, since it was necessary to create an image-picture – the heroine likes her work so much that she comes and goes between the tables, without pondering too much.

Later in the text we again encounter this phraseological unit:

Esp. Como lo de Martín, en todo caso, no debía ser nada grave, lo mejor sería que se presentase sin más ni más. Rus. Так как дело Мартина в любом случае не может быть очень серьезным, лучше всего ему явиться самому, безо всякого. In this case, modulation is contextual. The original text implies that it is better for Martin to come without hesitation, that is, without thinking up any alibi and without drawing anyone. It is this subtext that is conveyed in the Russian variant. Here are the quantitative data of English and Spanish phraseological units translated into Russian via modulation: from English – 14 PhU, from Spanish – 60 PhU.

Lexical method of translation involves the translation of PhU by conveying its lexical meaning with one word or phrase (Arsentieva, 1989). When applying the lexical method of translation, there is a complete non-correspondence between the grammatical structure of phraseological unit, its component composition, and stylistic connotation. However, by this method, the basic meaning of the phraseological unit is conveyed. For example, Eng. «to be gone to the dogs» according to “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English” means «it is getting much worse and will be difficult to improve» [16: 398]. Phraseological units with an animalistic component are very frequent. Sometimes the status of this or that animal and the attitude of people to it in different countries may coincide, then when translating phraseological units with an animalistic component, there are no difficulties. For example, the English “to be gone to the dogs” according to “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English” means “it is getting much worse and will be difficult to improve” (Summers & Gadsby, 1995). In Müller’s dictionary we find the following translation of this phraseological unit: “гибнуть, разоряться, идти к чертям”. Therefore, the translation “совсем опуститься” proposed by Man is an expression of the lexical meaning of this phraseological unit. It should be noted that with such a translation, despite the preservation of the significative-denotative meaning, the stylistic nuance of phraseological units practically disappears.

The translation of the lexical meaning along with the stylistic and emotionally expressive connotation can be illustrated by the following pair of phraseological units: Engl. He must be as mad as a hatter – Rus. Он окончательно рехнулся.

The study of Spanish phraseology shows that the use of the lexical method when translating from Spanish to Russian allows to avoid possible misunderstanding between native speakers of Russian and Spanish. Therefore, we often translate phraseological units by conveying only its lexical meaning in one word or phrase. For example, Esp. hombre de mala suerte – Rus. неудачник. The lexical method of translation is also used in the following case: Esp. anduvo dando tumbos – Rus. Шаталась.

The Spanish phrase “dando tumbos” has two meanings: 1) спотыкаясь; 2) в нужде, с трудом перебиваясь. The choice of this or that meaning is determined by the context: when translating, it is necessary to convey the constant wanderings of a person who begins to stumble moving due to being perpetually in want, weakness and hunger. Thus, by means of a word or a phrase, 8 non-equivalent phraseological units have been translated from English into Russian, 124 from Spanish into Russian. Translation equivalent was selected when translating 24 phraseological units of the English language and 51 phraseological units of the Spanish language.

Often phraseological units, causing great difficulties in translating, can be omitted in the target text. An important point when using **omission** is to achieve the minimum losses both in content and style. An example of omission is the following pair of PhU: Engl. They turned her out into the street **neck and crop**. – Rus. Они выгнали ее на

улицу. In translating Spanish phraseological units, omission is also not uncommon: Esp. ¿Quieres uvas? Pues **entra por uvas**. – Rus. хочешь винограду, так поработай на винограднике. The Spanish phraseological unit “no entrar por uvas” that means “избегать риска, ни во что не вмешиваться” (to avoid risk, not to interfere in anything) is not preserved in the text of the target language.

The technique inverse to omission is called **compensation**. Consider the following examples: Engl. “How good he looks, and how he does grow.”- “To be sure, he does.” Rus. “Растет не по дням, а по часам”. Obviously, for the Russian reader, the phraseological unit “растет не по дням, а по часам” has been close and familiar since childhood from “The Tale of Tsar Saltan”. Therefore, the addition of expressivity in this case is not inadequate. When translating from Spanish, compensation is also used: 1) Esp. A Don Jaime no le pas? esto, le pas? todo lo contrario. Rus. Дону Хайме Арсе **судьба не улыбнулась**, не повезло. 2) Esp. Si me hubiera estado como un gili viendo cómo la camelaban y cómo le metían mano los demás, a estas horas estaba como usted. Rus. Если бы я стоял, разинув рот, как дурак, и глядел, как ее обхаживают и щупают другие, был бы я сейчас **на бобах**, вот как вы. In the first case, the PhU “судьба не улыбнулась” is duplicated by the verb “не повезло”, which allows to convey the meaning of the Spanish construction based on antithesis and repetition: “no le pasó esto, le pasó todo lo contrario”. Concerning the second example, here it is necessary to pay attention to the meaning of the Russian PhU “на бобах” (“ни при чем”) (Ozhegov, 1988).

Omission and compensation are not the main methods of translation. Their use is limited to the cases when none of the above translation methods is suitable or when it is necessary to re-introduce the lost meaning and avoid both meaning and stylistic losses. The considered PhU translated by means of omission or compensation are not numerous: omission was applied when translating 3 Spanish phraseological units and 1 English phraseological unit, and compensation was used when translating 11 English phraseological units and 10 Spanish phraseological units.

4.SUMMARY

Thus, when translating non-equivalent Spanish and English phraseological units into Russian, national differences are prominent, which cannot but affect the choice of the method of translation of phraseological units. Studying the national-cultural specifics of phraseological units from the point of view of translation facilitates to overcome many barriers to intercultural communication (Yakubova & Gazizova, 2015). Within the framework of our research paper, we have carried out a comparative analysis of methods of translation of non-equivalent phraseological units from English and Spanish into Russian, which shows that the selection of lexical correspondence (23% when translating from English and 15% when translating from Spanish) is the most prevailing way of translation, followed by modulation (13% and 18%). This is explained by the fact that in most cases the use of phraseological units in a literary work plays a huge role in creating the image of a character or national color. In this connection, it becomes necessary to convey the figurative meaning of this unit. Also, one of the methods used is descriptive translation (3% and 8%). The smallest percentage of the use of omission (0.9% in both languages) and calque (0.9% when translating from English, 5% when translating from Spanish) may be explained by the desire of translators to preserve the author’s idea and style of the literary work.

5.CONCLUSIONS

Having analyzed the methods of translating non-equivalent phraseological units using the examples from works by Beecher Stow, Maugham and Cela, we can conclude that the main methods of translation are lexical, descriptive, and modulation. The correlation of examples of English and Spanish shows that the lexical translation method dominates when translating from both English and Spanish into Russian. Therefore, this translation method is the most suitable when translating non-equivalent phraseological units of the Spanish and English languages into Russian since, when translating, the semantics and pragmatics of phraseological units are conveyed. Moreover, it should be emphasized that when translating from English into Russian, the most common are modulation and selection of lexical equivalent correspondence, while when translating from Spanish into Russian, the main methods of translation are modulation, lexical method of translation and description.

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