

Classification and Problems in Process of Translation of Lexical Transformations

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Abstract. The article discusses the essence of lexical transformations in the process of translation, its classification and the main issues faced during the translation process. The theories presented in the given article are supported with proper examples in both English and Russian languages.

Key words: translation, literary text, lexical transformation, substitution, generalization,

Lexical transformation is a device originally proposed by Roeper & Siegel (1978) to account for the derivation of synthetic compounds such as *truck driver*, *fast-acting* and *pan-fried* out of the underlying lexical representations *drive a truck*, *act fast* and *fry in a pan*.¹

Lexical transformations change the semantic core of a translated word. They can be classified into the following groups:²

1. Lexical substitution, or putting one word in place of another. It often results from the different semantic structures of the source language and target language words. Thus the word *молодой* is not always translated as *young*; rather, it depends on its word combinability: *молодой картофель* is equal to *new potatoes*. This translation equivalent is predetermined by the word combination it is used in. This type of translation can hardly be called substitution, since it is a regular equivalent for this phrase.

Deliberate substitution as a translation technique can be of several subtypes:³

Specification, or substituting words with a wider meaning with words of a narrower meaning: *Will you do the room?* – *Ты убереешься в комнате?* *I'll get the papers on the way home.* – *Я куплю газеты по дороге домой.* The underlined English words have larger scopes of meaning than their Russian counterparts and their particular semantics is recognized from the context.

Generalization, or substituting words of a narrower meaning with those of a wider meaning: *People don't like to be stared at.* – *Людям не нравится, когда на них смотрят.* If we compare the semantic structure of the English and Russian verbs, we can see that the English *stare* specifies the action of seeing expressed by the Russian verb. The Russian *смотреть* can imply staring, facing, eyeing, etc. The specific meaning in the Russian sentence can be expressed by the adverb *пристально*. Another reason for generalization in translating can be that the particular meaning expressed by the source language word might be irrelevant for the translation receptor: *She bought the Oolong tea on her way home.* – *По дороге домой она купила китайского чая.* *Oolong* is a sort of Chinese tea but for the receptor this information is not important; therefore, the translator can generalize.

Differentiation is a rather rare technique of substitution. It takes place when we substitute a word by another one with parallel meaning, denoting a similar species: *bamboo curtain* – *железный занавес*. Both *bamboo* and *железо* (*iron*) are materials known for their hard nature. They are used figuratively to denote the barriers between the Western and Communist countries (*bamboo curtain* in reference to China, *железный занавес* in reference to other Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Aid) states. There are no

¹<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kontseptualnye-metafory-v-angliyskoy-i-russkoy-poezii-sopostavitelnyy-aspekt-1>

²Гончаренко С.Ф. Поэтический перевод и перевод поэзии: константы и вариативность // Тетради переводчика, - М.:1999. - 421с.

³ Латышев Л.К., Семенов А.Л. Л 278 Перевод: теория, практика и методика преподавания: Учеб. пособие для студ. перевод, фак. высш. учеб. заведений. - М.: Издательский центр «Академия», 2003. - 440 с.

hyponymic relations between the notions of *bamboo* and *iron* (though the referential area of *железный занавес* is of course much wider than that of *bamboo curtain*.)

2. Metaphoric transformations are based on transferring the meaning due to the similarity of notions. The target language can re-metaphorize a word or a phrase by using the same image (*Don't dirty your hands with that money!* – *Не марай рук этими деньгами!*) or a different one (*Он вернет нам деньги, когда рак свистнет.* – *He will pay us our money back when hell freezes over*). The source language metaphor can be destroyed if there is no similar idiom in the target language:⁴

a) concretizing - a SL word with an abstract, broad and general meaning is replaced by a TL word with a concrete, narrow and specific meaning, e.g. After dinner – После ужина b) generalization - a SL word with a concrete, narrow, specific meaning changed for a TL word which has an abstract, broad, general meaning, c) sense development - a SL word is replaced by a TL word the meanings of which denote notions connected with each other through cause-result links. Since such links are usually connected with an action there may be basically 6 varieties of such transformations: result – cause; result – action; action – result; action – cause; cause – result; cause – action (When I opened my eyes she had lit the lamp (action) Когда я открыл глаза, лампа была зажжена (resultant state)); d) antonymic translation - a SL word is translated by its TL antonym which as a rule brings about changes in the grammatical structure of a sentence, namely an affirmative sentence often becomes negative and vice versa a negative sentence may turn into an affirmative one.

Grammatical substitutions refer to various changes of grammatical (morphological) forms and syntactic structures that include several kinds of modifications:⁵

a) part-of-speech characteristics

Я ему обрадовался - *I was glad to see him* (the Russian verb denoting emotional behavior is often replaced by the English phrase: *to be* (turn, get, grow, become) + adjective);

b) parts-of-a-sentence substitutions: *John kept whistling "Song of India" while he shaved* – *Джон брился и насвистывал «Индийскую песню»* (subordination in the English sentence is replaced by coordination in the Russian sentence).

Complete transformation – is used when it is necessary to understand the meaning of the whole utterance and render it by means of words of target language sometimes very distant from the meaning of source text:

Eg. Help yourself, please. – *Угощайся!*

Due to the semantic features of language the meanings of words, their usage, ability to combine with other words, associations awakened by them, the place they hold in the lexical system of a language do not concur for the most part. All the same «ideas» expressed by words coincide in most cases, though the means of expression differ.

As it is impossible to embrace all the cases of semantic differences between two languages, we shall restrict this course to the most typical features.

The principal types of lexical correspondences between two languages are as follows:

I. Complete correspondences.

II. Partial correspondences.

III. The absence of correspondences.

Complete lexical correspondences. Complete correspondence of lexical units of two languages can rarely be found. As a rule they belong to the following lexical groups:

- Proper names and geographical denominations;
- Scientific and technical terms;
- The months and days of the week, numerals.
- Partial lexical correspondences

⁴<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kontseptualnye-metafori-v-angliyskoy-i-russkoy-poezii-sopostavitelnyy-aspekt-1>

⁵ Бархударов Л.С. О лексических соответствиях в поэтическом переводе // Тетради переводчика. - М.: «Международные отношения», 1964. - 275с.

While translating the lexical units partial correspondences mostly occur. That happens when a word in the language of the original to several equivalents in the language it is translated into. The reasons of these facts are the following:⁶

1) Most words in a language are polysemantic, and the system of word – meaning in one language does not concur with the same system in another language completely. That's why the selection of a word in the process of translating is determined by the context.

2) The specification of synonymous order which pertain the selection of words. However, it is necessary to allow for the nature of the semantic signs which an order of synonyms is based on. Consequently, it is advisable to account for the concurring meanings of members of synonymic orders, the difference in lexical and stylistic meanings, and the ability of individual components of orders of synonyms to combine: e.g. dismiss, discharge (bookish), sack, fire (colloquial); the edge of the table – the rim of the moon.

3) Each word affects the meaning of an object it designates. Not infrequently languages «select» different properties and signs to describe the same denotations. The way, each language creates its own «picture of the world», is known as «various principles of dividing reality into parts». Despite the difference of signs, both languages reflect one and the same phenomenon adequately and to the same extent, which must be taken into account when translating words of this kind, as equivalence is not identical to having the same meaning: e.g. compare:

Hot milk with skin on it.

Горячее молоко с пенкой.

4) The difference of semantic content of the equivalent words in two languages. These words can be divided into three sub-groups:

a) Words with a differentiated (undifferentiated) meaning: e.g. *In English: to swim (of a human being), to sail (of a ship), to float (of an inanimate object);*

b) Words with a «broad» sense: *verbs of state (to be), perception and brainwork (to see, to understand), verbs of action and speech (to go, to say), partially desemantized words (thing, case).*

c) «Adverbial verbs» with a composite structure, which have a semantic content, expressing action and nature at the same time: e.g.

The train whistled out of the station.

Дав свисток, поезд отошел от станции.

5) Most difficulties are encountered when translating the so called pseudo-international words, i.e. words which are similar in form in both languages, but differ in meaning or use. The regular correspondence of such words in spelling and sometimes in articulation (in compliance with the regularities of each language), coupled with the structure of word-building in both languages may lead to a false identification: e.g.

In English: moment.

In Russian: момент, важность, значительность.

6) Each language has its own typical rules of combinability. The latter is limited by the system of the language. A language has generally established traditional combinations which do not concur with corresponding ones in another language.

Adjectives offer considerable difficulties in the process of translation, which is explained by the specific ability of English adjectives to combine. It does not always coincide with their combinability in the Kazakh or Russian languages on account of differences in their semantic structure and valence. Frequently one and the same adjective in English combines with a number of nouns, while in Kazakh and Russian different adjectives are used in combinations of this kind. For this reason it is not easy to translate English adjectives which are more capable of combining than their Kazakh and Russian equivalents: e.g.

A bad headache, a bad mistake.

Сильная головная боль, грубая ошибка.

A specific feature of the combinability of English nouns is that some of them can function as the subject of a sentence, indicating one who acts, though they do not belong to a lexico-semantic category

⁶ Гей Н.К. Художественность литературы. Поэтика. Стилль. Изд-во «Наука» М., 1975. - 470 с.

NominaAgentis. This tends to the «predicate – adverbial modifier» construction being replaced by that of the «subject - predicate»: e.g.

The strike closed most of the schools in New- York.

В результате забастовки большинство школ Нью-Йорка было закрыто.

Of no less significance is the habitual use of a word, which is bound up with the history of the language and the formation and development of its lexical system. This gave shape to clichés peculiar to each language, which are used for describing particular situations: e.g.

In English: Wet paint!

In Russian: Осторожно, окрашено!

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the given article has shed light on the main issues and problems of the lexical transformations faced during the translation process and the main classifications of the lexical transformations. Moreover, it has shed light on theoretical foundations and scientifically proved viewpoints of the scholars who had contributed to this very topic. But, further, the given research will be enriched and fulfilled with examples deeply analyzed in both languages.

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