INVESTIGATING THE HERMENEUTICAL EQUIVALENCE OF IDIOMS IN TRANSLATION

INVESTIGAÇÃO DA EQUIVALÊNCIA HERMENÊUTICA DE EXPRESSÕES IDIOMÁTICAS NA TRADUÇÃO

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Abstract. The article presents a hermeneutic approach to idiomatic equivalents in terms of translation. The hermeneutic, activity-based approach to translation highlights the essence of translation as a process of transferring the way of thinking and thinking activity organization from one culture to another one. The application of the hermeneutic approach implies transition from the traditionally considered level of meanings to the level of meaning relations and the consideration of the idioms as a system of explicit and implicit meanings that are perceived on different levels of the system of thought-activity. The hermeneutical equivalence is viewed with the reference to the fixation of reflection on different levels of thought-activity system (thought-action, thought-communication and non-verbal thinking).
Keywords: idioms; idiomatic equivalent; translation; hermeneutic approach; interpretive equivalence.

Resumo. O artigo apresenta uma abordagem hermenêutica aos equivalentes idiomáticos no contexto da tradução. A abordagem hermenêutica, baseada na atividade, destaca a essência da tradução como um processo de

transferência da forma de pensar e da organização da atividade do pensamento de uma cultura para outra. A aplicação da abordagem hermenêutica implica a transição do nível tradicionalmente considerado de significados para o nível de relações de significados e a consideração dos modismos como um sistema de significados explícitos e implícitos que são percebidos em diferentes níveis do sistema de atividade do pensamento. A equivalência hermenêutica é considerada com referência à fixação da reflexão em diferentes níveis do sistema de atividade do pensamento (pensamento-ação, pensamento-comunicação e pensamento não verbal).
Palavras-chave: expressões idiomáticas; equivalente idiomático; tradução; abordagem hermenêutica.

1. INTRODUCTION

The phraseological system of any language contains invaluable information about the course of language development, history, culture and literature of the people speaking it, as well as about the peculiarities of mentality of its speakers. The study of the idioms, as well as any other linguistic research, is necessarily connected with the reference to the problem of interrelation and mutual influence of language and thinking.

In modern research there is a concept of idiomatic world view. Xajrullina (2006) singles out the idiomatic world view as a part of the linguistic world view that systematizes knowledge about the surrounding world by means of idioms. A feature of the idiomatic world view is its property to apply the most vivid figurative forms to expressing the nature of the language speakers and their mentality and securing their cultural and historical experience of perceiving the world. It is performed by evaluating phenomena and objects, actions and states rather than naming them. Therefore, the idiomatic world view contains not only rational, but also emotional information about reality (Razmara et al., 2022; de Souza et al., 2023).

In researching idioms, many different issues have been considered recently, the main one being the description of idioms of different languages - the pool of idioms is mobile, constantly replenished with new units, the meanings of existing units are reinterpreted, acquiring new shades or new meanings (Broeck, 1981; Dagut, 1976).

Over the past decades, a great variety of problems have been considered in phraseology: the organization of idiomatic composition, its development, the semantics of phrases, the nominative aspect, the development of descriptions of idioms in dictionaries. However, the variety of approaches to the study of idioms and the abundance of research conducted in the traditions of various scientific schools does not mean that all possible ways of studying idioms have already been explored. New schools and new approaches appear and will appear due to the fact that an idiom is the language unit that comprehensively reflects the features of the culture of the native speakers, their everyday life, way of life, the features of the natural and geographical environment in which the speakers of the language live (Koller, 1995).

The idiomatic fund of a language contains units that owe their origin to works of literature not only of the definite nation, but also world-famous authors, that is, it reflects the connection of the nation with the world around them. The grammatical models of idioms reflect the peculiarities of the grammatical structure of the language. Thus, we can say that idioms represent the only unit of language that comprehensively reflects the peculiarities of the thinking of the people who speak the language. That is why the study of idioms helps to uncover the peculiarities of thinking, which is very important for understanding and studying the language. The

hermeneutic approach to the study of phraseology is exactly the approach which allows us to research the mechanisms of thinking more deeply.

Linguistics of idioms is a science of interpreting and understanding, since it not only classifies the idioms, but also seeks to understand them, to find the author's intention (in this case, the nation can be understood as the author). Understanding is achieved through reflection, which is a universal feature of human thought activity, that is, thinking in the context of practice (e.g., communication).

An idiom has a dual nature: on the one hand, it includes individual words that compose it, which, as textual material, awaken reflection fixed in certain belts of thinking activity, on the other hand, the integral meaning of the idiom immediately becomes the material over which the subsequent reflection with a different mosaic of fixations of thinking activity is performed. Thus, when an idiom is included in the text, it becomes a tool of meaning formation and meaning perception (Chidlow, et al., 2014).

The aim of translation is to imitate the original source as much as it is possible. The limitations of this kind of activity, imposed primarily by language and culture, are quite obvious, but so is the need for culture to receive new meanings and ways of thinking activity with them from outside. This is the function of intercultural exchange of texts and the cultural significance of literary texts. They enrich both their own culture as well as other ones, being not only and not so much a way of intercultural communication as a way of meaning-making and a way of creating means of mastering new meanings. The translator should create prerequisites for transferring the optimal content of the original text, overcoming the resistance of cultures and languages if possible.

So, the task of the translator is not only to preserve the meaning of the idiom, but also to convey to the recipient of the translated text the meaning that the idiom acquires in the text. The criteria for equivalence in this case cannot be reduced to purely linguistic ones, but should be based on the reflection of the recipients of the source and translated text, unfolding in the belts of system of thinking activity.

2. HYPOTHESIS

The hermeneutic, activity-based approach to translation deserves particular attention because it highlights the essence of translation as a process of transferring the way of thinking and thinking activity organization from one culture to another one.

The application of the hermeneutic approach implies:

- Transition from the traditionally considered level of meanings to the level of meaning relations;
- Consideration of the idioms as a system of explicit and implicit meanings.

The nationally and culturally specific component of an idiom’s meaning is constructed in the form of a unique mosaic of fixations of reflection, awakened by the idiomatic metaphor. Hence, the equivalence of idiomatic units within translation process can be assessed in terms of preservation of the mosaic of fixations of reflection.

3. METHODS

The theoretical basis of the research is based on the developments of representatives of the Tver School of philological hermeneutics (Kharmandar et al., 2017; Stolze, 2011).

The methodological basis of the research is determined by the specificity of the material and the set tasks of the research: the basic methodology is conditioned by the hermeneutic approach based on G. Shchedrovitsky's theory of thought-activity system and consisting in revealing the meanings of idioms through the description of means of indirect nomination that evoke reflection. The action of reflection is usually considered within the notion of reflection fixations in the corresponding levels of thought-activity system. The system of such fixation includes:

1. The level of real world thought-action that includes the recipient's experience in the field of practical activity;
2. The thought-communication level containing the experience of communicating with verbal texts;
3. The level of pure thinking unfolding in non-verbal fixations.

4. RESULTS

Taking into account the three levels of thought-activity system Boucher (1996) presents seven possible patterns of fixing reflection when understanding metaphors. The same patterns can be applied to idioms as they present metaphoric representation of the world.

4.1.Thought-Action Level

The fixation of reflection in the level of thought-action, when the understanding of an idiom is directly connected with the reactivation of the experience of the recipient's practical activity. Understanding the most part of comparative idioms is a result of fixation of reflection on this level of tough-activity.

E.g. as different as chalk and cheese, as busy as a bee, as hungry as a wolf/ a hunter. As the practical experience of speakers of different languages is universal in many ways, the translation of such idioms does not pose a problem and evokes reflection on the same level.

4.2.Thought-Communication Level

The fixation of reflection on the thought-communication level occurs with the reference to the recipient's experience of communication with the verbal texts. In terms of translation, idiomatic units that evoke reflection on this level can generally be divided into two large groups:

- the idiomatic units belonging to inter-lingual equivalents that acquired their status thanks to the influence of Ancient Greek and Ancient Roman culture and literature, the influence of the Bible on the culture of many countries of the world, and the wide dissemination of the great works of world literature;
- The idiomatic units that are nationally specific, reflecting the peculiarities of the people's culture.

- As a rule, idioms belonging to inter-lingual equivalents will, in most cases, equally evoke reflection with reference to the recipient's experience with verbal texts or historical events, equally significant for speakers of different lingo-cultures: e.g. to pull smb's chestnuts out of the fire, to cross the Rubicon, cry wolf, etc.

4.3.Non-Verbal Thinking Level

The fixation of reflection on the level of non-verbal thinking implies that the idiomatic unit as a certain symbol leads the recipient to a certain thought, i.e. the process of understanding the idiom occurs directly and does not need verbalization.

In most cases, the fixation of reflection is relevant to non-motivated idiomatic units. When translating this kind of idioms, which are often nationally specific, it is usually impossible to achieve full translation equivalence. E.g. to be off one's oats - to be sick, to have a stomach ache; to lose one's appetite.

However, it seems possible to understand the author's intention and retain it in the translated text. In this case, the understanding of the original and the translation refers to the level of non-verbal thinking, which allows us to talk about a certain equivalence in terms of philological hermeneutics.

The idiom, the understanding of which awakens reflection on the level of non-verbal pure thinking, is translated, as a rule, in two ways:

- The meaning of the idiom is expressed in the translation by a variable combination of words, which awakens reflection on the level of thought-action and completely violates the author's intention: the action of the recipient to understand such a text proceeds easily, and the artistic value of the text is lost;
- The translation uses an idiom but it awakens reflection not on the level of non-verbal thinking, but on other levels;
- The language of translation selects an unmotivated phrase formed by a complex reinterpretation, which awakens reflection in a similar pattern to the original.

4.4.Combination of Levels (Thought-Action and Thought-Communication)

The fixation of reflection on two levels of thought-activity system: the thought-action and the thought-communication ones. Here two ways of fixation of reflection are possible:

- the idiom is understood at the expense of leaving the thought-communication level and entering the thought-action one (where thought-action is the prevailing level). For example, birds of a feather flock together - people of the same thoughts or with the same interests will be found together.
- The idiom is understood at the expense of leaving the thought-activity level for the thought-communication one (the latter being more important in the process of understanding). E.g. Kilkenny cats (fight like Kilkenny cats) - deadly enemies (fight to mutual destruction, fight to the death). The English phrase goes back to the legend of a fierce struggle between the towns of Kilkenny and Irishtown in the 17th century, which led to their ruin (Moyaert, 2008; Sánchez, 2009).

In such cases, a question arises as to what extent a translator can consciously refuse to the reflection fixation on one of the levels. Taking into account the fact that in the process of

choosing the right option the translator may sacrifice minimally meaningful units of translation, is it acceptable to change the mosaic of reflection fixation.

4.5.Combination of Levels (Thought-Action and Non-Verbal Thinking)

The fixation of reflection on two levels, the level of non-verbal thinking and the level of though-action, also gives two possible variants:

- leaving the level of non-verbal thinking into the level of thought-action, where the latter is more important. E.g. for the birds - unnecessary, of no value, of no interest whatsoever; stupid, ridiculous; a laughing stock.
- in most cases, when translating idioms that evoke reflection on the level of non-verbal thinking with the exit to it from the belt of thought-action, the pattern of reflection fixation changes. E.g. run riot - no measure, no restraint; overstep all bounds; go wild (about imagination) (to follow a false trail (about dogs)).

4.6.Combination of Levels (Thought-Communication and Non-Verbal Thinking)

The fixation of reflection on the level of communicative reality is leading. E.g. Caesar's wife must be above suspicion (according to the interpretation of the origin of this idiom, this is the answer given by Julius Caesar when asked why he divorced his second wife after an incident when Publius Claudius secretly entered Caesar's house dressed as a woman. The reason for Publius' behavior was his interest in Caesar's wife. Caesar divorces his wife, even though he realizes that she may be innocent. When this idiom is used in the text, the maximum degree of interpretive equivalence is achieved: understanding the text without reference to the belt of communicative reality is impossible.

Most idioms, originally formed as a result of the author's occasional use and bright metaphorical reinterpretation, are understood by referring to the thought-communication belt. However, having acquired a wide use in the modern language, they become a kind of symbol that leads the recipient to a certain meaning. Thus, it can be argued that there are a number idioms understanding of which comes with an exit from the thought-communication level to that of non-verbal thinking. One example of such idioms would be the following: cakes and ale - fun, pleasure, entertainment (Shakespearean expression).

There was a feeling ...that in very truth the time for cakes and ale in this world was all over. It was this feeling that made a residence in Ireland at that period so very sad (Mashhadi, 2021).

4.7.Combination of Levels (Thought-Action, Thought-Communication, and Non-Verbal Thinking)

The fixation of reflection on all three levels of thought-activity system represents the so called ideal of understanding. The most difficult task for the translator in this case will be to preserve the pattern of reflection fixations, taking into account which level of thought-activity system is the leading one.

According to the results of the analysis of literary works show, the number of idioms that evoke reflection on all three levels of thought-activity system is very small.

As a result, translation theory is said to be a collection of knowledge that we have about translation and its related issues. The theory of translation can explain topics such as the nature

of translation, definitions of translation, appropriate methods of translating various texts, stages of translation, balances between source and destination texts, etc. From the time of Cicero onwards, most of the theories of translation have been about the methods or types of translation, which generally include two methods: literal translation or word-for-word translation and free translation or meaning-for-meaning, the first of which is often used in religious texts that have a special sensitivity (Van der Louw, 2007). The second one is used in lectures and philosophical texts, etc. In the contemporary era, in almost all the famous theories of translation, two basic methods or two fundamental types of translation can be observed, which were mentioned in the above cases.

The present author's theory about the nature and types of translation is a new perspective in the field of translation studies. In this theory, translation is not a historical phenomenon that started from a certain period in history, but it is an innate talent in humans that is activated in the mind when humans begin to understand the outside world, and humans have the power to understand, think and express, in fact, the power It has translation, and therefore, in this new perspective, translation is inseparable from human daily life

5. CONCLUSIONS

The figurative vision of similar concepts and phenomena among speakers of different languages differs significantly, which is reflected in the idiomatic fund of the language, which is essentially a repository of national and cultural metaphors. Hence, the task of the translator is not only to preserve the meaning of the idiom in terms of the linguistic equivalence, but also to convey to the recipient the fixation of the refection when understanding the idiom submerged in the text. Concepts of equivalence existing in modern linguistics cannot fully assess the degree of equivalence of the original and the translation: being based primarily on linguistic principles, they assume maximum equivalence even when it is obvious that there is unequal division of reality in the pictures of the world, created by different languages.

The equivalence of idioms and their translations should be evaluated from the standpoint of the theory of thought-activity system: it reflects the fixation of reflection in understanding the original and translation and makes it possible to compare the mosaic of these fixations.

The hermeneutic approach to the study of idioms and their translation makes it possible to consider the translation process as an activity of meaning perception and understanding with reference to the author's text construction techniques and metaphorical means as ways of representation and discernment of meanings.

The introduction of the concept of hermeneutical equivalence, which is an interpretive equivalence, that consists in implying the same pattern of reflection fixation in the understanding of the original and the translation. The degree of interpretive equivalence is practically unattainable in the translation of the idioms that facilitate a fixation of reflection on the level of non-verbal thinking. A special translation difficulty is also presented by the idioms with the fixation of reflection simultaneously on several levels of thought-activity system.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors confirm that the presented data does not contain any conflicts of interest.

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