

STAGES IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY

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Articolul present este dedicat traducerii unitatilor frazeologice din limba engleza, greutatilor care sunt intilnite de traducator la transferul lor din limba engleza in limbile romina și rusa. Unele din cele mai mari greutati sunt recunoașterea unitatilor frazeologice, decodarea lor și traducerea propriu zisă, căutarea echivalentelor, dacă ele sunt sau interpretarea lor. Procedeele de lucru la traducerea frazeologismelor sunt demonstrate în baza exemplelor din povestirea lui O'Henry "Two Presents" și dicționarele bilingve: englez-romîn de frazeologisme; englez-rus de frazeologisme și invers: romîn-englez frazeologic și rus-englez frazeologic.

The last few years have seen an explosion of interest in Phraseology, which has gone from being a relative fringe discipline to playing a central role in a wide range of linguistic disciplines such as Lexicography, Contrastive Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Foreign Language Learning and Teaching, Translation and Natural Language Processing. Being an expanding field of research it has attracted the interest of many scholars from many countries.

Scholarly attention has been focused on the semantic, grammatical, structural and syntactic properties of the phraseological units, on various approaches to their synchronic and diachronic description, on their pragmatic function in discourse. But the central difficulty that Phraseology represents is translation.

The best approach to an opaquely literary text is to understand the original key phraseological units when you first read the text and then look them up (even if you think you know them), it is necessary to check your memory because of the fact that some words are pretty known but you may not know their bound meaning and may be influenced by "false friends of the translator".

Both text and translation are "thing-bound". According to Barbara Folkart (1984) the latitude which the translator enjoys is subject only to the constraints of register and, possibly, textual cohesion. This statement is questionable since the SL text is the basis of the translation, however much the translation departs from it: a) owing to its different natural usage; b) if it has to be referentially more explicit than the original – in particular in case of phraseological units, where case-partners may have to be supplied in the TL text.

Being aware that there are different methods of translating different situations, the idea that there should be a special method of translating phraseological units came into our mind. So, the initial hypothesis was that the process of translating of the phraseological units requires a certain approach and demands a special method in order to find the way of rendering them into the target language. So to say, we are interested in the analysis of the process of translating the phraseological units. We focused upon the stages of translation.

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There are some stages in the translation of the phraseological units. They are:

- How can one recognize the phraseological unit?
- How can a translator decode the phraseological unit?
- What equivalent will be adequate in the given context?
- In which specific meaning is the phraseological unit used?
- Should a translator preserve the source language structure when translating a phraseological unit?
- Should the translator render the cultural elements of the source language?

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.

As we have already mentioned the first obstacle for the translator consists in recognizing the phraseological units. If unrecognized, they are translated interpreting the meaning of the single words to the latter, with doubtful outcome, to say the least. The translator is always alert in order to catch a passage that is marked, s/he forms a particular sensitivity allowing him/her to stop and think about an unusual formulation even when in his/her experience s/he never ran across that particular phraseological unit.

Let us take an example from O. Henry's short story "Two Presents" and witness how a phraseological unit is recognized in a coherent text:

"Don't make any mistake, Dell", he said, "about me."

"Nu ma înțelege greșit, Dell" a spus el...

"He поёми меня ложно, Делл", - сказал он...

In order to avoid mistakes in translation the translator should be aware of the phenomenon called "phraseological unit" and know the methods of its translation. Once the expression is identified the next problem consists in decoding it. All authors agree that dictionaries are not always reliable tools in this sense. First they do not contain all phraseological units, then because everyday new other phraseological units are formed, and, lastly, because dictionaries have a limited length and cannot contain everything. The second problem consists in the identification of the phraseological units under a given entry: "find oneself between hammer and anvil" can be found under the words "hammer" or "anvil" but certainly if it is present under one entry it is absent in all the other entries, otherwise the dictionary would be too redundant (some redundancy is physiological and functional to effective communication, in order to cover the "voids" produced by physical and/or semiotic noise).

The third problem is the use of bilingual dictionaries. In this case the provided solutions are not the explanation of the sense of phraseological units expression that in the compilers' intentions should serve to translate them into the other language. Since there has never been a good coincidence of the meanings between phraseological units of different languages, there is a very high risk of finding others that have different metaphors, a different meaning, and are not at all fit for specific cases.

Once the phraseological unit has been recognized and understood, the task is not yet finished: on the contrary, one could say that the next problem is to find a translating expression.

In the most fortunate cases, in two cultures the same phraseological unit has been formed being based on the same metaphor. It is the case of the mentioned

example, *being between hammer and anvil*, existing also in Romanian: *între ciocan și nicovală* and as in Russian: *между молотом и наковальнеé*.

This kind of translation can be seldom done, when the opportunity occurs and when the phraseological unit does not have a culture-specific connotation (otherwise it would be lost, forming a translation loss).

In other cases, the translator opts for a different phraseological unit, based on a different metaphor, that is, in the translator's opinion, it conveys the same kind of contextual meaning in different languages. Thus, for example, the phraseological unit meaning „to be fortunate” may be as follows:

e.g. *to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth* (English) = *a se naște în cămașă* (Romanian), *родиться в рубашке* (Russian).

In a connotative text the choice of a translating phraseological unit can be a big problem, because the author's intention can be to use a given metaphor (for example “the shirts” mentioned above, as we saw the translation from Romanian and Russian are similar), that is functional to the network of intertextual referencies, and the replacing phraseological unit can radically shift the metaphor's content misleading the user of the target text.

If on the other hand, what counts most is only transferring the denotative meaning, for example, when the notion of “never” is expressed through a phraseological unit, we can use different metaphors without great difficulties:

English: *when the moon turns to green cheese*;

Romanian: *a crede în orice absurditate; nu tot ce zboară se mănîncă*;

Russian: *Когда рак на горе свистнет и рыба запоёт*.

There is, moreover, the possibility of a non-phraseological translation of a phraseological unit. This choice is preferred when the denotative meaning of the translation act is chosen as a dominant, and we are ready to compromise as to the presentation of the expressive colour, 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 explaining through other words the denotative meaning of the phraseological unit, giving up all the other style and connotative aspects. In the case of the “hammer and anvil” phraseological unit, the lexical rendering could be “to be in an uneasy, stressing situation.”

The calque would consist in translating the phraseological unit into a culture where such a form is not recognized as a phraseological unit: in this case the reader of the receiving culture perceives the phraseological unit as unusual and feels the problem to interpret it in a non-literal, metaphorical way.

The calque has the advantage of perceiving 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 as the metaphor is an essential, primal semiotic mechanism that therefore belongs to all cultures.

Literature

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