



**Lexico-Semantic Transformations In Translation Of American English
Paremiological Units**

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ABSTRACT

The following article is devoted to the study of the employment of lexico-semantic transformations in translation of American English paremiological units into the Russian and Spanish languages. Our aim is to compare and contrast the frequency of the usage of particular transformations depending on the target language. At the beginning of the research we put forward two hypotheses: 1) meaning development is going to be the most frequently used type of lexico-semantic transformations in translation to both languages, 2) the percentage of usage of concretization, generalization and metonymic translation is going to be very low in both languages.

The received results proved the first hypothesis only partially. Meaning development was found to be the most popular type of lexico-semantic transformations in translation only to the Spanish language (22%). The analysis of the Russian translations showed that meaning development was used in only 16% of the cases while addition was found in 20% of the translated paremiological units. As for concretization, generalization and metonymic translation, in both languages the percentage of their usage is quite low and in some cases is even zero, which totally proved our second hypothesis.

The received data allow to identify common for both languages translation features as well as to determine how the language difference affects the choice of translation transformations. These results can be quite useful for the development of the workable model of translation of American English paremiological units to different languages.

Keywords: paremiological unit, lexico-semantic transformation, concretization, addition, omission, generalization, metonymic translation, antonymic translation, meaning development.



1. INTRODUCTION

Translation transformations are in a particular concern of translation studies. The largest contribution towards this field is considered to be done by J.C. Catford, who might be called the author of the term 'translation shift'. The scholar defines shifts as: «... departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from source language to the target language» (Catford,1965). He also distinguishes two types of translation shifts: level and category shifts.

Transformations in this system are called intra-system shifts and appear in such cases when a translator selects a non-corresponding term in the target language, despite the fact that the source language and the target language possess approximant equivalent (Catford,1965).

Another influential input to the theory of translation transformations has been made by J. Vinay and J. Darbelnet, in their work «A Comparative Stylistics of French and English». Even though their research is based on English and French, it still persists one of the most thorough comparative analyses of two language systems. Moreover, the linguists have also presented the first classification of translation transformations regarding them as procedures (Vinay,1995).

Spanish scholars do not separate translation procedures and transformations either.

Hurtado Albir defines them as procedures, visible in the result of the translation which are used in order to reach the translation equivalence for textual micro units (Samaniego – Fernández, 2007). In her «Traducción y Traductología» she presents the collection of translation transformations acknowledged by the various scholars in the field of translation. Among them are: adaptation, linguistic expansion, calque, compensation, linguistic compression, explication, generalization, implication, modulation, particularization, borrowing, literal translation, transposition and others.

In Russian theory of translation several types of transformations are being distinguished and there exist many classifications of them.

L. S. Barhudarov named only 4 basic types: 1) changes; 2) substitutions; 3) additions; 4) omissions (Barhudarov, 1975). Ya. I. Recker in his classification took difference of levels of the language system as a basis and subdivided transformations into lexical and grammatical ones (Recker ,1974). V. N. Komissarov adds one more type to the previous



two ones mentioned, and that is the lexico – semantic translation transformations (Komissarov,1980).

One of the most recent classifications of translation transformations belongs to A. L. Semenov (Semenov ,2005), who also bases on the differences between the levels of the language system and provides the following classification of transformations – lexical, grammatical, semantic and stylistic.

This investigation is based on the analysis of the usage of lexico-semantic transformations in the translation of American English paremiological units (PUs) into Russian and Spanish languages. The research is aimed at the comparison and contrast of the frequency of usage of particular transformations depending on the target language.

2. METHODS

B.Franklin's «Poor Richard's Almanac» served as a main source of the American English PUs(Franklin,2010). The reason of choosing this work as a primary material of the research lies in the fact that «although the almanac used to be published in 1730s – 1750s, out of about 500 paremiological units presented in it, more than one fourth continue being part of the paremiological minimum of the modern American English language, that means they are familiar and used in speech by almost every native speaker in the USA» (Bashirova,Ayupova 2015).

In the course of the investigation of the Spanish translations of the PUs taken from the «Poor Richard's Almanac» 300 most popular proverbs were chosen for the analysis. «Autobiografía y otros escritos/ seleccionados y arreglados por Carl van Doren»(Franklin, 1942), published in Mexico in 1942, was chosen as a source of Spanish translations of the PUs .

Russian translations of «Poor Richard's Almanac»'s PUs were gathered from various sources, such as encyclopedias, aphorisms and proverbs collections, dictionaries as well as some academic online resources, due to the unavailability of the full translation of the Almanac, which was only made in the 19th century and printed once. As a result of the investigation 250 translations of the «Poor Richard's almanac»'s PUs into the Russian language were found.

The hypothetical – deductive method is used at the beginning of our investigation, as we put forward a hypothesis that meaning development is going to be the most frequently



used type of lexico-semantic transformations in translation to both Russian and Spanish languages, while the percentage of usage of concretization, generalization and metonymic translation is going to be low in both languages. Our prediction is founded on the idea that meaning development gives a translator a lot of freedom in achieving the equivalence, while concretization, generalization and metonymic translation bound him to using only conceptually or closely related equivalents.

In the course of our research the following methods were also applied: comparative-contrastive analysis of the PUs of the American English language and their translations; generalization; linguistic observation; description, as well as the statistical method.

3. RESULTS

As a result of our research 7 types of lexico-semantic transformations were found to be used in the translation of the American English PUs into the Russian and Spanish languages. Further a detailed description of each type is given.

1) Meaning development

Russian: 'To be content, *look backward on those who possess less*'. - *CHtoby byt' dovol'nym svoim polozheniem, neobhodimo sravnivat' ego s polozheniem hudshim* (Dushenko ,2007).

In this example the translator introduces the word 'polozhenie'(state), which does not have an equivalent in the source language text, he also substitutes the verb 'look backward' by 'sravnivat'' (to compare). As a result, very little vocabulary correspondence is preserved in this example, though the logical relativity can still be captured between the original proverb and its translated version. The Russian version of the PU sounds more elevated and aphoristic, which gives it more weight in the eyes of the target language readers.

In translation to the Russian language meaning development was used in 40 PUs, that equals to 16% of the total number of translations analyzed.

Spanish (66 examples – 22%):

Fools make feasts and wise men eat them. - Los locos dan festines y los cuerdos son los convidados.

In this example the words 'fools' and 'wise men' used in the original PU relate to the wisdom of the person, while the words 'los locos'(the insane) y 'los cuerdos' (the



sane) can be related primarily to the health condition of the person, not his intelligence. Moreover, the translator substitutes the phrase 'eat them' by 'son los convidados' (are the guests), which also can be treated as a serious divergence from the meaning of the original proverb. Nevertheless, the PU sounds quite natural and aphoristic in the target language, the loss of the meaning is not observed.

2) Addition

Russian (50 examples – 20%):

The proud hate pride – in others. - Gordecy nenavidyat gordost' v drugih *lyudyah* (9).

The translator adds the word 'lyudyah' (people) which was actually presupposed in the proverb of the original, therefore the change of the meaning is not observed, the element added fits the context perfectly and does not seem to be unnecessary in this example.

Spanish (46 examples – 15%):

Lend money to an enemy, and thou'lt gain him, to a friend and thou'lt lose him. -Presta dinero a tu enemigo y lo ganarás a él; *préstalo* a tu amigo y lo perderás.

In this example the word 'préstalo' (lend it) is repeated in the second part of the Spanish translation of the PU, although it is not observed in the original text. Still the conclusion can be made that it was presupposed in English proverb and its use in the translation does not affect the meaning of the PU negatively, on the contrary, this kind of repetition makes it sound more aphoristic.

3) Omission

Russian (45 examples – 18%):

In the following example it is seen that the word 'to come' is omitted in translation of the PU, it may be supposed that the translator does it in order to make the proverb sound more natural, exclude the elements not so essential for the understanding and the correct perception of the PU in the target text.

The nearest way *to come* at glory is to do that for conscience which we do for glory. -

Samyj bystryj put' k slave – delat' radi sovesti to, chto my delaem dlya slavy (Dushenko, 2007).

Spanish (30 examples – 10%) :



If Time be *of all Things* the most precious, wasting Time must be the greatest Prodigality. -Si el tiempo es lo más caro, la pérdida de tiempo es el mayor de los derroches.

In this example it is seen that the phrase ‘of all Things’ is omitted in translation of the PU, it may be supposed that the translator does it in order to make the proverb sound more natural, exclude the elements not so essential for the understanding and the correct perception of the PU in the target text.

4) Antonymic translation

Russian (8 examples – 3%):

Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure. - Esli hochesh' imet' dosug, *ne teryaj vremeni darom* (Marden ,2009).

In this example the phrase ‘employ thy time well’ of the PU of the original does not contain negation, while in translation the author substitutes it by the equivalent phrase using negation ‘ne teryaj vremeni darom’(loaf away time), which is in fact the phraseological unit. So it can be supposed that the use of such translation is dictated by the desire to make the proverb sound more aphoristic, and the use of phraseological unit is very helpful in such situation.

Spanish (6 examples – 2 %):

It is Ill –Manners to silence a Fool, and Cruelty to let him go on. - *Es contrario a las buenas costumbres* hacer callar a un necio, pero es una crueldad dejarle seguir.

In this example no negative constructions are used, but the phrase of the translated proverb in whole is antonymic to that of the original. The translator gives the following translation of ‘It is Ill – Manners’ – ‘ It is contrary to good customs’, so it is obvious that the meaning of the translated phrase is absolutely the same, the only difference is that it is expressed with the different, or more precisely, antonymic words. The meaning is preserved, the PU in the target language still sounds quite natural and does not lose its aphoristic character. The translation seems to be quite successful.

5) Concretization

Russian (5 examples – 2%):



One good husband is worth two good wives; for the scarcer *things* are the more they 're valued. - Odin horoshij muzh stoit dvuh horoshih zhen: chem rezhe *tovar*, tem on dorozhe (Dushenko ,2007).

The word 'thing' itself has a very general meaning and can relate to variety of items, objects and even feelings. The word 'tovar' (item of goods) in Russian language is more concrete, it refers to things the value of which can be measured, which can be sold or bought. The use of concretization transformation in this example makes the meaning of the PU narrower, it underlines the material value of the good husband, while in English it refers to the spiritual value as well. In this research the use of this type of transformation in this example is seen as unnecessary and is related to the translator's preference. It is thought that even direct translation could convey the meaning of the PU more fully.

No examples of the use of concretization were found in the Spanish translations.

6) Generalization

Russian (3 examples – 1%):

Be civil to 'al'; *serviceable* to 'many'; familiar with 'few'; Friend to 'one'; Enemy to 'none'. - Bud' vzhliv so vsemi, *obshchitelen* s mnogimi, famil'yaren s nekotorymi (Davletbaeva et al, 2016).

The direct translation of the word 'serviceable' is 'poleznyj, prigodnyj, uslužlivyj' and it is obvious that this meaning is much wider than that of the word 'obshchitel'nyj' (sociable). It seems that the translator just wanted the word fit the context, but by using transformation he excluded some part of the meaning of the expression.

Spanish (5 examples – 2%):

God heals, and the Doctor takes the Fees. - *El cielo* cura y el médico cobra la minuta. In this example the word 'God' is substituted in translation by the word 'el cielo'(the sky). Of course, it is obvious that God constitutes only one main part of a variety of spiritual things we associate with the sky, but still the use of the generalization in this example does not influence negatively the perception of the proverb.

7) Metonymic translation

Metonymic translation wasn't found to be used in the translation of American English PUs to the Russian language.



Spanish (4 examples – 1%):

In the following example the verb denoting process in the source language is substituted by the verb denoting the result. The use of metonymic translation here is again just the translator's choice which shows his point of view on the meaning of this proverb.

He that *falls in love* with himself, will have no Rivals. - El que *está enamorado* de sí mismo no tendrá rivales.

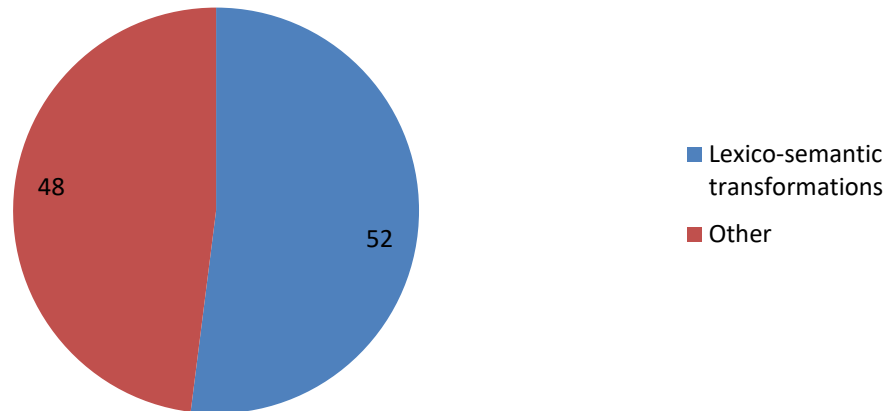
4. DISCUSSION

For the better perception the results achieved in the course of this investigation, they are presented in the form of charts:



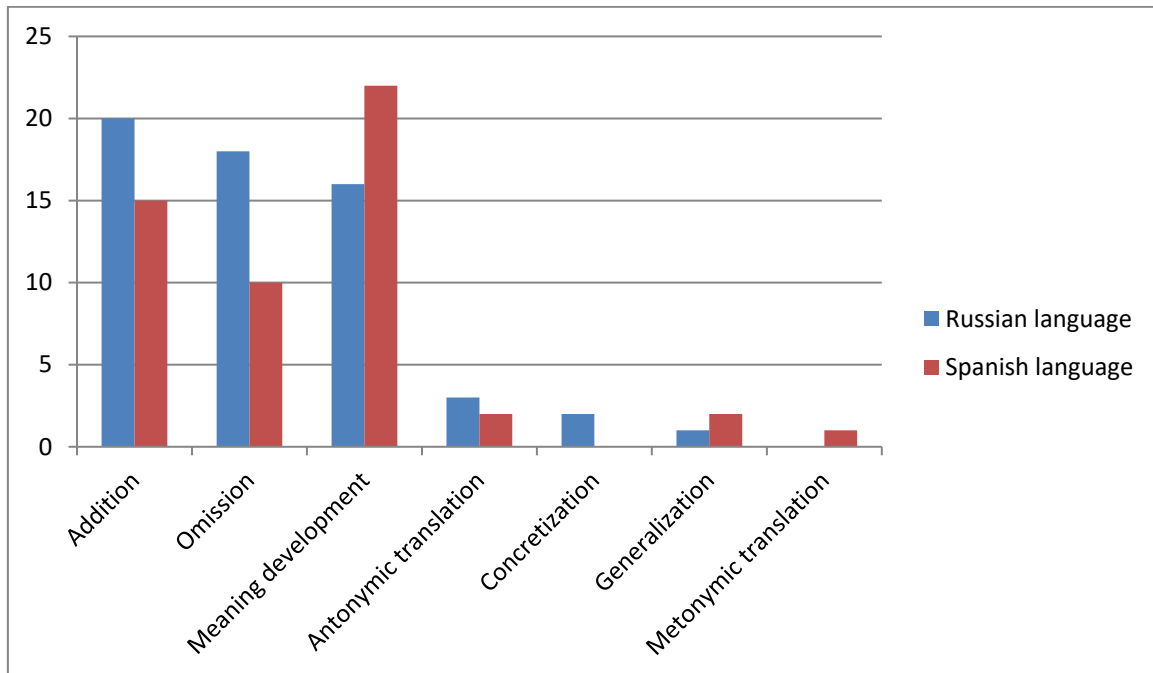


Translation of paremiological units into the Spanish language



The charts presented above show us that lexico-semantic transformations are more frequently used in Russian translations of PUs than in the Spanish ones. This can be explained by the fact that American English and Spanish languages and cultures have much more in common comparing with Russian language and culture. As a result, in order to make the PU understandable to the Russian language reader the translator cannot confine himself to only grammatical or stylistic changes; he has a lot to do with semantics of the PU.

Lexico – semantic transformations



As it is shown on the chart, meaning development (22%) is the most frequently used type of the lexico-semantic transformations used in the translation to the Spanish language, while in the Russian language it is addition (20%). This data proves our first hypothesis only partially, for the Spanish language. The reason of such a popularity of addition in translation to the Russian language can also be explained by the difference between Russian and American English cultures, as in order to achieve the equivalence in the target language, the translator needs to add some extra information.

As for concretization, generalization and metonymic translation, in both languages the percentage of their usage is quite low and in some cases is even zero, which proves our second hypothesis.

5. CONCLUSION

The data received as a result of the comparative-contrastive analysis of the usage of lexico-semantic transformations in translation of American English PUs into the Russian and Spanish languages allow to identify common for both languages translation features as well as to determine how the language difference affects the choice of translation transformations. These results can be quite useful for the development of the workable model of translation of American English PUs to different languages. At the



same time the study of the American English paremiological and phraseological units as well as their translations can be very helpful at the ESL lessons as the researches show that “the use of foreign literature at the lessons of foreign language while teaching phraseological units shows a high result of pupils’ knowledge” (13).

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