THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL-CULTURAL SPECIFICS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN NON-RELATED LANGUAGES

Z. Hojieva
Uzbekistan State University of World Languages,
21a, Kichik halqa yuli, Tashkent 100138 Uzbekistan
zarina2709@list.ru

Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of national and cultural specifics of English, Russian and Uzbek phraseological units which are met in the literary texts. The primary emphasis rests on the consideration of the concepts "linguistic picture of the world", "national linguistic picture of the world" and the problem of interrelation of language and culture. Translation peculiarities from English into Russian and Uzbek languages are also analyzed. This research may help other translators cope with arising problems of equivalence in the target language and encourage them to look more closely at translation strategies suggested for translation of phraseological units.

Keywords: linguistic picture of the world, national linguistic picture of the world, language, culture, phraseological units, national–cultural specifics of English, Russian and Uzbek phraseological units, equivalence of phraseological units, translation strategies of phraseological units.

Among multiple problems that modern linguistics studies, studying national – cultural specifics of languages plays an important role. The language is the major way of formation and existence of man’s knowledge about the world. Firstly, it is the basis for the development of linguistic picture of the world, one of the deepest layers of the picture of the world. Secondly, language expresses and explicates other pictures of the human world which enter into the language via special lexicon, introducing the features of a person and his culture (Serebrennikov, 1988, p. 11). As for the concept “linguistic picture of the world”, in modern linguistics it is defined by several Russian linguists such as Pimenova, O.A. Kornilov, Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin in different ways. According to M.V. Pimenova, it is “body of knowledge about the world which is reflected in language, and also ways of receiving and interpretation of new knowledge” (Pimenova, 2004, p. 5). O.A. Kornilov considers that it is “fixation and storage of all complex of knowledge of current language community about the world” (Kornilov, 2003, p. 4).

The most complete definition of researching the concept is given by Russian linguists Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin, who consider that “linguistic picture of the world is set of people’s representations about reality fixated in units of language at a certain stage of development of the people, imagination about the reality reflected in values of linguistic signs – linguistic partitioning of the world, linguistic collating of subjects and the phenomena…” (Popova and Sternin, 2007, p. 54).

So studying various definitions of “linguistic picture of the world”, we arrived at a conclusion that “linguistic picture of the world” is a verbal expression of objective reality of a certain language community. “Linguistic picture of the world” is embodied in all national languages, and receives designation "a national linguistic picture of the world".

In turn, "a national linguistic picture of the world" is “national and specific vision of all things in existence which is fixated in lexicon of the corresponding language, where the word "vision" expresses following concepts: logical conception, sensation and estimation, and concept “all things in existence” means not only a real material world, but also all introduced things in it by human mind” (Kornilov, 2003, p. 140). It should be noted that the questions concerning the problem of "national linguistic picture of the world" were made in scientific works of great linguist W. von Humboldt and the formers of theory of linguistic relativity E. Sapir and B. Whorf.

According to W. Humboldt’s doctrine, "various languages are various world visions. Any language, designating separate subjects, forms a picture of the world for the people speaking in it” (L.E.S.).

The base of a hypothesis of Sapir – Whorf makes belief that human beings are very much at the mercy of the particular language which determines nature of thinking of the person, his behavior and a way of cognition.
of reality, finally more widely – culture of society. “We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation” – writes Sapir (Sapir, 1958, p. 69). In other words, the person sees the world as he speaks. Therefore the people speaking different languages see the world differently. Each language reflects reality only in the way inherent in it; therefore, languages differ with their "linguistic pictures of the world".

Later this position was extended by Whorf, declaring in another widely cited passage that: “We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds – and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees” (Whorf, 1940, p. 213-214).

In research of “national linguistic picture of the world” the problem of interrelation of language and culture has the big significance. It should be noted that this problem is one of the most difficult and disputable in linguistics.

Even if the interrelation of language and culture seems obvious, this question has not been completely settled. While some scientists consider that language belongs to culture as part of whole, other ones point out that language and culture are independent sign systems which are in close interaction with each other. So, for example, a famous scientist of the American school of ethnolinguistics, E. Sapir, adhering to the first idea, wrote: "the culture can be defined as what the current society does and thinks and the language is that how they think" (Sepir, 1993, p. 193). The representative of the Russian school of ethnolinguistics, N.I. Tolstoy adhering to similar views claimed that "the relations between culture and language can be considered as the relation of whole and its part. Language can be apprehended as a component of culture or the culture tool, especially when it comes to the literary language or folklore language. However, at the same time language is both independent in relation to culture as a whole and it can be considered separately from culture or, in comparison with culture, with an equivalent and equal phenomenon" (Tolstoy, 1995, p. 16). In linguaculturology most of scientists adhere that language and culture are independent sign systems which are in close interaction with each other. From this theory point of view language is considered as a universal form of primary conceptualization of the world; the component of culture inherited by ancestors of person; the tool by means of which culture is acquired; translator, exponent and keeper of cultural information and knowledge of the world. Thus, language is not only specific way of existence of culture, but also a factor of formation of cultural codes so as it is considered "as a verbal code of culture, as its creator" (Tolstoy, 1982, p. 24).

Furthermore, it should be noted that language, being "creator" of culture, develops in it as well. Existence of language as the phenomena is impossible without culture as well as existence of culture is impossible without language. Summing up, “national linguistic picture of the world” represents language as agent of conceptualization of a national picture of the world and culture of the people as well. Consequently, when studying “national linguistic picture of the world” it is necessary to concentrate attention on language units, especially phraseological units which are carriers of national culture.

Phraseological units very often reflect the peculiarities of the culture of the language they belong to; moreover they reflect history of that nation, their attitude towards world, stereotypes they believe in, etc. Furthermore, phraseological units usually are formed from national sayings, prejudices, and cultural traditions. Phraseological units represent quite a large part of linguistics. According to Russian linguist Shansky, phraseologisms are “frozen patterns of language that consist of two or more components and allow little or no variation in form, structure or meaning” (Shanskiy, 1969, p. 28). Kunin A.V. defines them as “stable word-groups with partially or fully transferred meanings ("to kick the bucket", “Greek gift”, “drink till all's blue”, “drunk as a fiddler (drunk as a lord, as a boiled owl)", “as mad as a hatter (as a March hare)” (Wikipedia). Phraseological units are common to all languages of the world but have their unique form of expression. Their national – cultural specifics is shown in translation process. Translation is the phenomenon of replacement of a text in a source language (SL) by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language (TL) with the same “illocutionary effect” (House, 1977, p. 28).
The definition of translation suggested above implies that producing the same meaning or message in the target language text as intended by the original author is the main objective of a translator. This notion of “sameness” is often understood as an equivalent relation between the source and target texts. This equivalent relation is generally considered the most salient feature of a quality translation.

The term “equivalence” is actually a key term in translation. According to Ya.I.Resker, equivalence is “constant equivalent compliance, as a rule, not depending on a context” (Retsker, 1974, p. 10).

Vinay and Darbelnet view equivalent-oriented translation as a procedure which “replicates the same situation as in the original, whilst using completely different wording” (Zaliznyak, 2005, p. 342). They also suggest that if this procedure is applied during the translation process, it can maintain the stylistic impact of the SL text in the TL text. According to them, equivalence is therefore the ideal method when the translator has to deal with phraseological units (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995).

There are a lot of phraseological units in English, Russian and Uzbek languages which are not translated literally and perceived by review. In connection with various geographical conditions, historical development, political system and religion, phraseological units, used in the literary text, not always clear. Therefore, conterminous and in coincident elements come to light. Thereby awareness of values of phraseological units happens by means of equivalent units.

From stylistic point of view, it is possible to mark out two types equivalences of phraseological units: absolute and relative. Absolute equivalents completely coincide on value and the use. In literary texts of languages considered by us existence of absolute phraseological equivalents in all three languages are rarely met with. They generally consist of neutral expressions. For example: 

- to bring oil to fire – подлить масло в огонь – алангагаёғқуймоқ;
- to lose one’s head – потерять голову – бошинийуқотмоқ.

It is necessary to consider absolute phraseological equivalents not always present in all three languages at the same time. Existence of absolute equivalents can be found in two non – related languages: 1) English – Russian: the lion’s share – львинная доля, wolf in sheep’s clothing – волк в овечьей шкуре; 2) English – Uzbek: black frost – корасовуқ; search one’s heart – кўнглинисўрамоқ; 3) Russian – Uzbek: ловитьрыбу в мутной воде (to catch fish in muddy water); лоқасувдабалиқтутмоқ (to catch fish in muddy water);

нчать с чистого листа (to start from new sheet) – ғлосаҳифаданбошламоқ (to start from new sheet).

The next group is made by relative equivalents where semantic compliance of units does not extend on all their values, i.e. when not all elements are equivalent. For example: 

- to get out of bed on the wrong foot – встать с левой ноги (get up on left foot) – чапёнибилантурмоқ (get up on left side).

Relative equivalents are used and in two compared languages: 1) English – Russian: water off a duck’s back – как с гусь вода ("water off a duck"); sore point – больной вопрос ("sore question"); 2) English – Uzbek: heart in one’s mouth – жонибўғзигатиқилди (soul in one’s mouth); make one’s blood boil – кўнглинисўрамоқ ("to boil one’s blood"); 3) Russian – Uzbek: вариться в собственном соку ("to be boiled in own juice") – узёғидақоврилмоқ ("to be fried in own oil") and others.

Along with relative equivalents where incomplete compliance of units is observed, there are interlingual elements, absolutely not coincident among themselves. In our case phraseological units of one language have no phraseological conformities in other languages. “In each language the phraseology is especially personal most peculiar part of dictionary structure. And a large number of phraseological units keep a certain national color. This national originality is reflected at the same time both on stylistic, and expressional aspect of phraseological unit” – writes Russian linguist Recker (1974, p. 164). Thus, the maintenance of some phraseological units of different languages can’t be compared among themselves. These are English phraseological units: first line of defense; eat one’s heart out; when pigs fly; to set the Thames on fire; put it into your pipe and smoke it; queen’s head; funky chicken.

Russian phraseological units: калачами не заманишь (you can’t get here for love or money); держать в ежовых рукавицах (rule smb with a rod of iron); филькина грамота (useless scrap of paper).

Uzbek phraseological units: паруцуксук адиантунду (someone’s watermelon fell down); тенақчисиқабиля (someone’s upper hair rose); амлаанибузой (aunt’s calf); данилмогокамилири (inner is sweeter than seed itself); қозондаборичўмичгачи (what is in the kettle does come out).

When translating units of this kind it is advisable to use ways of transfer. According to Recker, there are four main translation possibilities for transferring the meaning of phraseological units: 1) completely preserving the meaning, expressivity and form of the original phraseological unit; 2) partly preserving the
meaning, expressivity and form of the original; 3) changing the expressivity of the original phraseological unit; 4) completely eliminating expressivity of the original phraseological unit (Retsker, 1974, p. 161).

To the first translation strategy belong such phraseological units that have international features and can be transferred by using phraseological units with the same meaning but different form in the target language, for example: eng. cold war – rus. холодная война – uzb. совуқуруш.

Examples above illustrate translation that preserves the meaning of the original without any change in it.

The second translation strategy preserves expressivity of phraseological units, however with some change of its lexical or grammatical features. Expressive components of the phrase can be changed by other expressive or meaningful components and some components are just changed by other components in the target language. For example: eng. as the apple of an eye – rus. Как зеницу ока (as pupil of the eye) – uzb. кўзқорачиғидек (as pupil of the eye).

The third translation strategy is applied when it is necessary to preserve the expressivity of the phraseologisms. For example: eng. to cross the flour of the house – rus. перейти с одной артии в другую (to transgress from one party to another) – uzb. бирартиядан бошқартияга утиб келмоқ (to transgress from one party to another).

The last translation strategy is a complete elimination of expressivity of the original idiom. It is not the best solution for the translation as the expressive function is lost in the translation, for example: eng. a skeleton in the cupboard; семейная тайна (family secret); оилавий сир (family secret).

Summing up we can say that phraseological units play an important role in literary style, giving figurativeness and expressiveness to the literary text, and also make emotional impact on the reader.

The special attention should be paid on that phraseological equivalents of different languages not always coincide among themselves. They have no identical or similar compliances in compared languages, are painted by national traditions, household realities, customs, legends and other cultural historical values. Untranslatable phraseological units exist in all languages because each culture, each language in its own way unique. Thus, the correct and pertinent use of phraseological units gives speech a unique originality, special expressiveness, emotionality, accuracy and an expressional saturation.

References