PHRASAL VERBS VERSUS IDIOMS

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Although there are numerous guides and research materials on translation difficulties in general, so far little attention has been paid to the difficulties of translating verbal phrases. These are characteristic of the English language, but as translation plays a major role today, there is a great need to translate verbal phrases into other languages. So this article is based on the study of verbal phrases from both linguistic and translation perspectives.

English phrasal verbs can be highly idiomatic due to their meanings that can be sometimes difficult to infer based on the sum of their constituents' meanings (e.g., "*take in"* - to deceive, "*lay down"* - to build, "*let on"* - to tell a secret). In those cases, when neither the context nor professional experience help to reveal the meaning of a phrasal verb, a good explanatory or bilingual dictionary is of great help to the translator. For example, for someone, who is not a native speaker of English, in the sentence "He liked to *break in* his assistants slowly" neither the context, nor the adverbial element of the phrasal verb hint at the real meaning of the combination *break in.* According to the "Longman Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs", the phrasal verb "*break in*" has the following "unexpected" meaning: (4) to help (somebody) to become accustomed (to work, etc.). The Russian edition of this very dictionary treats this meaning in the same way: (4) вводить (кого-либо) в курс (новой работы и т.п.) [1]. Based on the examples provided above, we consider that a thorough study and consequent understanding of semantic correspondences of the English and Russian verbal systems can be an extremely powerful tool in the translator's arsenal.

Besides paying attention to translation itself, translators have to be careful with some other aspects in communicating the translated language, and namely to grammar and vocabulary. Focusing on translation, one should bear in mind that grammar is the basic foundation of a language and is worth learning. Another element worth remembering is that the vocabulary of the English language has a huge variety of forms, which implies idioms as well. Idioms are present in all languages; they play an important role in vocabulary and can be used both in formal and informal language styles. Idioms are mostly used to differentiate the shape of a language than the common features, sometimes phrasal verbs are regarded as idioms [2, p. 94].

Translators should be concerned with idioms that are all present in any other language. The English language, for instance, has developed so many interesting forms of word to analyse that it makes it challenging to understand instantly how meanings change as words are translated from English into Russian [3].

Forms of idioms, or idiomatic expressions, such as phrasal verbs, are particularly made to be used as a unit of words, and they cannot be translated literally, neither can word for word translation be applied. Hence, phrasal verbs have characteristics that make them distinct among English words. This is explained in “Dictionnary of English Phrasal Verbs and their Idioms” which states that an idiom is succession of words whose meaning is learnt as a whole [2, p. 487].

Mona Baker, in her book “In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation”, proposed the most useful practical approaches to translate phrasal verbs, along with idioms and fixed expressions; these approaches are: *using similar meaning and form, using similar meaning and dissimilar form, applying paraphrase,* and *omission* [4].

The translation approach *using an idiom of similar meaning and form* is suggested, since Baker insists that by this kind of translation strategy the translator makes use of a fixed expression or idiom in the target language so that it has the intended meaning which is the same meaning conveyed in source-language idiom, pertaining the presence of equivalent lexical items [4, p. 76]: “Harry *got* slowly *out* of bed and started looking for socks” [5] – “Гарри медленно *выбрался из* постели и огляделся в поисках носков” [6]. The phrasal verb “*get out* of bed” was rendered by the idiom “*выбрался из* постели” with the same meaning and form.

Another widely used translation approach in handling English phrasal verbs is to *use an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form*. Baker remarks that this strategy helps finding an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but with the presence of different lexical items [4, p. 78]. In this case, the translator uses an idiom in the TL which has the similar meaning as the SL idiom although the form can be totally different. For example:

“Dudley began to cry loudly. In fact, he wasn’t really crying—it had been years since he’d really cried—but he knew that if he *screwed up* his face and wailed, his mother would give him anything he wanted” [5] – “Дадли громко разрыдался. То есть на самом деле он вовсе не плакал, последний раз настоящие слезы лились из него много лет назад, но он знал, что стоит ему *состроить жалобную физиономию* и завыть, как мать сделает для него все, что он пожелает” [6]. In this example, “*screwed up* his face” was translated using a dissimilar form idiom “*состроить жалобную физиономию*”, which also helped render the informal style of the original sentence.

The use of *omission or linguistic compression* is commonly met while dealing with phrasal verbs and/or idioms. In relation to idiomatic translation, the strategy called *omission* may be used to synthesize the existing linguistic elements to make them simpler to understand, which can be also regarded as *linguistic compression* [7, p. 509]. This can be illustrated by the example: “Harry *sat up* and gasped; the glass front of the boa constrictor’s tank had vanished” [5], translated as “Гарри *сел* и открыл от удивления рот — стекло, за которым сидел удав, исчезло.” [6]. In this case “*sat up*” was rendered by a simple verb “*сел*”, rather than using the prefixed verb “*присел*”, since the sentence preserved its original meaning.

Translation by paraphrase is another useful translation method. Paraphrasing, as Mona Baker emphasizes, is the most possible way to translate idioms in the absence of an equivalent in the target language, especially when dealing with stylistic preferences of the two languages. By doing this, the translator is able to remake the translation into a more understandable context to the target language readers [4, p. 80]. This can be exemplified by the sentence: "The traffic *moved on* and a few minutes later, Mr. Dursley arrived in the Grunnings parking lot" [5] – "Стоявшие в пробке машины наконец *тронулись с места*, и несколько минут спустя мистер Дурсль въехал на парковку фирмы «Граннингс»" [6]. The phrasal verb was successfully paraphrased by the idiom "*тронулись с места*", keeping both the semantics and stylistics of the original.

In conclusion, having revised the translation strategies used to deal with phrasal verbs regarded as idiomatic expressions, we can state that these approaches are mostly used by translators when they have to render the meaning of phrasal verbs into Russian, choosing the best translation method to preserve both the lexical and the stylistic load of the text translated.

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Recomandat
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