



Translation of Foreign Culturally Colourful Metaphors Into the Native Language

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Abstract*

Translation of culturally coloured words has long been in the focus of linguists. This lexicon is also called by linguists as the words without lexical equivalents in other languages. The question is actual for its importance for translators, who face with frequent difficulties in the process of translation of the texts with culturally coloured lexicon. Interpretation of culturally coloured metaphors requires not only a close acquaintance with the English culturally coloured words but also a sufficient information about the phraseological system of the native language. The semantical equivalents of English metaphors can be found in the native metaphorical system no matter in which lexical structures the identical or similar metaphorical meanings may find their expression. Possibility of finding the semantical equivalents of English metaphors in the native language is conditioned with the common thinking way of peoples speaking different languages who in their long life experience have come across with the same situations allowing to create similar metaphorical expressions in different lexical ways.

Study of language and culture in close ties was always in the focus of linguists from the point of view of communication and translation from one language into another. Scientists come to the conclusion that any language has a special semantic field which creates a difficulty for translating from one language into another. Such a lexical layer reflects just the national background, ethic and aesthetic life of a concrete people formed during many years.

1. Introduction

Formation of the English lexicon has had a close relationship with the cultural life and traditions of the people who speak that language. All this cultural background has greatly influenced the enrichment of the English language, its metaphorical layers.

Researches relating to the relationship of language and culture reveal inseparable ties between these two dimensions. Study of language and culture in connection has always attracted the attention of linguists for its role in communication with English – speaking people and in translation from English into the native. It is especially important for translators as there appear a number of difficulties in translation, connected with cultural differences of nations. Researchers come to the conclusion that within any language there is a semantic field, incomprehensible for translators who translate from one language into another. This semantic layer reflects the cultural life, world outlook of the English people formed for centuries.

As language and culture are deeply related, understanding the meaning of culturally colored lexicon can be understood through deep knowledge about the culture of a given nation.

In order to provide a communication the communicators must have a profound knowledge about the culture of the people who speak that language. Parallel learning of language and culture is very necessary to learn a foreign language.

Like other languages, the English language is based on a common experience, and expresses facts and notions that are object of communication. The lexicon of any language also reflects the attitudes and beliefs, outlook, traditions and moral life of a nation. The language expresses cultural reality of the nation whose language is learned.

The members of a people or social group do not only have specific life, they also express this experience in language. They give meaning to words and these meanings naturally reflect their own culture.

Language is considered to be the mirror of national culture. People usually speak the language reflecting their cultural life, their social, economic, mythological, religious experience and those who learn that language must also get acquainted with above mentioned national dimensions. Otherwise, it would not be possible to guess the culturally colored lexicon of any language.

That is also the case with the lexicon of the English language, formed during many centuries under the influence of the history and lifestyle of the British people, their social life, economical and political world.

Culture as an important extra-linguistic factor affecting the formation of any language. National culture includes lifestyle, customs and traditions, mentality, world outlook, ethnic history, etc.

Thus, the main difficulty in learning a foreign language is culturally colored lexicon, which occurs in the form of denotations and connotations. Denotative realities refer to the layer of vocabulary that denote the objects and notions referring to a concrete nation. Connotative realities are metaphors also connected with cultural life of a concrete people. Both types of English culturally colored words and expressions are often met in communication with the English – speaking people and this determines the importance of learning the English culturally colored lexicon.

Socio – cultural aspect of studying a foreign language enables language learners to get a better experience in communication and translation.

Translation of culturally coloured words has long been in the focus of linguists, who also called them the words without lexical equivalents in other languages. The question is actual for its importance for translators, who face with frequent difficulties in the process of translation of the

texts with culturally coloured lexicon. Interpretation of culturally coloured metaphors requires a close acquaintance with the English lexicon without lexical equivalents in other languages and a sufficient information about national phraseological system of the native language.

The semantical equivalents of English metaphors can be found in the native metaphorical system no matter in which lexical structures the identical or similar metaphorical meanings may find their expression. Possibility of finding the semantical equivalents of English metaphors in the native language is conditioned with the common thinking way of people speaking different languages who in their long life experience have come across with the same situations allowing to create similar metaphorical expressions in different lexical ways.

Cultural aspect of the English language was fundamentally researched by well-known linguists as Sapir (1948), Whorf (1956), Humboldt (1988), Vinogradov (1978) and some others who concluded that a language could not be thought without culture. As cultures differ, every language has specific layer of vocabulary not understandable for other nations. These linguists revealed inseparable ties of a language with culture. However, actuality of this subject makes it necessary to research the question in the aspect of translation of culturally coloured words within each language in order to clarify the ways of interpretation of English linguistic realities in the native language. The goal of our article is just connected with the need of interpretation of English culturally coloured words in the native language.

2. Research methods

This research uses a descriptive method to reveal the impact of culture on the language with the purpose to promote the stylistic translation of culturally coloured lexicon.

The data collection in this research was provided in several stages such as clarifying the background of language studying the approach of linguists to character of culturally coloured lexicon and identifying was of this lexicon.

3. Discussions

The established relationship of language and culture presents students an actual subject to improve their communicative and translation skills, to remove errors in the interpretation of culturally coloured denotative and connotative realities in the English language.

4. Novelties

The research attaches a great importance to having a deeper knowledge of the native-connotative lexicon in achievement of expected results in translating English culturally coloured lexicon. It is stated that having a profound knowledge about native metaphors is of primary importance for English culturally coloured expressions.

5. Cultural background of language

Development of the English lexicon was closely tied with the lifestyle, traditions, mentality of the people. These factors had a great impact on the enrichment of the lexicon with denotative and connotative expressions.

Theories relating to the ties of language and culture reveal close ties between these phenomena. These ties between language and culture are very important for translating from English into the native language because of the presence of a lot of culturally coloured expressions. Scientists come to a conclusion that any language has a special semantic field which creates a difficulty for translating from one language into another. Such lexical layer reflects just

the national background, material and cultural life of a concrete people formed during many years.

As language and culture are inseparably interconnected, to realize the meaning of culturally coloured lexicon can be achieved through acquaintance with the cultural background of a concrete nation. In order to acquire the meaning of coloured words communicators must have a profound knowledge concerning the culture of a concrete people. For mastering the English language, translating from it and speaking in that language can normally be achieved through large information about the cultural layers of that language. That is why simultaneous study of language and culture is of great importance and therefore learning this subject is practically very useful. It is directly connected with getting an achievement in normal communication with English – speaking people.

The human language expresses the notions and events that are familiar to a concrete nation. The representatives of a given nation give meaning to different words in accordance with their own ideas, mentality, and traditions. Naturally these words turn out to be understandable for them, because they are based on their own social and ethnic life. But they are not understandable for those, who are representatives of other nations. As different languages refer to different cultures, the learners of these languages need explanation about the culturally coloured lexicon.

The relationship between languages and the culture is very actual now. This question was studied by a number of researchers for its practical importance. Its importance lies in the fact that during the communication with foreigners one can come across with frequent difficulties in understanding the culturally coloured words and expressions.

6. Approach of linguists to cultural ties of language

Among those who researched the relationship of language and culture, the opinion of Whorf (1956) is very interesting. To his opinion, word is based on the conscious activity of people. Our thinking and behavior are closely connected. For this reason, it is often observed that the analogous object and processes turn out to be accepted in different ways by representatives of different nations (Kamissarov, 1999, p.146).

Learning a language and having a communication with its bearers requires a deep information about the history and culture of that nation. The extra-linguistic factors influencing the formation of the language is reflected in it. Without a sufficient knowledge about this background one cannot overcome the difficulties, the misunderstanding that appear during the communication process and translation from the original language.

Without understanding the nationally coloured expressions, words, denotative and connotative realities of a language it would be difficult to perceive their meaning. For instance, not knowing about the historically coloured realities of American society, it would not be possible to understand the American expression Abscam. This expression is only understandable for representative of American Society, as they are aware of an historical fact of 1910s, when a USA congressman was caught in bribery and was accused by intelligence service officers of the country. Intelligence officers wearing Arabian suit had offered the congressman a bribe and had caught him when he received it. Abscam is a short form of Arabscam, which was the name of an operation realized by intelligence officers.

As we see, the event expressed in the word Abscam is culturally, historically coloured reality belonging to the history of Americans. American social and political life has played as a background for appearance of a great number of such realities.

Cultural background is classified by V.S.Vinogradov into several groups, attaching a great importance to the ethnographic background. It includes specific facts referring to national history, the objects referring to the past and present material culture of the nation, folklore and many others (Vinogradov, 1978).

In linguistics the culturally coloured words are sometimes referred to the lexicon, translation of which is not possible. Although we cannot agree with this opinion in relation to all culturally coloured words, however it is an undeniable fact that a great number of realities, the denotative ones in particular, have not lexical equivalents in other languages.

Above mentioned linguists admit the translation of realities as presenting semantical equivalents of the culturally coloured connotative lexicon. Culturally coloured denotative words can only be interpreted through explanation. As the denotats denote the objects and notions only referring to a concrete country, they do not have word by word translation. For instance, Glorious Revolution as a denotat expresses a stage of the English Bourgeois Revolution. To the representatives of other nations this historical reality can be explained as “the peaceful stage of English Bourgeois Revolution during which the absolute monarchy was replaced by constitutional monarchy and the king was deprived of absolute power”.

As was already mentioned, language realities refer to a specific semantic field not familiar for those who have to translate them from English into their native language. The culturally coloured words reflect their life of a given nation, their traditions, everyday life, world outlook, understandable for those who learn that language. In order to remove the difficulties in translating the cultural realities from one language into another, the language learners must study foreign language and culture inseparably, in close connection.

7. How culturally coloured lexicon is translated

It is admitted by linguists that translation of culturally coloured words requires establishing not lexical structure of the original, but finding the semantical equivalent of the original. The translator has to create the functional, stylistic, emotional analogy of cultural realities no matter in what lexical form it may be. In this sense the opinion that translation is presenting the text of one language by using the structural form of another language is completely acceptable.

Humboldt (1988), an outstanding linguist, thinks that translation of culturally coloured expressions must be studied in close connection with traditions, psychology, everyday life of peoples (Humboldt, 1988, p.115). This approach is found to be truthful on the basis of linguistic facts. Culturally coloured denotative and connotative words are observed to reflect the English culture.

Numerous connotative realities are observed in all varieties of the English language. The connotation they denote are culturally coloured, because they are associated with traditions, with lifestyle of English – speaking peoples.

Culturally coloured English idioms refer to different fields of English culture; traditions, historical facts, mythology, religion, lifestyle, etc. However, their semantical equivalents in Azerbaijani language may refer to other cultural fields although the idea may be identical.

Mind your P's and Q's is the emotional equivalent of “mind your own business”. The idiom is associated with English lifestyle. Men used to drink beer in pints and quats. When they drank much and started interfering others' affairs, the pub owner shouted at them telling “mind your P's and Q's” (shortenings of pint and quat). Later the expression (mind one's p's and q's) turned into an idiom denoting the notion of not interfering others' affairs more emotionally.

In Azerbaijani language this idiom may be interpreted descriptively without keeping the emotion in the original. But in order to keep the emotional meaning of the original one can use

colloquial version in which that emotion is kept. For instance, an Azerbaijani expression that literally means “don’t your nose into others’s affairs” can be used as the semantical equivalent of the English metaphorical one.

It shows that connotative idioms in any language may have semantical equivalents structurally in different lexical units. That is the case, for instance, with some metaphorical Americanisms, that have semantic equivalence in Azerbaijani.

Toboggan– a light frame or board used for sliding over snow, especially down slopes for sport is a denotative reality of the Indian origin in the USA. In combination with the word *price* it gains a connotative meaning denoting “sharp decrease of price”. *Prices tobogganed*– “prices sharply decreased” (Longman Dictionary, p.1416).

In Azerbaijani language the semantical equivalent of this idiom finds its expression in a metaphor which literally sounds as “to fall to the price of water” that has the same connotations as “the prices tobogganed”.

Most of connotative realities have semantical equivalents in other languages although in lexically different structures. Therefore their translation does always need description or explanation. It is often possible to find in the native language the structurally different but semantical by analogical equivalents of English metaphors:

Gretna Green marriage, understood by the English as “a quick/easy marriage” is associated with a historical tradition observed in the village Gretna Green, where marriage of young couples was realized very easily. This association caused the appearance of this culturally coloured idiom.

The notion of a “quick/easy marriage” is general many all nations although the *Gretna Green marriage* is lexically an English language reality. But the same notion is common for all nations and can find its expression within different structures in different languages. A translator’s task in process of translation is to discover in his native language just the semantical equivalent of the English reality no matter in which lexical structure that notion may find its expression. For instance, in Azerbaijani language for “quick/easy marriage” there is an expression that means literally “quick shopping marriage”. It is semantically or emotionally identical with Gretna Green marriage. It is also the case with other languages in which there exist semantical equivalents of English culturally coloured metaphors, but structurally in different word combinations. However, their translation from one language into another requires a large information about the native phraseology and colloquial expressions in order to deliver the original connotation to keep the stylistic function of English metaphors in translation.

8. Conclusion

We can conclude that in order to enlarge students’ knowledge of the cultural aspect of the English vocabulary is necessary for improving the skills in the field of translation of culturally coloured lexicon and better communication. As is known, the culturally coloured words and expressions are usually associated with traditions, lifestyle, historical events, religion, mythology and some other aspects of national culture. Under the influence of these dimensions, there appear nationally coloured denotations and connotations that need interpretation in the native language. Their translation into the native language requires different approaches. Denotations not having semantic equivalent in the native language can be translated through explanation, while connotations that can occur in different languages, in different lexical units can be interpreted through national metaphors, semantically equivalent to the original connotations. This subject is practically important for both translators and communicators.

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Biography of Author

Mrs. Samira Mammadova got her master degree on Linguistics from the University of Foreign Languages in 2005. After graduating the Master Program Mrs. Samira started to work at the “Azeravtoyol” State Concern as an interpreter-translator. During the period of 2012-2017 years she started to work at Azerbaijan University as a lecturer, senior lecturer. Mrs. Samira got her PhD degree in 2013. Currently she works as an Associate Professor and the Head of Foreign Languages Department at the Azerbaijan University.