

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract: This article examines phraseology as an important field of linguistic research and analyzes the main difficulties connected with the translation of phraseological units. The study focuses on the classification of phraseological expressions, their semantic and stylistic features, and methods of translation into English. Special attention is paid to full and partial phraseological equivalents, descriptive translation, and combined translation methods. The article also highlights the importance of phraseological competence for successful intercultural communication and literary translation.

Key Words: Phraseology, phraseological units, translation, figurativeness, equivalents, idiomatic expressions.

Introduction

Phraseology is one of the most significant branches of linguistics that studies stable word combinations and their meanings. In recent years, the investigation of lexical and phraseological units has become an actively developing field in linguistics. Researchers analyze phraseological units from semantic, grammatical, and stylistic perspectives, paying attention to their role in communication and cultural expression. Phraseological units enrich speech with vividness, emotionality, and expressiveness, which explains their frequent use in everyday communication, fiction, journalism, and political discourse.

The term “phraseology” originates from the Greek words *phrasis* (“expression”) and *logos* (“study”). The main objectives of phraseology include the study of the stability, semantic structure, origin, and stylistic functions of phraseological units. One of the most complicated aspects of this field is the translation of phraseological expressions from one language into another. Because phraseological units are figurative and culturally specific, their translation often presents difficulties for translators.

Methods

The research is based on descriptive, comparative, and semantic methods of analysis. Different types of phraseological units and their English equivalents were compared in order to identify similarities and differences in meaning, figurativeness, lexical composition, and grammatical structure. Examples from English and Russian phraseology were analyzed to demonstrate the main methods of translation, including equivalent translation, analogue translation, descriptive translation, and combined translation. The study also applies a stylistic approach to determine how phraseological units preserve emotional and expressive meaning in translation. Special attention was paid to the preservation of figurative imagery and cultural meaning during the translation process.

Results

The analysis showed that phraseological units can be translated through several methods depending on the level of equivalence between the source and target languages. Since phraseological expressions are closely connected with national culture, traditions, and ways of thinking, translators must pay attention not only to the direct meaning of the

expression but also to its figurative and stylistic features. The process of translating phraseological units requires a balance between semantic accuracy and the preservation of emotional and cultural coloring.

Full Phraseological Equivalents

Full phraseological equivalents are expressions that completely coincide in meaning, figurativeness, stylistic coloring, and grammatical structure in both languages. Such equivalents are considered the most successful type of translation because they preserve the original image and expressive effect without any significant changes. In these cases, the translator can easily reproduce both the semantic and stylistic value of the phraseological unit. Examples include:

- *to play with fire* — играть с огнем
- *the salt of the earth* — соль земли
- *busy as a bee* — трудолюбивый как пчела

These expressions preserve both meaning and imagery in translation and demonstrate how certain metaphorical concepts may be shared across different linguistic cultures. The existence of full equivalents simplifies the translator's task and helps maintain the naturalness and expressiveness of speech in the target language.

Partial Phraseological Equivalents

Partial equivalents preserve the general meaning of the phraseological unit but differ in lexical composition, grammatical structure, or figurative imagery. Such expressions are more difficult to translate because the translator must adapt the phraseological unit while preserving its communicative function and stylistic effect. Partial equivalents can be divided into several groups.

1. Differences in lexical composition

In this group, phraseological units have similar meanings but use different lexical elements to express the same idea:

- *to promise the moon* — сулить золотые горы
- *East or West, home is best* — в гостях хорошо, а дома лучше

Although the words differ, both expressions convey identical cultural and emotional meanings. Such translations show that different languages may represent the same human experience through different metaphorical images.

2. Differences in word order or grammar

Some phraseological units coincide semantically but differ in grammatical structure or word order:

- *all is not gold that glitters* — не всё то золото, что блестит
- *not to see the wood for the trees* — за деревьями не видеть леса

In these examples, the translator preserves the meaning of the expression while adapting it to the grammatical norms of the target language. This type of translation demonstrates the importance of syntactic flexibility in phraseological interpretation.

3. Differences in figurative imagery

In certain cases, languages express the same idea through completely different images and metaphors:

- *to go to bed* — отправиться на боковую
- *as old as the hills* — старо как мир

Such examples prove that phraseological units are strongly connected with the cultural worldview of a particular language community. Therefore, translators must focus on preserving the communicative meaning rather than reproducing the exact lexical structure of the original expression.

Descriptive Translation

When there is no direct equivalent in the target language, translators often use descriptive translation. This method explains the meaning of the phraseological unit through free word combinations or explanatory phrases. Although descriptive translation may reduce figurative expressiveness, it helps preserve semantic clarity and ensures accurate understanding by the reader. Examples include:

- *a white elephant* — burdensome property
- *red tape* — bureaucracy
- *a black sheep* — disgrace in the family

Descriptive translation is especially useful when phraseological units contain culture-specific concepts that may be unfamiliar to speakers of another language. In such situations, explanatory translation helps avoid misunderstanding and maintains the communicative purpose of the text.

Combined Translation

Combined translation includes the use of equivalent or analogue translation together with descriptive explanation. This method is often applied when a phraseological equivalent exists but does not fully express the semantic or stylistic nuances of the original expression. By combining several translation techniques, the translator can preserve both meaning and emotional coloring. Examples include:

- *spick and span* — с иголки, elegant and neat
- *to live on the fat of the land* — жить в роскоши

This method demonstrates the translator's creative role in intercultural communication. It allows translators to adapt phraseological expressions to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target audience while preserving the artistic and expressive qualities of the original text. The study demonstrates that successful translation of phraseological units requires not only linguistic competence but also deep cultural awareness and contextual understanding. Phraseological expressions reflect the traditions, mentality, and worldview of a particular nation; therefore, their adequate translation is essential for preserving intercultural meaning and achieving effective communication.

Discussion

Phraseological units represent an essential part of language because they reflect national culture, traditions, and ways of thinking. Their figurative and idiomatic nature makes them difficult to translate literally. A word-for-word translation often destroys the original meaning and stylistic effect of the expression. Therefore, translators must preserve not only semantic meaning but also imagery and emotional coloring. The findings confirm that equivalent translation is the most effective method when direct phraseological matches exist. However, in many cases translators must rely on analogues or descriptive methods because languages differ in cultural and linguistic structures. The research also shows that phraseological competence is necessary for understanding humor, irony, and stylistic nuances in literary and spoken language.

Conclusion

Phraseology is an important area of linguistic research that studies stable and figurative expressions in language. Phraseological units enrich speech and play a major role in communication, literature, and intercultural interaction. However, their translation remains one of the most challenging tasks because of semantic complexity, figurativeness, and cultural specificity. The study identified several translation methods, including full and partial equivalents, descriptive translation, and combined translation. Effective translation of

phraseological units requires deep linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, and the ability to preserve stylistic and figurative meaning in the target language.

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