FROM WORD-FOR-WORD TO IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION

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Abstract*: Were there any languages and rules of translation at the dawn of civilization? Nobody knows. At that time there was no enough scientific knowledge. At first there were translations only of religious texts-the Bible. Which was the starting point of translation? Nowadays in the era of informatics and internet the main problem in translation is the recognition of idioms and their correct and precise translation.*

The article is dedicated to the pointing out of the difficulties in human and machine translations, the requirements for both of them and the process of translation as an art based knowledge of different vocabulary units from simple monosemantic words to idioms and other cultural realia of a foreign language, English in our case.

Different languages encode meanings in various forms. The translators are to find the appropriate ways of preserving the meaning in each language, source and target ones, and decode it. Consequently, the form and the code may be changed while the meaning must remain unchanged.

Key words: *idiomatic translation; word-for-word translation; difficulties in translation*.

The new technologies that appeared nowadays have the aim to help humans, or even to replace them. We have in mind the use of computers. In some spheres they perform human activities, better than the specialists in the domain. Scientists are trying to find new solutions for their improvement because they may be very useful and can help a lot especially in the sphere of machine translation (MT) (PIOTROVSKI, 1980: 9). Speaking about MT, we must speak about the types of the texts that can be better translated by the computers: technical, publicist, popular, non-fiction and literary texts. As to literary translation we are not always at ease because of the translation of phraseology. Here we can speak about terminological phraseology (BERESNEV, 1960: 45), and phraseology from the point of view of literary and political texts (OJEGOV, 1957: 46).

The language question is a hot topic in today's life. Language services cover a large market (HERMAN, LAMBERT, 1998: 115). That is why we focused our investigation mainly on one basic question: the translation of phraseological units, the structure of which contains names of colour in the idioms. Such units have hardly been tackled. We have given the importance to this problem, because of the difficulties of the translation of phraseological units, it must be taken very seriously from the point of view of the preparation of the materials for MT.

Some simplistic attitudes indeed, imply that there would be no translation problems, if only we had enough thoroughly professional translators. Our starting point is to make a glossary for MT with the above-mentioned phraseological units. We have the reason to assume that such units would be a certain relevance for other cultural situations as well, maybe even serving as a basis for an account of contemporary translation in general. We are collecting not only phraseological units proper, but make their statistical data, because the statistical information may allow for a first approximation to a general survey in the domain of MT. Besides collecting the units for

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the glossary, we decided to look for regularities in the rather predictable schemes of translation, so to say, to find out the analogies and differences in the word-for-word translation, if such one is possible and the transfer to idiomatic translation at the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic levels.

As it was mentioned above, idioms are a peculiar type of word collocations. Their main peculiarity is "partial or complete discrepancy of plane of the contents with the plane of expression, that determines the specificity of a phraseological unit". This peculiarity influences the ways and methods of translation.

Practically in any language there are several levels of idioms. And not all of them are quite known, widespread and are given in the dictionaries. Some of them are used by the native speakers, but you will not find them in any dictionary. That is why the paramount task of a translator is to recognize the idioms in the text, and to be able to distinguish fixed phraseological word combinations.

The translator also should remember that polysemy and homonymy are characteristic not only with words, but with idioms as well. The capability to analyze speech functions is one more condition for adequate translation of idioms, namely into foreign languages. Sometimes authors use idioms in their several meanings within one utterance to create imaginary or emotional associations or for the humour effect.

Sometimes the translator has to restore the idiom that underwent some author's transformation, and to convey in the translation the desired by the author effect.

One more inevitable difficulty is some national and cultural difference existing in similar meanings of idioms in different languages.

The same problem can appear even while translating idioms, having one and the same source of origin, for example, biblical, ancient, or mythological. Such idioms are called international. Into this type of idioms we may include those idioms that were borrowed from language to language, or appeared in the use of different peoples independently, because of the community of the human thinking process, or some closeness of separate moments of social life, labour activity, development of production, science and art.

The greatest difficulties the translator meets working with idioms based on the modern realities, for example, "*Hell's Angels*"; "*The Land of Wonders*"; "*Agent Orange*".

It is impossible not to mention different types of popular expressions. The difficulty is in the fact that they have several corresponding meanings both in the language of original and in the language of translation. For example, let us analyze the phrase, the author of which is considered to be Cromwell: "Put your trust in God and keep your powder dry!" In the context an element of military terminology is seen, but historically it happened so that this phrase became very popular in the English culture and does not arise any historical associations. It is connected with the fact that in the minds of native speakers the meanings of such phraseological units are fixed as meanings of separate words, and the inner form of the idiom does not always help to motivate its meaning. In such cases the translator does not translate the phrase itself, but only the role it plays in the original text.

Now after we described some peculiarities of English idioms and difficulties in the process of translation, we can formulate the basic rules of translation of phraseological units.

1. Optimal variant of translation is, of course, the usage of the identical idiom. But we know that the quantity of such correspondent expressions is rather limited.

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2. If any correspondent phrase does not exist in the language of translation, the idiom from the original language can be translated with the help of analogous phraseological unit, though the translation will be done on the basis of figurative meaning. The translator should also have in mind that stylistic and emotional meaning s do not always coincide. In this case the interchange is impossible.
3. Borrowing of the phrase as a translation loan word combination is sometimes possible, though this method is not always effective. It is interesting that sometimes the translators can introduce a new idiom in the language or even the culture of the translated language. More often it happens with idioms from the Bible, or ancient and mythological sources.
4. Translating texts on cultural and historic themes, borrowing phraseological units as loan phrases is possible alongside with parallel explanation of the phraseologism in the possibly shorter way. Such kind of translation is called double, or parallel.
5. If there do not exist phraseological units in the language of translation that to some extent correspond to the original phrase, the translator must look for the corresponding meanings and stylistic and emotional shades of final words. Such words are called one-word partial equivalents of phraseological units.
6. While translating phraseological units from one language to another the translator should use bilingual dictionaries of phraseological units and idioms.

Now we shall speak about some **adequate ways of translation of idioms with colour elements** in their semantic structure.

The possibilities of getting worthy translation of phraseological units depend mainly on the coordination between the source language (SL) and the language of translation (TL). (COMISSAROV, 1990: 5) From the point of view of identity and conformity of the examined and analyzed phraseological units they can be divided into three groups:

1) The idiom has in the TL exact conformity, that does not depend on the context;
2) The idiom can be translated into the TL by one or other phrase, usually with some deviations from the exact translation, that it is translated by some analogous expression;
3) The idiom has in the TL neither equivalents, nor analogous expressions.

That is we can say that the phraseological units are translated either by the already existed equivalents or by means of some other methods, giving non-phraseological translation because of lacking of the analogous equivalents in the TL.

The *first group* can be represented by the idioms that fully coincide in both languages, have one and the same meaning, one and the same stylistic shades and inner form. For example:

Black as coal / ink / night / pitch etc.- negru ca smoala,cerneala,noaptea, etc.,
Black ingratitude – nerecunoştinţă (neagră)
Red as blood – roşu ca single;
Red Cross – crucea roşie;
Like a red rag to a bull – a face pe cineva să fie foarte emoţionat/excitat sau violent; a înfuria pe cineva; a face să vadă roşu în faţa ochilor de furie**;**
Blue blood – persoană ce provine dintr-o familie nobilă, aristocratică**;**
Yellow press – presa de scandal;

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Look at smth through rose – coloured glasses – a vedea lucrurile într-un mod mai optimist;

Green with envy - a fi extrem de enervat**;**

White war – război economic.

All the above mentioned examples have their phraseological equivalents in most languages, that is they are equal to the original phraseological units. The number of such coincidences is very limited.

The second *group* includes idioms with partial equivalents. It means that they have similar meaning but are different in the inner character of imaginary form. Such equivalents are called relative phraseological units. They can differ from the original phrase by some components, usually synonymous, then by little deviation in syntactic or morphological structure, collocability etc. But their relativeness is covered by the context.

Paint a black picture -

To be in a black book – a fi în defavoare, dezaprobat la modul cel mai serios/ categoric, pe lista neagră**;**

Yellow belly – laş, fricos;

Golden opportunity - caz minunat, posibilitate excelentă.

Kill the goose that laid / lays golden eggs – a omorî găina care afec ouă de aur, a încerca să obţii un avantaj mai maredistrugînd astfel sursa acestuia;

Grey cells / matter – materie sură (creierul uman)

White lie – o minciună spusă în slujba unui scop nobil, a unei scuze bune;

Put down in black and white – a scrie negru pe alb

It is necessary to remember that using this method of translation one should consider emotional and expressive colouring of the phraseological unit. The difficulty is that such expressions are real or forgotten metaphors unconsciously assimilated by the native speakers.

The *third group*, the most numerous, includes idioms having no equivalents in the language of translation. To transfer their meanings into any other language one should use non-phraseological ways of translation.

Non-phraseological translation transfers the meaning of the idiom by lexical and not by the phraseological means. Such translation can not be considered of full value. There are often some losses: imaginary, expressiveness, connotation, figurativeness, shades of meanings etc. That is why the translator very seldom use this method of translating.

When it is impossible to transfer the semantic-stylistic and expressive-emotional colouring of the phrase we use another method which is connected the usage of loan words, if possible. This method is preferable when it is possible to convey the meaning of the original phrase by its word-to-word translation in order for the reader to understand the phraseological meaning of the whole expression and not only its constituent parts.

Most loans can be considered to be phraseological, for example, the English phrase the hill **the grass is always greener on the other side of the hill** was used as a word-to-word translation in the newspaper "Loc European" (14, Apr 14, 2006, pag.7) in the article "*What is Good in Toronto*?":

„14,5 % izraelieni, ce au plecat în Toronto, trăiesc sub nivelul sărăciei. ce i-a permis directorului general al ministerului de integrare, Mirle Gali, să observe, că "iarba la vecini e întotdeauna mai verde".

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Descriptional translation is almost always not a translation but the interpretation of the meaning of the original phraseological unit. They can be conveyed by means of description, comparison, explanation, interpretation, that is by all means possible to transfer in most clear and short form the meaning of the phrase, trying to give a possible phraseological meaning or a connotative one.

A black eye -

Be in the black – a avea succes sau profit;

Be in the red – a nu avea succes, profit;

Be in the pink- a fi optimist;

Have a yellow streak – a avea trăsătură negativă de character,perfidie, laşitate;

Blue chips – acţiuni, titluri de bursă foarte solide, fără risc.

Sometimes translators not only give the loan translation but also some historical commentary. Such translation is called double or parallel.

For example**, white elephant** . The expression is not formal, and means a very costly possession that is worthless to its owner and only a cause of trouble, - lucru costisitor de întreţinut,care te costă enorm/ cît ochii din cap.

«The car we bought last year is a white elephant; it uses a lot of petrol and breaks down again and again»

"The recent Budget has offered hundreds of millions of pounds to share up private enterprise and to finance such white elephants as Concorde and the Channel Tunnel" [New Statesman, 22 Nov 74].

The expression 'white elephant' referred to a practice of the kings of Siam when they wished to get rid of the followers who had displeased them. The king would give the follower a white elephant. The elephant was so costly to keep that its owner would be ruined.

Of course, it is impossible to analyze all the examples of the third group, because they are very numerous.

First insights into the structure and semantics of the above-mentioned phraseological units, pointed out the fact that translation must be done from the perspective of a function-oriented Descriptive Translation Study: "There is little point in a process-oriented study of whatever type, unless the cultural-semiotic conditions under which it occurs, are incorporated into it (TOURY, 1995: 13)." What is at stake here is the basic view on language, rather than narrower issue of translation as such. It is the language component that is to be taken into consideration especially within the multi-media world. Monolingual approaches are not taken into consideration nowadays, and in contacts with the world of politics, since global communication pervades the world and politicians are interested in good translations.

In the political texts, phraseological units in our opinion, are expressed by pure and semi idioms, which are opaque to language-users in respect to all or some of the words that make them up. (FERNANDO, 1996: 33)What is evident in all of them is that a single meaning different from the separate meanings of each word, is imposed on the whole unit. Though this sort of semantic unity is most clearly seen in pure idioms, it is also evident in semi-idioms. Thus, the semi-idiom "blue-blood", has the sense of "noble birth" – a person of noble birth only when these two words occur together. The typical result of such semantic unity in the non-literalness of the idioms is complete, in pure idioms and partial in semi-idioms. Understanding of such idioms is facilitated by their translation, by its completeness and value: "…the completeness and value of translation,

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means definite rendering of the contextual sense of the original piece and a high-grade functional- stylistic conformity" (MONA-BAKER, 1992: 432).

There are many pure idioms which do not easily show connections between the literal meanings of the individual words which make them up, and the idiomatic one applicable to the whole expression, e.g.: *red herring*. But there are other pure idioms in which the literal meanings of the words making up the idiom are still partly operative, though, of course, the idiomatic meaning is the dominant one. *Red carpet*, with its variants *roll out the red carpet* and *red carpet welcome*, *red carpet treatment*, is one of such example. An idiom like *red carpet* can also be used literally to refer to a real red carpet, e.g.:

a. "They smiled and made a well synchronized procession along the *red carpet* that tumbled down the stairs and across the lawn in front of the birch, cedar and chestnut trees." (The Sydney Morning Herald, July the 9th, 1978, p. 5)
b. "*Red carpet* was rolled out as Sydney crowds greet Li Xiannian" (headline).
c. "The red carpet was rolled out… The Vice-Premier of China, Mr. Li Xiannian, noted the sumptuous proceedings and thanked everyone". (The Sydney Morning Herald, May the 12th, 1980, p. 3).
d. "…the pub did not have a suitable *red carpet* to roll out for the distinguished visitor". (The Australian, August the 6th, 1988, p. 20).

The pure idiom *red carpet*, even when used to refer to a real carpet as public functions, is a symbol of respect and deference; though literally, it differs from the reference to a red carpet in somebody's house. In other words, when the idiom refers to a real carpet, the carpet is confined to public, political functions. However, *red carpet* can be used in a purely figurative sense in a variety of situations. The common meaning of *red carpet* refers to the floor-covering put down for the royalty or VIPs to walk on during an official visit. The meaning the idiom conveys additionally is "a symbol of respect and deference", that a real carpet is present is evident in the presence to *the red carpet the tumbles along the stairs.* The headline in b, conveys the meaning "especially good treatment". The two following examples make the idiom a less straightforward one:

e. "Boris Yeltsin has been given the *red carpet* treatment reserved only for heads of the state." (BBC World News, December the 20th, 1991).
f. "When I married the second time, it was to a man actually younger than me and suddenly the *red carpet* was whipped from under my feet." (Nova, November, 1974).

The last two examples describe the lavish treatment, part of the lavishness being the presence of a carpet, additionally a symbol of respect. As we see, if the idiom is used in the sense of "especially good treatment" a red carpet need not actually be there, particularly if the idiom is used to refer to ordinary persons, in such a case the expression *red carpet* is not an idiom and may be translated word by word in Romanian, their structures of the English and Romanian translations being different.

The next analyzed idiom is (to be a) *red rag*. The idioms of the kind are called (Halliday, Fernando) to designate the macro-function of language realized through the clause and concerned with the speaker's or writer's experience of the world: participants, actions, and processes, the attributes of the participants and the circumstances associated with actions and processes, that is, transitivity. Typically, ideational idioms are realized by units smaller than the clause, units that are nominal. These units function as parts of clauses. Ideational units can be clauses themselves. The

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functional range of ideational idioms ensures their ambiguity in a text; they have the potential of appearing anywhere and everywhere:

g. "For Gorbachev, Yeltsin was a convenient *red rag* (nominal subject complement) to wave at the *hardliners* (nominal, in an adverbial clause). Gorbachev would give *an inch*, Yeltsin would take *a mile* (verbal)…"

In this example we have what is external to language users: the world; we Also we have what language users bring to their messages: their specific perceptions of the world from which their attitudes and appraisals derive, and their experience in using the lexico - grammatical resources the language offers them.

The actors of the drama, in the citation have elicits certain vocabulary choices determined primarily by the attitude of the writer towards his subject: two men locked in a power struggle while another power (the hardliners) waits in the wings to take over. What is fore grounded is strategy in the form of provocation, and an expedient courtship of the public.

The attitudinal appraisal of the writer is "ambivalent". The view that politics is a dirty game, emerges in a *convenient red rag* implying as it does, clever opportunism, as well as the predatoriness of *give an inch …take a mile.*

There are other registers except journalism that are concerned primarily with individuals – the heroes and villains of extraordinary or ordinary life, rarely the faceless collective, the anonymous mass. Ideational idioms can be useful for characterizing such fore grounded personalities in media reports as it was shown above.

As in a drama, the two protagonists, their proper names are used, are fore grounded against the relatively anonymous masses of the crowd scenes.

The main purpose of the analysis of the examples is to demonstrate how conventional and stable as well as variable, the context is, context-specific meanings are conveyed via the color idioms, as we see.

The next idiom is a part not only of political affairs but also of everyday life conversations. That is, **"a horse of a different color"** or its variations.

One cannot forget the final scene of Shakespeare's Richard the Third. The king is fighting for his life on Bosworth Field. His horse is gone and he must fight on foot. He keeps calling for a horse, ready to offer his crown for one. "A horse! A horse!" the king cries out, "My kingdom for a horse!", but there is no horse to be had, only *"a horse of a different color"*, *"a pale horse"* whose rider is Death.

The phrase *"a horse of a different color"*- or "a horse of another color" – goes back to hundreds of years before Shakespeare, but is still part of today's living speech.

At its beginning, the phrase meant exactly what it said, a horse of a different color. At that time, horses competed under the colors of different knights. And a rider whose horse failed to win, of course lost to a horse of another color.

But in the time, the meaning of the phrase became broader. Today, when you say, "That is a horse of another color", you mean that an entirely new situation had arisen and you must consider the change before making a decision.

For example, a man wants to buy your house, and offers you a certain price. You feel the price is right and accept it. But then the man says, "I will pay a small part of it now, in cash, and will pay the remainder over the next five years".

Most likely, your answer will be, "Oh! That is a horse of another color", and you will break off negotiations.

In conclusion, we can say, as we saw from the above-mentioned examples, that the translation of the idioms is not context-free. Only in the cases when the same construction is used literally, it may be translated word by word.

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The idioms present troublesome expressions that cannot be translated word – for - word, that's why they must be given in a special dictionary as ready-made expressions with their translation; otherwise they bring to typical language mistakes to misunderstandings due to their apparent similarity in structure.

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