

PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH IDIOMS: TRANSFORMATION OF IMAGE

¹*Olesia Prysiashna, senior lecturer, candidate of philology sciences*

²*Liudmyla Tulchak, senior lecturer*

³*Nataliia Hadaichuk, lecturer*

⁴*Svitlana Medvedieva, lecturer*

Ukraine, Vinnytsia, Vinnytsia National Technical University;

¹*Department of Foreign Languages;*

²*Department of Foreign Languages;*

³*Department of Foreign Languages;*

⁴*Department of Foreign Languages*

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed to analyze theoretical material on the issues of idiomatic expressions and their translation, as well as to define and assess the importance of the translation of idiomatic expressions, which students can encounter in technical literature, into Ukrainian. The transformation of image of English idioms is a very difficult task because of their semantic richness, imagery, brevity and the brightness. On the one hand, English idioms are widely used in oral speech, artistic and political literature. On the other hand, English idioms are used in technical literature, though not so often. The choice of one or another type of translation depends on the features of idiomatic expressions that students must recognize and be able to transform their meaning, brightness and clarity.

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Introduction. English idioms, proverbs, and expressions are an important part of English. They come up all the time in both written and spoken English. The basis of the internal form of an English idiom is an imaginative world perception based on metaphorical interpretation of genesis, traditions, customs, rituals, and beliefs with regard to psycho-behavioral archetypes, emotional and sensual integrity of native English speakers. Over time an idiom more or less undergoes semantic changes, shifts, transformations that impact first and foremost on its metaphorical imaginative basis and, hence, on identifying new properties of objects and phenomena as well as a new pragmatic aspect. Semantic motivation that determines the linguistic phenomenon of an idiom gradually overshadows and recedes into the background but it does not lose the prototype. The process of rethinking, recoding the original image and its non-uniform transformations takes several stages and affects differently the imaginative structure of an idiom. The internal development of an idiom causes the transformation of one image into another one becoming a means of preserving the hidden original image and creating “the image of the image”. [14]

Because idioms do not always make sense literally, you will need to familiarize yourself with the meaning and usage of each idiom. That may seem like a lot of work but learning idioms is fun, especially when you compare English idioms to the idioms in your own language.

A step-by-step reconstruction of the imaginative system of an idiom allows to reveal the previous state of the image up to the prototype. However, the original imaginative vision, which an idiom reflects, may be insufficiently transparent and lose its clear boundaries at least in the mind of a modern speaker, however, it somehow emerges through the darkened meaning in a new quality or new interpretation.

The analysis of image transformations is complicated by the fact that the processes of integration of the generalized-holistic phraseological meaning and metaphorized comprehension of their motivational basis affect the semantic structure of such entities. In modern use the initial semantic filling of an idiom only indirectly affects the content, its modal-estimating, amplifying values, functional-stylistic stratification, etc.

Moreover, the shifts in the imaginative and metaphorical structure of different groups of idioms are far from equivalent and caused not only by internal factors but also by extra-linguistic (social, psychological, ethnic, etc.) factors. Idioms with relatively clear motivation and more or less intelligible figurative content continue to exist in a rather stable semantic set keeping the original form and the original metaphorical content to a certain extent. Such metaphorical expressions reflect the traditional idea of the people's ethnos, the connection with folk life, customs, psycho-invasive invariants, etc. At the heart of many images created by folk imagination there are observations for the environment, nature, behavior of people and animals, reflection of labor processes and everyday situations, first of all, anything that is subjected to receptor perception and creates a nation-cultural picture of the world.

The realization of the inner form and imaginative motivation of an idiom is associated with possible associations predefined by the knowledge of the traditional discrepancy and the people's, that is, the presuppositive background content. The structure of such presuppositions is quite different and variegated, its signals are a component set of an idiom. For example, out of the frying pan and into the fire means things are going from bad to worse; burn bridges means destroy relationships; once in a blue moon means an event that happens infrequently; when pigs fly means something that will never happen. [5]

The complexity of the translation is caused by the fact that the semantic integrity of an idiom is usually based on the deactivation of its constituents, at the same time the original meaning of the components in one way or another influences the semantics of an idiom, that is the lexical content of an idiom directly or indirectly affects its general meaning. Of course, many idioms have components with erased semantics, some of them completely lost their original meaning and deemphasized. However, in order to understand the semantic transformations of an idiom the internal form of the components should be constructively defined. [9]

On the basis of metaphorical comprehension of expressions containing names of numerous objects of everyday life a group of idioms turn out to be large in scope and semantic potential, which proved the originality of folk. The inclusion of components such as dime, pitcher, whip, etc points their functional diversity, semantic features and indirect nomination processes caused by creative imagination of the people. For example, a dime a dozen means something common; little pitchers have long ears means children hear everything, especially when you least expect them to, the "ear" of a water pitcher is the handle; like a whipped dog means ashamed, embarrassed or unhappy because you have been defeated or punished. [11]

Research results. Translating English idioms constitutes a problematic area for foreign students and learners of English. As we have defined, idioms are sequences of words which meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of their individual constituent parts. [2] That is why to render a satisfactory translation, students must acquire a good knowledge about the grammatical, lexical and stylistic systems of both languages in order to achieve equivalence or an appropriate interpretation of an idiom.

We have conducted a research among the students of Vinnytsia National Technical University aimed at investigating the difficulties that Ukrainian students encounter in translating English idioms into Ukrainian. The participants of the study were the second year students of four faculties of VNTU: Faculty of Computer Control Systems and Automatics, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Ecology and Electrical Mechanics, Faculty of Information Technology and Computer Engineering and Faculty of Radio Engineering, Telecommunication and Electronic Instrument Engineering. The total number of the students was 120. Four groups of 30 students from each faculty were asked to translate the idioms that were included in the translation test from English into Ukrainian. We designed a test containing 50 items varied in their difficulty and then checked the students' answers and defined the methods and strategies used by them. The research revealed the problems arising from the students' translation of idioms. They were the misunderstanding of the meaning, the loss of shade of meaning, sometimes word for word translation, paraphrasing or cultural substitution methods were used not in an appropriate way.

According to data collected, all students coped with the tasks to a great extent satisfactory, especially bearing in mind that translation is not their field of specialty in the technical university. The best results revealed students of FITCE – 90% were in a very acceptable and accurate manner; students of FCCSA – 75%, FRETEIE and FCEEEM – 60% and 45% respectively.

This research, to a great extent, was helpful in giving us the idea of our students' level of translation and understanding technical texts, their ability to comprehend and guess the meaning from the context. Furthermore, this study demonstrated the type of issues that is the most confronted by our students – lexical.

Conclusions. Translation is the way of communication in our modern world. It is through translation that students can gain new knowledge, exchange information, benefit from scientific research written in English. For that reason, it is especially important for students of technical specialties.

This study sheds the light on many challenges that students encounter while translating technical literature that is quite full of idiomatic expressions.

Learning and practicing using idioms should be paid more attention at Universities. Students should be encouraged to translate the meaning of the idiom during reading.

We should present more idioms to the students with a focus on exposing students to the target language culture.

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