IDIOMS IN ENGLISH: TRANSLATION AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Studying English idioms helps learners to understand native speakers, avoid misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication, be able to use them in speech to make it vivid and authentically sounding, make their vocabulary rich. While doing this, it is necessary to compare English language idioms to those in learners’ native language. Investigating origin, diversity and methods of translating idioms is one of the efficient means of raising students’ interest to English language learning.

Idioms reflect realia, history, mentality of the folk. Most idioms are very effective in transferring their meaning because of their shortness and directness. The general tendencies of present-day English are towards more idiomatic usage; idioms are not a separate part of the language which one can choose either to use or to omit, but they form an essential part of the general vocabulary of English. Meanwhile, these unique expressions can make the language more interesting and fun to learn.

Idioms exist in all languages and often have similar meanings, but they are realized in different ways, use different associations which is due to different cultural peculiarities of nations. The English language is particularly rich in idiomatic expressions. For instance, there are plenty of idioms and expressions connected with means of transport and ways of travelling [2, 3, 4].

According to Mona Baker [1], there are four methods of translating idiomatic units. The first is to find a similar idiom in the target language, with the same meaning and form. For example, “do something on autopilot” has an exact equivalent, the idiomatic expression used in Russian “делать что-то на автопилоте”. It is translated by completely preserving the meaning, expressivity, form and function of the original idiom.

The second and the most common method is to use an idiom with the same meaning, but in a different form. For instance, the phrase “to be asleep at the wheel” has the same meaning in Russian as in English, but it is not in the same form: “спать на ходу”. Another good example of analogue in sense but not in form linguistic equivalent using transport connotations is “in the driver’s seat” (Rus.-“у руля”) which in both languages means being in control of a situation or in charge of something.

In most cases grammar forms of idioms do not coincide in different languages. A nominal idiom “a back-seat driver” used to describe a person who gives unwanted advice in affairs they are not responsible for, or subjects they may not understand well in Russian has an implication of “говорить под руку”. “Rock the boat” – to disturb a situation that is otherwise stable and satisfactory – can also be translated with the verbal idiom “расскичивать лодку”. Different transport associations are used in partial equivalents “in the same boat” – “в одной упряжке” and “get on the bandwagon” – take a popular position – “в общем потоке”. The idiom “miss the boat” can be translated into Russian using another grammar form: “пойдя ушёл” with the same meaning to miss an opportunity.

Some idioms contain nominations of vehicle components. For example, the expression with aviation terminology “cool your jets” means relax or became calm. The Russian language has the equivalent “охладить свой пыл”. The idiom “wheels fall off” can be used to describe a person who cannot control a difficult situation. Russian equivalent is “вертится из руки.”

Literature

2. Новый словарь методических терминов и понятий [Electronic resource] // URL: https://methodological_terms.academic.ru (date of the application: 02.02.2018).

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It is worth noting that some English transport-related idioms would be translated into Russian using food-related ones. For example:

- “it’s plain sailing” – “идти как по маслу”;
- “push the boat out” – “устранить пир на весь мир”, “пир горой”;
- “jet set” – сливки общества.

The third method is by paraphrasing, where the meaning of the idiom in the source language is conveyed by a phrase which expresses the meaning, but does not use an idiom. “Hit the road”, which means to leave one place to go to another in English, is not an idiom in Russian and would have to be explained using other suitable words in the target language: “отправиться в путь”. The idiom “a Sunday driver” which carries the meaning of a person who drives slowly, timorously or unskillfully, as if used to driving only on Sundays when the roads are relatively quiet, has no Russian equivalent which could preserve expressivity and form of the original idiom, thus, should be translated as “осторожный/неопытный водитель”. The phrase “paddle one’s own canoe” is used if you want to say that someone works or does something alone without help of other people, or is an independent person (Rus. - “ни от кого не зависит”).

The fourth method is omission, which should only be if the other three methods cannot be used, because it will not be true to the source content. Thus, the idiom “a busman’s holiday” – time away from work that is spent doing something that is similar to your usual job – has no adequate equivalent in Russian and its idea would be explained in other words.

While studying English idiomatic units for developing communication skills it is helpful to be aware of where the expressions come from. Let us consider the origin of some transport-related idioms.

“Jet set” was a term for an international social group of wealthy people who travelled the world to participate in social activities unavailable to ordinary people. Now it refers to those who have the independent wealth and time to travel frequently and widely for pleasure.

The phrase “jump on the bandwagon” first appeared in American politics in 1848 when Dan Rice, a famous and popular circus clown of the time, used his bandwagon and its music to gain attention for his political campaign appearances. As his campaign became successful, other politicians strove for a seat on the bandwagon, hoping to be associated with his success. [3]

“On the wagon” means abstaining from alcohol, while “off the wagon” means returned to drinking after an attempt to give it up. Suggested explanation of these idioms origin focuses on actual wagons that were used to transport people; for example, condemned prisoners who had taken their last drink in this life and were transported to the gallows by wagon.

The phrase “to push the boat out” originates with the literal meaning, i.e. pushing boats from wherever they are beached into the water. People have for centuries built boats that were too large for an individual to move. Helping a seaman to push the boat out was an act of generosity – a similar to the modern-day act to helping to push a car that is broken down. [7]

“Sail under false colors” meaning to pretend to be something that one is not, is originally nautical, referring to a pirate ship disguised as an innocent merchant ship.

We suggest several effective ways of learning idioms that can be used in or outside the classroom environment:

- Figure out the meaning from the context:
  - I knew her slightly, but never got to know her well – we were just ships that pass in the night.
  - Find idioms in your language which have the same meaning: to sail in one’s own boat, the wheels have come off, reinventing the wheel.
- Paraphrase the sentence using the given idiom (run out of steam):
  - I suddenly became very tired while shopping and had to sit and have a coffee.
- Illustrate English idioms with pictures. These can be images that humorously illustrate the literal meaning of the idioms.
  - Find associations for the idioms.
  - Repeat them aloud.
  - Write them on stickers and hang on visible places (a wall, a shelf or a table). People remember what they see very often.
- Listen to the music which lyrics contain idioms.
- Practice using the idioms that you have learnt in your writing and speaking.
- Use a common theme to learn idioms [5, 6].

Therefore, the analysis of transport-related idiomatic phrases has proved the influence of everyday realia of the past and present on the language development. Investigation of idioms enhances better understanding of cultural peculiarities of the English-speaking countries, their lifestyle and traditions. The most prevailing translation strategy turned out to be idiom-to-idiom translation. Although understanding what is meant by the expressions interpreted in a figurative sense can be challenging, the difficulty in studying them can be overcome by applying the translation and learning strategies.

References


RUSSIAN MENTALITY THROUGH EUROPEAN EYES
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It was in Russian that unsurpassed literary works were created, Mendeleev and Lomonosov, Pushkin and Lermontov, Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov spoke on it.

The Russian language has a rich history, many times it has been tried to assimilate foreign tribes, but still, like the Russian people, it has been able to maintain its independence, strength and power.

The Russian language is extremely multifaceted, it can easily convey all the feelings that are born in the human soul, thoughts and desires.

In addition to the basic functions that are inherent in each language, Russian has another very important purpose, it is the unifying link of many peoples and nations. Russia is a multinational country, each ethnic group has its own language, but often each of them provides an opportunity to communicate with a certain group of people. The Russian language eliminates this obstacle. Also Russian is the international language of communication between the Slavic countries: Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia etc.

According to the total number of people speaking it, Russian occupies the 6th place in the world. More than 200 million people consider it to be their native language, and the number owning it reaches 360 million. In more than 10 countries, Russian has official status, among them — Russia, Belarus, Abkhazia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan.

It is noteworthy that according to the legislation of New York, the official documents in the city must be published along with English, as well as in Russian, as the Russian diaspora in this city annually increases. Despite the fact that in many independent countries of the post-Soviet space Russian does not have an official status, about 50% of the population speaks it. As it has already known, language and speech are a reflection of mentality of an ethnos.

Under the mentality we mean in a certain way a built-up system of the basic structures of human consciousness that is inherent in the ethnic group, the people, the nation and which forms the image of the world in these groups, the image of oneself in this world, determines the specifics of the relationships between people, determines the general patterns of behavior and sets up consciousness on certain aspects of both the external and internal world.

For instance, will is the ability of an individual to control himself, to independently believe in himself, to act arbitrarily. It is the ability to keep one direction and reach the set goals, regardless of changing circumstances and changing feelings. Europeans are people who have good command of themselves; they are discreet and disciplined, which cannot be said about Russian. Russian people are not used to hamper their affects and emotions; they are quite direct in their expression. Russian people are accustomed to live more gusts and spontaneous drives.

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<td><strong>Mentality of the Russian and European individuals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Russian</strong></td>
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<td>The Russian person, unlike the European, does not feel his break with the world. The border between him and the world is much weaker, and he practically does not notice it. The feeling of one’s own individuality is much weaker for a Russian than for a European. He feels his oneness with the world, he is not a stranger in him and does not feel the hostility of the world. Shubart, describing the Russians, calls this “original trust” [2]. Russian is immanent in the world. He is inside the world, within it. The world is like a mother’s womb, which puts it on all sides and gives a feeling of rootedness, security, peace. Therefore, Russian is careless, trusting, often hopes “at random”. The European is transcendent to the world. He is at least in body in this world, but, nevertheless, he feels himself not included in it, his spirit is beyond his limits.</td>
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<td>Due to its original unity with the world, the Russian is inclined to unite everything, whatever it may encounter, in everyday life and in the scientific sphere. The desire for unity is the main feature of the nature of the Russian people, this desire is the main force driving the Russians. The desire for unity determines the integrity of the world outlook of the Russians. This integrity is expressed in the</td>
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