

Edu World 2016
7th International Conference

**AVOIDANCE OF AMBIGUITY IN THE PROCESS OF
DISCOURSE CREATION**

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Abstract

The research paper is motivated by necessity to avoid misunderstandings and necessity to create a technology that could prevent ambiguity in the process of discourse creation in “Language of primary socialization” and “Language of secondary socialization”. The process of communication is bilateral. Each language has its own language means of the same information expression. The ability to recognize, understand and convey the information too close to the original and the ability to properly usage of idioms are very important. One of the main requirements for successful interlanguage transformations is knowledge of “the shared code”. The problem of lexical words combinatory is one of the most difficult. Idioms in different languages look deceptively equivalent. The important task of the modern foreign languages learning and teaching is a description of the technology of removing the ambiguity of idioms and the idiom competence formation. The technology is based on the creation of the explanatory formula idiom’s meaning and finding informational arrays. It could be useful in the theory and practice of translation, teaching, learning and increasing the effectiveness of communication.

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Keywords: Idiom; discourse; ambiguity; explanatory formula idiom’s meaning.

1. Introduction

The present time is characterized by the increasing intensities of international contacts. Communication contacts between speakers with different “*Languages of primary socialization*” are becoming more widespread and intensive. Language unites and divides people, gives the opportunity to create information, allows storing of information about the past and extrapolating the future.



The key conditions of the communication process effectiveness are mutual understanding, “dialogue of cultures”, tolerance and respect for the partners’ culture other than their own. We appreciate and understand them in values and beliefs of our own culture. This leads to the destruction of information and cultural conflicts.

2. Problem Statement

The scientific problem of the research is connected with the necessity to avoid misunderstandings in the process of discourse creation. The term “*discourse*” is understood as “the process of information formation with reflection of knowledge about the essence of being by human consciousness. Information is a definite amount of agreed concepts, knowledge and data that reflect the properties and conditions of objects and phenomena of the objective world in the natural, social and artificially created systems (including abstract), the temporal and spatial coordinates that displayed and set up by the process of thinking in human’s subjective consciousness” (Soldatova, 2014, p. 345-346). It requires the development of techniques able to prevent the formation of ambiguity in the process of translations.

The scientific hypothesis of the research object is based on the creation of *explanatory formula idiom’s meaning* (EFIM) and using it as the technique able to provide authentic coding and decoding of idioms, to prevent accidental coincidences and to create equivalent language-independent discourses.

3. Research Questions

Idioms cause problems in the process of coding and decoding of information. Our research questions: to analyze and systematize different translation techniques, to synthesize a technique that can be used to ensure the authenticity in the process of idiom interpretation. The object of this research is *full idioms* (or “zero” equivalents) because they cause the biggest number of difficulties.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim is to show the authentic translation technique of idiom in the practice of cross-language communication.

The scientific novelty is the specific approach to the process of coding and decoding of information stored in idioms; EFIM creation and a *vector of informational accordance* (VIA) discovering; an authentic conversion of information from one language into another language.

5. Theoretical Foundation

The basis of any communication is the existence of “the dual code”, mutual knowledge of the actual realities, knowledge of the communication object. The process of information formation in the human brain does not depend on language. Any information entering the brain joints with the information structures already committed. A complete search of information in memory does not occur in the case of identification. The necessary information is found very quickly (by correlation means) between the

electric potential wave of incoming Sign and the electric potential wave of molecular volume of memory that has the information. This corresponds to the law of energy minimization.

Achievement of the successful discourse creation is possible “in the case of consideration not only laws, discourse creation rules and principles of linguistics but also features and laws of human psychology, social communication, language functioning” (Серажим, 2003, p.16).

6. Problems of Formation, Coding and Decoding of Information from the Physiological Standpoint

Language is not a reflection of the world. It is a mean to express and pass on information from person to person. Human world could be presented in **4 forms**: 1) the real picture of the world. It is the world that surrounds people; 2) language picture of the world. It is the expression of the same information in its own ways; 3) cultural picture of the world. It is a reflection of the picture of the world through the prism of concepts formed on the basis of collective representations; 4) individual picture of the world. It is an experience based on “learning through experience” (learning by doing).

Each language expresses the reality in its own way, creates its own view of reality and asserting its own system of “concepts” (meaning), the existence of the network (association) links of every *acoustico-graphic code* (AGC).

The criterion of failure is the information on the “input” and “output” has not kept the authenticity. The result is the partial or complete destruction of the information.

The criterion of success is the “Law of information preservation” realization for all language code systems. It means uncertainty minimization and the information on “input” and “output” has kept the authenticity.

The contradictions in the process of cross-cultural communication between: 1) the cognitive bases of different cultures; 2) the individual cognitive spaces of an author and an addressee; 3) the cognitive spaces of a society in different countries and cultures; 4) the communicative competence of different cultures in the intercultural aspects (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, or discursive, sociocultural, strategic, etc.) (Soldatova, 2014).

Native speakers usually do not see language and culture conflicts. “A strong illusion of the world vision, a way of life, mentality, etc. as the only possible and the only acceptable is created within the framework of own culture” (Тер-Минасова, 2000, p. 33). Folk wisdom is trying to warn against “cultural conflicts” caused by different values and beliefs: “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” (English), “Don’t blow out candles in a foreign church” (Ukrainian).

7. Interlanguage Interference in the Process of Authentic Discourse Creation

Interlanguage interference is the influence (activation or intrusion) of “*Language of primary socialization*” (LPS) system to “*Language of secondary socialization*” (LSS) system. The similarity of forms (acoustic, graphic, acoustic and graphic), the full or partial identity of meanings and others cause the equating units of LPS to LSS and vice-versa. Authentic discourse creation does not occur through a

simple transfer AGCs from one language to another. It is necessary to activate authentic sensory ideas and concepts but not a similar AGC.

Each language is a symbolic key to the culture, a product of culture or society (Sapir, 1929), “different vision of the world” (Мечковская, 1998, p. 37). It is also necessary to take into account different features and laws of human psychology, social communication and language functioning in addition to laws, rules and principles of languages. “...the language barrier is absolutely obvious, the cultural barrier becomes apparent only in the collision (or comparison) of native culture with foreign ... hence the concept of culture shock. ...cultural mistakes are perceived much more painful than the language mistakes” (Тер-Минасова, 2000, p. 33).

AGC does not reflect the reality of the object. It reflects its image imposed on a native speaker’s mind. “...words of different languages look deceptively equivalent...You should be very careful with using of a new word, the equivalent of the native word: the concept is behind the word, the object or the phenomenon of the world reality are behind the concept, but it is the world of another country, foreign, alien, strange” (Тер-Минасова, 2000, p. 35). Every AGC has its own reserve of compatibility or valence inherited only in that language. Using dictionary gives the “equivalent” of meanings. It confuses and provokes to use foreign AGCs in familiar contexts of LPS and native AGCs in familiar contexts of LSS. It causes errors: “Да нет, наверное” (Rus.) (Yes, no, probably) is “No”; literal translation of “Міжнародна обстановка» (Ukr.) is “international furniture” but it is “international climate” (Engl.).

Another difficulty is the conflict between cultural perceptions of different nations on objects and phenomena of reality designated by “equivalent” AGCs: in Ukrainian language “годинник” corresponds to “watch” and “clock”. “Годинник” (Ukr.) and “watch” (Engl.) coincide in their meaning as “an instrument for measuring time”. But “годинник” also means “watch”; “wrist watch”; “timepiece”, “timekeeper”; “clock”; “sundial”; “hourglass”; “sandglass”; “alarm clock”; “tower clock”.

Such conflicts generate a lot of curiosities, anecdotes, funny stories, troubles.

8. “Idioms” in the Practice of Interlanguage Transformations

Problems of intercultural communication intensify in the process of comparison and translation of *idioms* (also called as “a set of thoughts”, “set phrase”, “idiomatic phrase”, “multi-word expression”, “phraseme”). The basic features of idioms: meaning is underivable from the meaning of its components (AGCs); acts as “a translation unit” that has to be translated as a single lexeme.

The most important tasks: to develop a technique able to provide an authentic interpretation of idioms, to keep the impression of naturalness for the norms of languages (LPS and LSC).

We have analyzed ways of translating idioms:

1. Saving of the whole complex of the transferred unit values, criteria and parameters with the phraseological units of the original. This way is possible for:

1.1. Complete phraseological equivalents: “to play with fire” – “грати з вогнем” (Ukr.) (to act in a very dangerous way and to take risks); “to go through fire and water” – “пройти крізь вогонь і воду” (Ukr.) (to experience many difficulties or dangers or to have great life experience (often not perfect)).

1.2. International idioms from biblical, ancient, mythological sources:

- Biblical: “Extend the olive branch” – “принести оливкове гілля” (Ukr.) (to take steps towards achieving peace with an enemy, a symbol of peace (appeasement, armistice);

- ancient: “Draco’s Law Code” (Draco's written law) – “Драконівські закони” (Ukr.) (laws characterized by its harshness);

- mythological: “The Gordian Knot” – “An Achilles’ heel” – “Ахіллéсова п’ята” (Ukr.) (a weakness in spite of overall strength) (Словарь фразеологизмов, 2008-2014).

2. Partial saving of the complex of the transferred unit values:

2.1. Partially compositional idioms: differs from the original idiom: change of forms, syntactic constructions, sequence number, compatibility, etc.: “all is not gold that glitters” – “не все те золото, що блищить” (Ukr.); “for the trees to see the forest” – “за деревами лісу не бачити” (Ukr.) (the difference in the word order).

Some of these idioms can be translated using antonymous transfer, i.e. a negative value is transmitted via assertive design and the positive value is transmitted by the negative constructions: “count chickens before they are hatched” – “don’t count your chickens before they are hatched”.

2.2. National-painted idioms (mental and cultural “picture of the world”). Could be used double translation: loan translation and explanations as short as possible: “to be from Missouri” means “disbelieve, a person who mistrusts people, ideas, etc.” (Crowther, Kavanagh, 1999), “John Bull” means “an imaginary typical Englishman, representing English people as a whole” (Англо-русский словарь Онлайн, 2010-2016).

3. The complete replacement of AGCs with retaining all information of the original source:

3.1. “False friends”: “break a leg” (“good luck” (Engl.), “wishing failure” (Ukr.). Ukrainian analog is “Ні пуху ні пера” (no fluff no feathers).

3.2. Idioms with different emotional values: “Jack of the trades” means “unqualified, spoiling all, what is taken” (negative sense) (Engl.) and a “handyman” (positive sense) (Ukr.).

3.3. Stylistic idioms: “It is raining cats and dogs” is translated “rain raining cats and dogs”, but in a certain context it is better to use loan translation with additions “the English say...”.

3.4. Ambiguous idioms (polysemy and homonymy):

- polysemy. For example: “to throw the book at somebody”:

1) to charge or convict someone with as many crimes as possible; 2) to punish or criticize someone severely; 3) to punish or criticize someone as severely as possible; 4) to make all possible charges against (Idioms and phrases, 2003-2016);

- homonymy. They are rarely but exist. For example: “fingers itch”: 1) want to do something; 2) want to hit someone, to give somebody a thrashing (Idioms and phrases, 2003-2016).

3.5. Phraseological units. It is not possible to find a greater or lesser equivalent to the original phraseological unit. Way of translation is finding partial-word equivalents with the appropriate value and color of the words: “skeleton in the closet (cupboard)” is “family terrible secret”.

3.6. Full idioms are the most difficult for translation. Their meanings do not include the meaning of any of its lexical components. The following examples have the same stylistic and emotional coloring and could be used for authentic translation: “куй залізо, поки гаряче” (Ukr.) (to hammer iron until it is hot) – “make hay while the sun shines” (Engl.); “шкурка вичинки не варта” (Ukr.) (skin is not deserve

dressing) – “the game is not worth the candle” (Engl.); “заморити черв'ячка” (Ukr.) (to underfeed a worm) – “to have a bite”, “refresh one's inner man” (Engl.).

It is thus necessary to find a technique that provides an authentic interpretation of idioms and a sufficiently high degree of equivalence in the practice of cross-language communication. Such technique has to be useful for all kinds of idioms and particularly for full idioms.

9. Methodology

There is an important distinction between “divinatory” (intuitive) and “*Informational correlation criterion*” (ICC). The basis of the ICC is an analysis of all possible correlations and information arrays contained in idioms of different languages. ICC is based on presence or lack correlation (informational crossings) kept in informational arrays of idioms.

The proposed technique (method) is able to ensure the formation of equivalent discourses and full understanding of their meanings, the correct use by people with different LPS. The technique is based on the creation of EFIM.

EFIM is a complete and monosemantic explanation of the content of idioms in LPS and LSS. By received correlations we can unambiguously identify presence / lack of crossing informational content, correlation of information. It is VIA information on the essence in idioms. The presence of VIA crossing means the presence of authentic information in idioms.

Table 1. The structure and an example of creating EFIM

“Black sheep” (English)	“Біла ворона” (“White crow”) (Ukrainian)
1. analytical description of idiom’s meaning:	
1.1. explanation essence of the phenomenon in direct meaning (as a free word combination)	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) – sheep with a genetic mutation ;	“White crow” (Engl.) – a crow with a genetic mutation ;
“Black sheep” (Ukr. “чорна вівця”) – sheep with a genetic mutation.	“White crow” (Ukr. “біла ворона”) – a crow with a genetic mutation.
1.2. explanation essence of the phenomenon in figurative meaning (as an idiom)	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) – not like the others, special;	“White crow” (Ukr.) – not like the others, special;
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) – figurative meaning is absent.	“White crow” (Engl.) – figurative meaning is absent.
2. functional essence of the idiom’s explanation	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) – a person who is unlike all the rest, unusual, extraordinary, not like others; a person who is an outsider ;	“White crow” (Engl.) – a person who is unlike all the rest, unusual, extraordinary, not like others; a person who is an outsider;
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) – a sheep is characterized by the increased synthesis of melanin pigment (<i>eumelanin</i>), this leads to a black pigment.	“White crow” (Ukr.) – a crow is characterized by the absence of melanin in feathers (albinism).
3. Synonyms	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) – an exception;	“White crow” (Engl.) – an exception;
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) – an exception	“White crow” (Ukr.) – an exception
4. Antonyms	

“Black sheep” (Engl.) – norm, rule	“White crow” (Engl.) – norm, rule
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) – norm, rule	“White crow” (Ukr.) – norm, rule
5. Stylistic function:	
5.1. a positive connotation (lack “-“, presence “+“)	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) – “-“ ;	“White crow” (Engl.) – “-“
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) – “-“	“White crow” (Ukr.) – “-“
5.2. a negative connotation (lack “-“, presence “+“)	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) “+“	“White crow” (Engl.) “+“
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) “+“	“White crow” (Ukr.) “+“
5.3. a neutral connotation	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) “-“	“White crow” (Engl.) “+“
“Black sheep” (Ukr.) “+“	“White crow” (Ukr.) “-“

Table 2. Finding VIA

“Black sheep” (English)	“Біла ворона” (“White crow”) (Ukrainian)
1. analytical description of idiom’s meaning:	
1.1. explanation essence of the phenomenon in direct meaning (as a free word combination). (⊖ is lack of correlation; ⊕ is presence of correlation)	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊕ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊕ “White crow” (Ukr.)
1.2. explanation essence of the phenomenon in figurative meaning (as an idiom)	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊖ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊖ “White crow” (Ukr.)
2. functional essence of the idiom’s explanation	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊖ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊖ “White crow” (Ukr.)
3. Synonyms	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊕ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊕ “White crow” (Ukr.)
4. Antonyms	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊕ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊕ “White crow” (Ukr.)
5. Stylistic function:	
5.1. a positive connotation	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊕ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊕ “White crow” (Ukr.)
5.2. a negative connotation	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊖ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊖ “White crow” (Ukr.)
5.3. a neutral connotation	
“Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊖ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	“White crow” (Engl.) ⊖ “White crow” (Ukr.)
6. The general conclusion. A vector of informational accordance (VIA) points to the presence or lack of correlation	
1) “Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊖ “Black sheep” (Ukr.)	1) “White crow” (Engl.) ⊖ “White crow” (Ukr.)
2) “Black sheep” (Engl.) ⊕ “White crow” (Ukr.)	2) “White crow” (Ukr.) ⊕ “Black sheep” (Engl.)

Idioms “White crow” (Ukr.) and “Black sheep” (Engl.) are authentic in the meaning “a person who is unlike all the rest etc.”

10. Results and Discussion

Despite of the fact that the AGCs correlate by the essence of information in different languages, idioms with these AGCs do not correlate. The difference of use is result of differences between English and Ukrainian and other cultures. We have to avoid the “literal translation” and provide correlation of information only by accidental combination of information elements. It is necessary to select idioms that correlate in different languages by their contents (not by AGCs).

The results show the advantages of EFIM: 1) doesn't depend on languages; 2) allows understanding the lexical meaning unambiguously and determinate VIA kept in idioms; 3) makes it possible to encode and decode the semantic connections between idioms (priori relevant for central AGCs).

The proposed positions of comparing EFIM have sufficient. But they are not a final. EFIM could be supplemented with additional analysis criteria.

11. Conclusions

The present study shows that EFIM allows understanding the lexical meaning of idioms mono semantically and helps to achieve authenticity of interlanguage communication. The creation of EFIM and finding VIA give the possibility to understand the full essence of information, to develop a “sense of language” and avoid mistakes.

As a result, it will be formed a secondary language personality able to take part in conversations with people from all over the world and participate fully in intercultural communication in the process of discourse creation.

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