

Specific character of translation of idioms from English into Turkmen

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Idioms and fixed expressions are an inalienable part of each language found in large numbers in most of the languages. Since the meaning of these collocations cannot be understood from the superficial meanings (obvious; not thorough or complete meaning) of the single words constituting them, so there are some problems in both processes of understanding and translating them. The process of translating idioms and fixed expressions from one language into another is a fine work which obliges a translator to have a good knowledge of both languages and cultures. [Shojaei: 1]

The way in which an idiom or a fixed expression can be translated into another language depends on many factors. It is not only a question of whether an idiom with a similar meaning is available in the target language. Other factors include, for example, the significance of the specific lexical items which constitute the idiom, i.e., whether they are manipulated elsewhere in the source text, as well as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using idiomatic language in a given register in the target language. The acceptability or non-acceptability of using any of the strategies described below will therefore depend on the context in which a given idiom is translated.

Baker [Baker: 26] suggests four more detailed strategies as follows:

1. **Using an idiom of similar meaning and form** in a way that the TL idiom conveys exactly the “same meaning” by the use of the “same equivalent lexical items” to the SL ones. The point to be mentioned here is that the more two cultures are identical to each other the more cases of such equivalents are possible. Contrarily, if the two cultures are not similar and cultural differences are clearly remarkable between them, then possibility of making such equivalents for idiomatic expressions is decreased to its lowest degree. In our case this kind of match can only be achieved occasionally.

Example:

As cold as ice – Buz ýaly sowuk

A wolf in sheep's skin – Goýun derisine giren möjek

Better later than never – Hiçden giç ýagşy

To have an open hand – Eli açyk bolmak

Knowledge is power – Bilim – güýçdir

To know what is what – Nämäniň nämedigini bilmek, baş çykarmak

To play with fire – Ot bilen oýun etmek

There is no fire without smoke – Tüssesiz ot bolmaz

At the ends of the earth – Ýeriň aňry ujunda

2. **Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form** in a way that an idiom or fixed expression in the target language has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but consists of different lexical items [Baker: 74]. Turkmen language is rich for phraseological units, so it won't be difficult to find this kind of equivalent of an English idiom in Turkmen.

A burnt child dreads the fire - Süýtde agzy bişen suwy üfläp ißer

Diamond in the rough - Göwher kül içinde (Gülüň biten ýerinde gadyry ýok)

Kill two birds with one stone - Bir okda iki towşan awlamak
Old habits die hard - Öwrenilen gylyk örklesen-de durmaz
Talk to the devil and he will appear - Gurt agzasaň, gurt geler
To get out of bed on the wrong side - Çepiňden turmak

3. **Translation by paraphrase.** Baker continues that: is by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages. It isn't easy to find exact Turkmen equivalent of an idiom or fixed expression. Therefore, this strategy is more often used in translation of English idioms into Turkmen than other strategies.

It is no use crying over spilt milk - Indi işi düzedip bolmaz. (Süýt dökülenden soň gykylykdan ne peýda)

Fine (fair, soft) words butter no parsnips - Gury sözden palaw bolmaz; boş sözden netije bolmaz

Eat the calf in the cow's bell - Bitmedik ýowşanyň düýbünde dogmadyk towşan

A little knowledge is dangerous thing - Çala eşiden çatma ýykar

Follow the river and you'll get to the sea - Ýodany yzlasaň, ýola bararsyň

4. **Translation by omission** [Baker: 77]. This means that an idiom is entirely deleted in the TL because "it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons". This strategy is done mostly in the sentence or paragraph level. One may either omit or play down a feature such as idiomaticity at the point where it occurs in the source text and introduce it elsewhere in the target text. This strategy is not restricted to idiomaticity or fixed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss of meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text. We can take an example from Golding's Lord of Flies:

*There were many things he could do. He could climb a tree but **that was putting all his eggs in one basket**. If they were detected, they had nothing more difficult to do than wait.*

Onuň edip biljek köp zady bardy. Ol bir agaja çykyp bilerdi, emma bu onuň üçin hemme zatdan geçmegi aňldýardy. Eger olar tapylan bolsadylar, olara garaşmakdan beter has kyn zat ýokdy.

Translator should better try his best to find equivalence (the quality or state of having the same value, function, meaning) to transfer both the form and the meaning and be thoughtful of not deleting the whole or eliminating the part of the idiom there is no correspondence (a relation of denotational equivalence between two lexical units in the context of two segments that are translation equivalents) for.

References

- 1) Baker M. In other words: A coursebook on translation. – London and New York: Routledge, 1992
- 2) Shojaei A. Translation of Idioms and Fixed Expressions: Strategies and Difficulties. – Quchan, Iran, 2012