

The Main Problems of Multilingual Phraseological Dictionary Compilation

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ABSTRACT

Some of the main problems of “Russian-English-German-Turkish-Tatar Phraseological Dictionary” (REGTTPD, 2008) compilation are described in the article. The dictionary, based on “Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms and Set Expressions” (Arsenteva, 1999), was compiled by a group of scientists of Kazan state university, Russia, and was published in 2008. It is designed to represent the wealth of Russian phraseology and the ways of rendering Russian phraseological units into four languages belonging to different language groups. Much attention is paid to the following problems: dictionary structure, phraseological unit (PU) arrangement in the dictionary, providing necessary connotation linguistic information, ways of translation of Russian phraseological units, with a view to translation in case of zero phraseological equivalence, presentation of Russian examples of usage.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the further development of lexicographical and phraseographical theory is primarily due to the developments in linguistic theory. Phraseological dictionaries “...appeared much later and have undergone less development than general and/or bilingual dictionaries” (Pamies, 2008, 991). The reason of it is quite clear: the first profound comparative studies of the phraseological stock of two or more languages appeared only in the mid-sixties.

Still, not all problems have been solved yet and there are different approaches of dictionary compilers, especially in the field of bilingual and multilingual phraseography. As far as multilingual phraseological dictionaries are concerned, “Russian-English-German-Turkish-Tatar Phraseological Dictionary” may be considered to be the first phraseological dictionary of the kind presenting enormous phraseological material of five languages belonging to different language groups. So it goes without saying that the number of problems the compilers had to solve is rather large. Being responsible for the Russian and the English parts of the dictionary I’ll dwell upon the main problems on the whole with the examples both in Russian and in English.

DICTIONARY STRUCTURE

The structure of any dictionary is presented by macrostructure and microstructure. The macrostructure of “Russian-English-German-Turkish-Tatar Phraseological Dictionary” includes a preface, a list of dictionaries used, a list of sources of illustrations, and a list of symbols and abbreviations used, and, of course, dictionary articles. Dictionary articles represent the dictionary microstructure.

There were, on the whole, no problems concerning the arrangement of the first four components of the dictionary macrostructure. The most difficult part was, of course, the proper presentation of dictionary articles.

LEMMA AND PHRASEOLOGICAL UNIT PRESENTATION IN THE DICTIONARY

The first component of a dictionary article is a lemma (or entry word, or headword). Lexicography has a tradition of lemmatizing nouns in the Singular, verbs in the Infinitive and adjectives in the neutral uninflected form. In the case of irregular inflection of the so-called base form, the irregular forms may be lemmatized as well to facilitate user access to the information required.

The problem of presenting lemma is much more difficult in case of phraseological dictionaries. There are, on the whole, four main ways of choosing lemma in phraseological dictionaries: according to the first component of phraseological unit; according to the main grammatical (syntactical) component; according to the so-called formal way when the compiler(s) of the dictionary choose lemmata conditionally; according to the so-called structural-semantic principle. In our dictionary we have chosen the second way as the most consistent one. So Russian phraseological units are arranged and lemmatized according to their main grammatical (syntactical) component. This choice is mainly caused by the fact that the most complete phraseological dictionaries of the Russian language are based on the same principle.

Each phraseological unit is presented in the dictionary only once under its grammatical headword. The article is presented under the headword.

If a phraseological unit has the structure of a combination of words, it is presented under its main component, i.e. substantive PUs – under noun, verbal PUs – under verb, adjectival units – under adjective (in full or short form), if it is absent – under noun or, if there is no categorematic word in the PU, - under the first syncategorematic word. Adverbial and interjectional units are also presented under their structurally organizing component.

So, the substantive PU “сделка с совестью” is presented under the noun “сделка”, the verbal unit “мыкать век” under the verb “мыкать”, the adjectival phraseological units “красный как рак” and “вышей /чистой/ пробы” under the adjectives “красный” and “пробы”, respectively, the adverbial unit “с наскока /наскоку/” under the adverb “наскока”, etc.

If a phraseological unit has the structure of a sentence, it is lemmatized according to its structure:

1. PUs with the pattern of subject-predicate sentence are organized under subject, so the unit “карта бита кого, чья” is presented under the noun “карта” which is the subject of the sentence.

2. If there is no subject in the sentence, PU is arranged under predicate, for example, the unit “мало каши ел” is presented under the predicate “ел”, the PU “вот куда махнул” – under the predicate “махнул”.

If a phraseological unit has the structure of the combination of two or more homogeneous parts of the sentence, it is lemmatized under the first component as well as PUs with coordination. So the unit “волки и овцы” is presented under the headword “волки”, “быть или не быть” – under the lemma “быть”.

If a phraseological unit contains comparison, it is presented under the component which serves as its grammatical centre, e.g. the unit “как /будто, словно, точно/ ножом отрезал” is arranged under the headword “отрезал”.

One lemma may introduce one phraseological unit, or two or more phraseological units. The second variant is typical of verbal and substantive lemmata.

PRESENTATION OF CONNOTATION LABELS

After the proper presentation of Russian phraseological unit all the necessary linguistic connotation information is given in different types of labels: register labels showing functional-stylistic reference of PU, emotive labels, labels of expressivity. All the labels are utilized.

The first component of connotation, which finds its reflection in the dictionary is the so-called functional-stylistic component showing the functional-stylistic reference of the unit. This component also indicates chronological and territorial characteristics as well as the way of using phraseological units.

The following register labels are used in the dictionary to show the PU stylistic reference: «книжн.» (книжное –bookish), «возвыш.» (возвышенное – elevated), «поэт.» (поэтическое – poetical), «lit.» (literary), «возвыш.» (возвышенное - high-flown style), «разг.» (разговорное), «col.» (colloquial), «low col.» (low colloquial), «разг.-фам.» (разговорно-фамильярное - colloquial-familiar), «груб.» (грубое – rude), «вульг.» (вульгарное – vulgar), «жарг.» (жаргонизм – jargon), «эвф.» (эвфемизм - euphemism), «slang»: “обагрять руки в крови” книжн., “держаться насмерть” высок., “братся за ум /разум/” разг., “переть против

рожна” прост., “сопля зеленая” груб.-прост., “давить фасон” жарг., “rend the air” bookish, “<as> pure as a lily” poet., “full of beans” col., “a clever dog” col.-fam., “a pair in the ass” vulg., “put the acid on smb” jarg., “send smb ro glory” euph.

Neutral phraseological units don’t belong to any particular functional style as they may be used in any style (whenever occasion demands). Such units predominate in the dictionary and have no label: “оставаться /быть/ самым собой. остаться самим собой”, “раскинуть карты”, “be left in the basket”, “be a load off smb’s mind”.

As obsolete units are not included in the dictionary, chronological characteristics show the temporary functioning of neologisms, with Russian units the label «нов.» (новое - neologism) is used: “сменить пластинку” нов.

Territorial reference is presented with English PUs. Such labels can be found in the dictionary: «Amer.» (used in the USA), «Austral.» (used in Australia), «Scottish» (used in Scotland), «Canad.» (Canadian), etc.: “a straight arrow” Amer., “blow one’s bags” Austral., “teach the cat the way to the kirn” Scottish.

The second type of labels used in our dictionary reveals the emotiveness of phraseological units. The scale consisting of 10 emotive labels representing 10 emotive semes of Russian PUs are used: «ласк.» (ласкательное - the term of endearment), «шутл.» (шутливое - jocular), «ирон.» (ироничное - ironical), «неодобр.» (неодобрительное - disapproval), «пренебр.» (пренебрежительное - disdainful), «предосуд.» (предосудительное - blameworthy), «презр.» (презрительное - contemptible), «уничиж.» (уничижительное - reprobative), «груб.» (грубое - rude), «бран.» (браное - expletive expression): “расправлять крылышки” ласк., “мальчик-с-пальчик” шутл. (in the second sense), “ангел без крылышек” ирон., “бить баклуши” неодобр., “что взять с кого” пренебр., “выхватывать кусок <хлеба> изо рта у кого” предосуд., “пропойное рыло” презр., “башка с затылком” уничиж., “на рыло” груб., “чертово семя” бран.

Some phraseological units have a mobile emotive gradation, which means that they may have two or even three (which happens very seldom) emotive semes depending on their realization in speech (context). As a rule they are characterized by the labels which stand close to each other on the scale of emotiveness, e.g. «шутл. или ирон.» (jocular, or ironical), or they can also have the label «часто» (often) «чаще» (more often): “подбитый ветром /ветерком/” пренебр. или презр., “подпускать турысы <на колесах> кому. подпустить турысы <на колесах> кому” часто неодобр. или пренебр.

The last label «экспрес.» (экспрессивное – expressive) shows the expressivity of Russian phraseological units: “растаптывать душу кого, чью. растоптать душу кого, чью” экспрес., “сердце кровью обливается чье, у кого. сердце кровью облилось чье, у кого” экспрес.

All the above mentioned labels are presented in the “List of Abbreviations” and are given in strict order: the label of functional-stylistic reference, the label of expressivity, and the label of emotiveness, e.g.: “дрожать как осиновый лист. как осиновый лист дрожит /трясется/. как осиновый лист задрожал /затрясся/” разг., экспрес., чаще презр., “без пути” прост., неодобр., “в пух и <в> прах” разг., экспрес., “пустить под нож кого” прост., “рыцарь без страха и упрека” экспрес., “в ряду кого, чего”.

PRESENTATION OF ENGLISH COUNTERPARTS

The following types of interlanguage phraseological relations are distinguished:

1. Phraseological equivalents (full and partial);
2. Phraseological analogues (full and partial);
3. Phraseological units having no phraseological counterparts in another language.

Phraseological equivalents are phraseological conformities which are characterized by functional-semantic and aspect identity. The coincidence of phraseological meaning seme composition on the signification-denotational and connotation levels (i.e. the coincidence of evaluative, emotive, expressive semes and functional-stylistic reference of PUs) leads to their

functional-semantic identity. The coincidence of lexeme and grammatical structure of PUs belonging to different languages means their aspect identity.

It goes without saying that the group of phraseological equivalents constitutes a small part as the languages belong to different language groups: Slavonic and Germanic. International PUs serve as good examples: “играть с огнем” – “play with fire”; “играть роль” – “play the role”.

The existence of interlanguage phraseological equivalents facilitates the work of a lexicographer: “не верить <своим> глазам” – “not to believe one’s eyes”; “вторая натура” – “second nature”; “двуликий Янус” – “two-faced Janus”; “терять голову” – “lose one’s head”; “метать бисер перед свиньями” – “cast pearls before swine”.

The existence of partial phraseological equivalents, the main distinctive feature of which is the presence of some minor differential formal indications on the aspect level combined with full coincidence of signification-denotational and connotation components of meaning also finds its expression in the dictionary: “петь другим голосом” – “sing another /a different, a new/ tune”; “открывать зеленую улицу кому, чему” – “give a /the/ green light to smb /smth/”.

The majority of Russian phraseological units may be rendered into English with the help of phraseological analogues. In linguistic literature phraseological analogues are understood as multilingual PUs having differences not only in componential (lexeme) and grammatical structure but also in emotive, expressive and functional-stylistic components of connotation but coinciding in their signification-denotational component of meaning and evaluative component of connotation.

If Russian phraseological unit has phraseological conformity/conformities in the form of analogue/analogues, the dictionary presents it/them after the special mark designating their similarity ~ : “валить /сваливать/ с больной головы на здоровую. свалить с больной головы на здоровую ” разг. ~ “pass the buck” разг.; “маска спадет с кого” экспрес. ~ “smb will come out in /smb will show/ his true colours”; “махать кулаками после драки” разг. чаще неодобр. ~ “cry over spilt milk”, “вон куда махнул” прост. ~ “go beyond /over/ the mark”; ~ “overshoot /overstep/ the mark”.

The connotation differences are marked with the help of labels.

Partial analogues are presented rather seldom as they are characterized by the low level of semantic conformity: “отпускать вожжи” ~ “draw rein”; “не давать слова вымолвить кому” разг. ~ “shut /stop/ smb’s mouth”.

The last group of Russian phraseological units may be rendered into English with the help of translation loans, descriptive and lexical translation. As a rule translation loans are accompanied by descriptive translation, e.g. “бедный родственник” – “a poor relation, i.e. a humble person who depends on others”; “хромать на обе ноги” – “be lame in both legs, i.e. have considerable gaps in one’s knowledge”.

Some Russian phraseological units are rendered into English with the help of lexical translation if they have lexical equivalents: “напускать на себя. напустить на себя” иногда пренебр. или неодобр. – “affect”, “с тяжелой рукой” – “heavy-handed”; “золотая рота” – “vagabonds, trams; ragamuffins”; “как (будто) писанный” прост. экспрес. - “beautiful, handsome”.

Descriptive translation is also a good way of rendering Russian PUs with no phraseological counterpart(s) in English: “не покладая рук” экспрес. – “work unceasingly, tirelessly”, “плести /плесть/ лапти” прост. пренебр. или презр. – “do smth unskillfully, stupidly, confuse smth with smth”; “даром не пройдет что кому” разг. экспрес. – “smb will not get away with smth; smb will pay for it”.

But it is more convenient to give combined translation thanks to which it is possible to convey the meaning of PUs having no phraseological counterparts more completely and adequately: “складывать руки. сложить руки” – “stop working; ~ fold one’s hands”, “большой руки” – “large scale; possessing the highest degree of some quality; inveterate.

About smb”; “слоны продавать” прост. пренебр. – “loaf; stroll around aimlessly; wander around”.

The compilers of the dictionary are trying to do their best to give all possible variants of interlanguage conformities and in this way to present the reader all the variants necessary to understand PUs and find the best way of their translation in different contexts: “пустое место кто” разг. часто пренебр. – “a lay figure; a negligible quantity; he /she, etc./ has nothing in him /her, etc./; ~ a mere /poor, remote/ circumstance (амер. разг.); smb counts for nothing; a nobody”; “с копыт долой” прост. – “kick the bucket (жарг.); kick up one’s heels (разг.); fall off the perch (жарг.); turn up one’s toes (разг.); push up <the> daises” (разг.); “ни в зуб толкнуть” прост. экспрес. – “have no idea about smth; not to have the faintest idea about smth; ~ smb doesn’t know a word of it.

Polysemantic phraseological units, though they are few, are also under consideration. Each meaning is registered under its own number: “склонять голову перед кем, перед чем. склонить голову перед кем, перед чем” - 1. часто неодобр. “submit to smb /smth/; bow to smb /smth/; surrender to smb /smth/” 2. “regard smb with referential respect; worship /adore/ smb; admire smth”.

German, Turkish and Tatar phraseological counterparts are presented after Russian examples of usage.

PRESENTATION OF RUSSIAN EXAMPLES OF USAGE

In lexicography three types of examples are distinguished: (1) citations which are taken from authentic texts without subsequent adaptation by the lexicographer; (2) citation examples; (3) competence examples. All the above mentioned types of Russian examples are presented in “Russian-English-German-Turkish-Tatar Phraseological Dictionary”.

The first type has the advantage that the examples represent reality, both in terms of subject-matter and usage. Such illustrative quotations are taken from both works of Russian writers and the Russian corpus (www.ruscorpora.ru), all of them are presented with the indication of source (the author and the book):

ПРОГЛОТИТЬ ЯЗЫК разг. иногда ирон. или шутл.

- Я Нечаева, - тихо сказала Нина.
- Нянечка недоверчиво оглядела ее с ног до головы.
- Что же ты, язык проглотила? ... Пришли к тебе. (М. Глушко. Мадонна с пайковым хлебом).
- Вы чего, языки проглотили? Не выпались, что ли? (Б.Можаев. Мужики и бабы).

ДО ЗЕЛЕНОГО ЗМИЯ прост. ирон. неодобр. экспрес.

Поп Демьян напивается до зеленого змия, и его зовут Демьян-Змеевидец. (А.Чехов. Записные книжки).

И в области этих торжественных дней обыватель в полном смысле сам себе господин: не только имеет право упиваться до зеленого змия, но, если вздумает, от полноты сердечных чувствований, на четвереньках ходить – само начальство никаких серьезных возражений представить не может. (Л.Андреев. Москва. Мелочи жизни).

The examples of usage of the first phraseological unit are taken from our own card index numbering more than 15000 illustrative quotations (the List of Sources of Illustrative Material is presented at the end of the dictionary). The last two examples of the unit “до зеленого змия” are taken from the Russian corpus.

Citation examples are abbreviated citations from which the information, which is considered irrelevant or superfluous has been left out:

МЕШАТЬСЯ В УМЕ /В РАССУДКЕ/. ПОМЕШАТЬСЯ /ПОВРЕДИТЬСЯ/ В УМЕ /В РАССУДКЕ/. МЕШАБСЯ УМОМ /РАССУДКОМ/. ПОМЕШАТЬСЯ УМОМ /РАССУДКОМ/ прост.

/Дед Гришака/ под конец... зачал умом мешаться. (М.Шолохов. Тихий Дон).

If no appropriate examples of usage (including abbreviated citations) were found in authentic texts, the compilers of the dictionary presented their own competence examples trying to convey not only the denotational component of the meaning of PUs but also all the components of connotation:

МЕТАТЬ ПЕРУНЫ ПРОТИВ КОГО книжн.

«Друг мой! Прочитал твой отзыв на мой рассказ и был сначала готов перуны против тебя метать. Потом успокоился и стал трезво изучать твою критику. И. Представь себе, понял, что ты прав...»

МЕТР С КЕПКОЙ прост. ирон.

- Что ж ты так плохо вырос, метр с кепкой? Иль в детстве плохо кормили? – насмешливо спросил высокий и статный парень.

In case of polysemy examples of usage are presented after each phraseo-semantic variant:

ПРЕДОСТАВЛЯТЬ САМОМУ СЕБЕ. ПРЕДОСТАВИТЬ САМОМУ СЕБЕ – 1. leave smb to himself; leave smb to his own resources

Мы просили оставить нас в покое, предоставить нас самим себе, и пусть не обвиняют нас в жестокости те, кто не захотел вернуть нам необходимого. (Ю.Люциц. Дмитрий Донской).

2. cease looking after smb (about children)

Все были заняты своими делами. Бостон с женой увязывали узлы, укладывали посуду. Асылгуль устроила постирушку... А маленького Кенджеша предоставили самому себе, и он то выбегал из дому, то опять забегал в дом и все крутился возле цыплят. (Ч.Айтматов. Плаха).

Both examples are taken from our own card index, the second example is abbreviated. In the next phraseological unit the first example of usage is a citation from our card index, the second example showing the second phraseo-semantic variant is our own competence example:

СТАВИТЬ ВВЕРХ ДНОМ что. ПОСТАВИТЬ ВВЕРХ ДНОМ что. прост. экспрес. – 1. play hell <and Tommy> with /пазг./ ; play the <very> deuce /the <very> devil, the devil and all, the <very> dickens, the mischief/ with /пазг./; raise Cain /hell, the devil/ with smth; ~ play /raise/ havoc with /амер./; ~ raise hackles /heck, hob, ned/; ~ raise the roof; ~ kick up a fuss /амер./

... теперь дум нельзя было утопить ни в вине, ни в работе. А между тем эта смерть, так глупо и неожиданно представшая перед Андреем Ивановичем, поставила в нем все вверх дном. (В.Вересаев. Два конца).

2. topsy-turvy; make a mess

- Ты что это, совсем сдурил, всю квартиру вверх дном поставил?
- Ладно, не ори, хотел как лучше... Помогите лучше прибраться.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have tried to show the ways of solving of some of the most difficult problems connected with the microstructure of the dictionary which arise before the compilers of multilanguage phraseological dictionary. All decisions are based on the results of comparative studies of phraseological units and the latest achievements in phraseology, lexicography and phraseography.

We hope that the dictionary will be of great help for all those working in the field of phraseology as well as for numerous translators and interpreters.

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