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Bilingual and multilingual Russian-English phraseological dictionaries

Abstract: The paper looks into macrostructural and microstructural parameters of bilingual and multilingual Russian-English phraseological dictionaries. The dictionaries are considered in chronological order, beginning from the very first to the latest ones. Macrostructural parameters description includes the number of head phrases presented, their choice, order of their presentation. Analysis of microstructural parameters of dictionaries pays special attention to introducing head phrases from the formal viewpoint, revealing their grammatical valiancy and lexical collocability, stylistic labels, giving examples illustrating the ways of their use and presentation of synonyms and antonyms. The paper analyzes also the volume and quality of the information unit of dictionary entries. The conclusions are that their volume is constantly extended and the quality of each parameter description is enhanced. Authors of dictionaries published later try to add still more parameters of phraseological unit meaning to be described in bilingual dictionaries.

Keywords: macrostructural and microstructural parameters; head phrase; dictionary entry; stylistic label; information unit

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1 Introduction

Russian-English phraseological dictionaries are aimed, first of all, at English speaking users and translators from Russian into English. They are also of great help for those studying English, and linguists engaged in scientific research. For these reasons, their compilation and existence are very important nowadays.

English speaking and Russian speaking users have several bilingual phraseological dictionaries compiled both in English speaking countries and Russia at their disposal: *Russian-English Idiom Dictionary* edited by Vitek and published in the USA in 1973, *The Great Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms and Set Expressions* compiled by Borkowski and published in London in the same year (1973), *Russian Phraseological Units in Pictures* by Dubrovin (1977), *Short Russian-English and English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary* created by

Alekhina, which contains several hundreds of the most frequently used phraseological units in both the languages and the ways of their rendering into another language (Alekhina 1980), *Short Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* compiled by Gurevich and Dozorets and published in Moscow in 1988, *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms* of Lubensky, published in the United States in 1995 and republished in Russia (1995), *Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* by Kveseleovich (1998), *Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* compiled by Arsenteva and published in 1999, *Translator's Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* compiled by Kuz'min (2001), and *Russian-English Dictionary of Stable Comparisons* by Shadrin (2003). We can also add here the multilingual *Russian-English-German-Turkish-Tatar Phraseological Dictionary* created by the researchers from Kazan State University and edited by Arsenteva (2008). The English-Russian phraseological dictionary compiled by Kunin and published in 1984 should also be mentioned here, because, being a significant and complete dictionary, it has had an enormous influence on the compilation of bilingual phraseological dictionaries in Russia. It was enlarged and republished several times.

Representing phraseological units to foreign readers is an extremely difficult task. For this reason theoretical questions for compiling phraseological dictionaries attract many scholars. Phraseography is a young branch of linguistics based upon the knowledge accumulated by lexicography. The distinguished Russian lexicographer V.P. Berkov wrote about requirements for laying out a word meaning in a bilingual dictionary entry in his work devoted to the problems of bilingual lexicography. He emphasizes that the description of the semantic structure of a head-word in a second language should fully coincide with that in a monolingual dictionary (Berkov 1977: 51). Revealing phraseological meaning which is much more complex than word meaning is an even better solution. The factors contributing to achieving this are: the way of phraseological material presentation, presence of more elements of entry, and the way of their arrangement, among others. In this respect, each of the above-mentioned dictionaries has its own peculiarities.

2 Analysis of bilingual Russian-English phraseological dictionaries

Russian-English Idiom Dictionary, edited by Vitek, is the result of collective efforts of a group of researchers who worked on the dictionary for about four years. The dictionary is of great interest, as it includes a larger part of Russian phraseological stock. The compilers included only the so-called “true idioms”

into the dictionary. These idioms were also analyzed with the help of computer programs in order not to mix them with the so-called “complex lexical entries”. Some “true idioms” also have lexical and grammatical variants (variations) with the same phraseological meaning. There is a description of such types of variations in the Preface. All these types of lexical and grammatical variants (variations) are symbolized in the dictionary, which has its own stylistic evaluative code and language examples. Phraseological counterparts and translation of each idiom were presented by five compilers whose native language was English and by two compilers whose native language was Russian. The following types of “English equivalents” are given in the dictionary: English idioms and descriptive translation into English, which follows word-for-word translation.

On the whole, the dictionary entry is presented in the following way: lemma, two-digit code, which is the stylistic marker of the Russian phraseological unit, the Russian unit itself, its English counterpart, and illustrative examples. One of the advantages of the dictionary is its stylistic evaluative code consisting of 85 labels of different types.

Nevertheless, the dictionary has several drawbacks. The source of the Russian idioms and the indication of their grammatical and stylistic properties in Vitek’s dictionary were only two Russian lexicons: *Tolkovyj slovar’ russkogo jazyka*. Ed. by Usakov (1935) and *Slovar’ russkogo jazyka* (1957). Because of this selection, some Russian idioms were left out, such as *поехал в Ригу, свет померк в глазах чьих, набивать голову чем, and дутый пузырь*. Appropriate English idiomatic equivalents or explanations were selected by an eclectic and less systematic procedure, and as such the dictionary lacks many appropriate English equivalents and analogues. Furthermore, illustrative examples were created by the compilers of the dictionary themselves.

Borkowski claims that his dictionary is based on close and methodical examination of existing Russian monolingual and Russian-English dictionaries. The author introduces the new alphabetical method in order to limit the size of the dictionary and to avoid repetition, duplication and triplication of particular items. But on the whole, this “practical method” does not work in all cases, and the author had to introduce four additional exceptions concerning auxiliary verbs, the verb “to be”, some adjectives, and also prepositions, conjunctions, numerals, personal and possessive pronouns.

In order to avoid the second “stumbling block” of bilingual dictionaries (especially Russian-English ones) Borkowski introduces 33 Russian and 14 English labels of functional-stylistic, etymological and emotive character.

The dictionary contains about 7000 entries, but, unfortunately, not all of them are true idioms and set expressions. Several free or varied word combinations are also included in the dictionary such as *через два года, выучить*

наизусть, ехать на автобусе, ехать на автомобиле, to name a few. Some mistakes in Russian units can be also observed: *вытянуть ноги* instead of *протянуть ноги*, *идти по поводу у кого* instead of *идти на поводу у кого*, *позировать по портрета* instead of the variable expression *позировать для портрета*.

The English part of the dictionary is very poor, especially in comparison with the first dictionary analyzed. The common practice of Borkowski is to give both phraseological counterparts and descriptive or lexical translation depending on the Russian phraseological units. Still, some Russian phraseological units which have English phraseological equivalents are rendered into English with the help of descriptive or lexical translation. But perhaps the main drawback is the numerous mistakes in the English part of vocabulary entries. We enumerate only some of them. The Russian phraseological unit *наступать на пятки* is rendered into English with the help of the English idiom ‘tread on smb’s corns / toes’. The meaning of the Russian unit is ‘be close /hard/ on smb’s heels; breathe down smb’s neck’, and the English unit *step / tread on smb’s corns / toes, on the toes of smb* means ‘touch a sore spot; hit smb, where it hurts’. The second example is the Russian unit *сечь пятниц на неделе у кого* which is rendered into English in the dictionary with the help of the English expression *he’s in two / twenty minds*. The meaning of the Russian unit is ‘blow hot and cold; smb is always chopping and changing; smb keeps changing his mind; change like a weathercock’, the English expression presented as the English counterpart, means ‘hesitate; waver’. There are no language examples (illustrative quotations) in the dictionary at all.

In spite of all the drawbacks mentioned above, the *Russian-English Idiom Dictionary*, edited by Vitek, and *The Great Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms and Set Expressions*, compiled by Borkowski were the first Russian-English phraseological dictionaries, and as such have been of great assistance for several decades for those who had to deal with the Russian and English phraseology both in English and Russian speaking countries. The compilers of the dictionaries should be praised for their great efforts in gathering the material, creating their own methods of presenting it in the dictionaries, in their striving to show functional stylistic and other characteristic features of idioms and set expressions with transferred meaning.

Mark Dubrovin’s dictionary *Russian Phraseological Units in Pictures*, published in 1977, is in fact a Russian-English idiom dictionary. Though this dictionary represents only 600 of the most frequently used phraseological fusions and unities, it is well worth considering because each entry is provided with pictures, one illustrating the literal meaning of the idiom, the other its real meaning. That is why it can be used not only as a dictionary, but also as

serious aid for students of linguistic departments in comprehending the essence of idioms. The dictionary is of great value in realizing the meaning of such terms as *inner form*, *imagery*, and *prototype*. The entries are arranged in an unusual way, consisting of the following components: a head-phrase with its variant in Latin graphics, its word-for-word translation with explanation, and English equivalents wherever available.

As far as the shortcomings of the dictionary compiled by Dubrovin are concerned, we should mention that there is a lack of lexical or grammatical variants, first; second, a lack of examples illustrating the use of the head-phrase; and third, a lack of labels giving information about the connotational component of the meaning.

The *Short Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* compiled by Gurevich and Dozorets and published in Moscow in 1988 was the first dictionary of this type. It evades all these shortcomings, rests upon the authors' large-scale phraseological knowledge base, but it includes only 1000 of the most commonly used Russian idioms. The compilers didn't include proverbs and sayings, "winged" catch phrases, phraseological units below the literary standard and stable expressions of terminological character.

Gurevich and Dozorets propose the following way of representing Russian phraseological units: each unit is presented as many times as it has lexical components but the dictionary entry of this or that unit is given under the main grammatical (syntactical) component: substantive PUs – under nouns, verbal units – under verbs, adjectival ones – under adjectives, pronominal units – under pronouns. If there is no grammatical link between the components of PU, or it is impossible to determine the main grammatical component, and also in case of PUs of coordinative type the units presented under the first main part of speech.

The structure of the dictionary entry is also of great interest: an ordinal number within one letter precedes the Russian phraseological unit, which, if available, contains optional, lexical and formal variant (variations). Verbal PUs are presented with both perfective and imperfective forms, and a special mark points to the cases of polysemantic use of the imperfective form of the verb. Grammatical and lexical collocability is also reflected in the dictionary with the help of special words in italics in postposition. We can also find stresses in Russian units, a special mark points out phrasal stress. A stylistic or expressive-emotional label follows the Russian phraseological unit, after which we find its meaning. In the case of polysemy each meaning of the PU is preceded by an ordinal number. Some additional data concerning the situations of usage, paradigmatic relations, or whether the word order is stable or not, are also present in this part of the dictionary entry.

In the English part of the entry, the English counterparts are presented. If possible, first come English equivalents, and when they are absent, the space is filled with descriptive translations. English phraseological units contain all possible lexical, optional and formal variations. Stylistic labels, word-building variants and necessary explanations can also be found in this part of the dictionary entry. Illustrative quotations extracted mainly from belles-lettres demonstrate the contextual use of the Russian phraseological units. The illustrative part of each entry is very rich.

Where possible, phraseological synonyms are also added. At the end of a limited number of entries we can find the meaning of some obsolete words or words of some specific sphere of usage which serve as lexical components of Russian phraseological units. Moreover, the literal meaning of the whole Russian unit may be found if it is necessary to understand the image of it.

It is also worth mentioning the dictionary's detailed system of labels, which includes labels of functional-stylistic and emotive character as well as grammatical ones and also some abbreviations of general character.

On the whole, the compilers of the dictionary have managed to create a dictionary which completely answers the needs of bilingual dictionary making and gives the most detailed description of each dictionary entry.

Even in such an "ideal" dictionary, however, we come across some inaccuracies in individual entries. As an example we can take two ways of rendering Russian PUs into English. The Russian PU *поднимать на смех кого, что* with the meaning 'make fun /game, sport/ of smb; hold smb, smth up to ridicule' is rendered into English in the dictionary with the help of the expression *take /get/ the /a/ rise out of smb, smth*. The presented English idiom has the meaning 'drive smb crazy /mad/: drive smb out of his mind'. The second example deals with the English idiom *paper over the cracks* with the meaning 'use smth temporarily; create the image of prosperity, well-being, consent' which is given as the interlanguage equivalent of the Russian PU *сглаживать острые углы* with the meaning 'smooth /round off/ the rough edges; smooth things over'.

The *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms* by Lubensky is the third bilingual phraseological dictionary compiled in English-speaking countries. Successful cooperation with the scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, including such famous Russian scholars as Apresyan and Mel'čuk, made it possible to create the dictionary based on the latest achievements in the fields of lexicography and phraseology. The process of compiling the dictionary took about 12 years, and the dictionary includes about 13000 Russian idioms presented in more than 6900 entries. Besides idioms which are considered to be combinations of two or more words acting as a semantic unit and more often than not

characterized by the transference of meaning, some other types of stable expressions and about 300 most frequently used proverbs and sayings as well as some catch phrases such as *были когда-то и мы рысаками* are also included in the dictionary.

The obvious merit of the dictionary is the completeness of the material presented in it. As Lubensky states, it is characterized by some peculiarities, which distinguish it from the existing dictionaries of the Russian language. The entry includes the ordinal number within one letter, the head idiom with the stress, its existing variation forms, if necessary, the information of its paradigmatic completeness/incompleteness and its lexical and grammatical collocability, usage labels, definition, English counterpart/counterparts, illustrative material and its translation into English. One of the peculiar features is also the presentation of the grammatical information of the given idiom and, sometimes, its synonym (*с легким сердцем – с легкой душой*). Usage notes may be expressed in the following way: *принимать /принять (близко) к сердцу что* (usu. used in situations when one sympathizes deeply with another's misfortune or reacts to smth. more intensely than is warranted). The compiler of the dictionary also distinguishes homographs with the help of the diacritical ordinal number, e.g. the obsolete interjectional unit *прости Господи* and the substantive phraseological euphemisms.

The list of abbreviations include 104 labels, among them labels of functional stylistic reference (“coll” – “colloquial”, “highly coll” – “highly colloquial”, “substand” – “substandard”), territorial and temporal reference (“dial” – “dialectal”, “obs” – “obsolete”, “old-fash” – “old-fashioned”), a very limited number of emotive labels (“humor” – “humorous”, “iron” – “ironic”, “derog” – “derogatory”), professional labels (“mil” – “military”, “offic” – “official”). There are also a lot of abbreviations of grammatical character (“accus” – “accusative case”, “predic” – **AQ1** “predicative”, “obj-compl” – “object-complement”, “ungrammat” – “ungrammatical”, etc. Typical shortenings are also included in the list (“etc” – “et cetera”, “smth.” – “something”, “s.o.” – “someone”) as well as some other types of abbreviations (“anim” – “animate (noun)”, “foll. by” – “followed by”) and twelve symbols (“()” – “enclosed optional elements”, “<” – “introduces etymologies”, “[]” – “used for grammatical information and compiler's comments etc.

The illustrative material is of great value for users. In the majority of cases we find in this part of the entry citations from works of Russian classical or modern writers including also those working abroad, and their professional translations into English. The examples of usage of some idioms created by the native speakers of Russian are also presented in some cases. Such an “illustrative part” greatly enriches the practical value of the dictionary, especially for English speaking users.

If necessary, some etymological notes are added, e.g. in case of national-cultural component in the structure of the idiom: *играть в бирюльки* – <From the name of an old game in which a large number of very small objects (*бирюльки*) were scattered on a table and the players tried to pull out one item at a time with a small hook without disturbing the other objects. Cf. **jack-straws, pick-up-sticks**.

One of the peculiarities distinguishing entries in Lubesky dictionary is the use of the so-called Russian patterns in which the signs X and Y denoting subject and object are used. These patterns are presented also in the negative form, e.g., *играть в бирюльки* – *Нег X не в бирюльки играет*. Such a way of presenting the information is of special use for non-native speakers of Russian for whom the dictionary is actually intended.

In the English part of the dictionary, as a rule, several phraseological counterparts of the Russian phraseological unit are offered as well as the definition of this unit in English. The list of all Russian idioms with the headword “crowns” the dictionary as its Index.

In spite of all the undeniable merits of the dictionary, as with any other bilingual dictionary, it has some shortcomings. Not all Russian idioms are followed by illustrative examples (e.g. *гоняться <гнаться> /погнаться за двумя зайцами, вступить в закон; принять закон, пожинать /пожать лавры, небу жарко*, etc.). The way of presenting grammatical information may be considered unusual and redundant (e.g. *независимо от кого-чего* [**Prep; Invar: the resulting PrepP is adv**], or *скорее всего* [**AdvP; Invar; usu. Sent adv; fixed WO**]). English phraseological counterparts of Russian verbal idioms are presented not in the form of verbal units but in the form of patterns in contrast to other structural-grammatical classes of idioms (substantive, adverbial, etc.), which testifies to the heterogeneous presentation of phraseological counterparts in the English part of the entry. The last remark is probably connected with the aspiration of the compiler of the dictionary to give the user all possible variants of idiom usage. On the whole *Russian-English Dictionary* by Lubensky is of exceptional value for native speakers of English and it greatly enriches Russian-English phraseography.

The *Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* compiled by Kveseleovich includes about 7000 Russian phraseological units widely used in different genres in the 19th and 20th centuries, and possible variants of their translation into English. The author of the dictionary follows Kunin’s definition of phraseological units, which considers phraseological units as “fixed word combinations with complicated semantics which cannot be formed according to generating structural semantic model of free word combinations” (Kunin 1996: 5). As a result the dictionary includes some stable expressions which are traditionally

considered to belong to the sphere of phraseology, i.e. proverbs and sayings with transferred meaning, some speech stereotype expressions, stable comparisons, compound terms with transferred meaning, catch phrases which have become phraseological units of the Russian language, and also some word combinations in which one word acquires the meaning determined only by this word combination of the type *девичья память*.

Lexical, formal and optional variants of components of Russian phraseological units are presented as well as their possible contextual syntactical links. The compiler of the dictionary pays special attention to the homonymy of both the PU key components and PU word forms, which are marked by Roman and Arabic numerals.

The lemma introduces the dictionary entry which consists of the ordinal number of the PU within each letter, the phraseological unit itself as the head of the entry, words introducing the unit in context (or accompanying it), different types of labels, definition of PU in case of polysemy, possible variants of translation into English, Russian citations – illustrative examples, and their English translations. The typical feature distinguishing the dictionary from other Russian-English phraseological dictionaries is the existence of the so-called sub-lemmata, i.e. morphological forms of the key word under which phraseological units are presented in the alphabetical order. Kveselevich considers that the use of such sub-lemmata helps the user to find the desired PU in large dictionary families rather quickly.

The *Russian-English Phraseological Dictionary* compiled by one of the authors of this article and published in Kazan in 1999 contains 5491 Russian phraseological units and most frequent phraseological combinations of anthropological character. While compiling the dictionary we tried to take into consideration all the achievements in the sphere of Russian-English bilingual phraseology and to overcome the drawbacks (especially mistakes) which we came across in other dictionaries analyzed above (though it is very difficult to be objective in this case). While selecting Russian units we used the existing phraseological dictionaries, both unilingual and bilingual. Some phraseological units were added into the dictionary from our own card index if they were used at least three times by different authors.

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

Russian phraseological units are presented with all types of variants: phonetic, accentological, spelling, grammatical (including morphological and morphological-syntactical), lexical, lexico-grammatical, mixed and optional.

After the proper presentation of the Russian phraseological unit all the necessary linguistic connotation information is given in different types of labels: register labels showing functional-stylistic reference of PU, territorial, emotive labels, labels of expressivity. 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 the 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 туры <на колесах> кому. подпустить туры <на колесах> кому часто неодобр. или пренебр.* All the labels are utilized and 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.

In the English part of the entry the dictionary presents different types of counterparts: phraseological equivalents and analogues. If the Russian unit has no English phraseological counterpart it is translated with the help of lexical, descriptive translations and translation loans. 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’. English phraseological counterparts are presented with all types of their variation forms mentioned above. The compiler of the dictionary tried to do her 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 translating them 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.

AQ2

эксрес. – ‘have no idea about smth’; ‘not to have the faintest idea about smth’; ~ ‘smb doesn’t know a word of it’.

A few polysemantic phraseological units were also included in the dictionary. Each meaning is registered under its own number: *кровь с молоком* разг. эксрес. - 1. ‘the very picture of health’; ‘full of health’; ~ ‘milk and roses’; ~ ‘in blooming health’; ‘full of health’ 2. ~ ‘have roses in one’s cheeks’; ~ ‘<as> red as a cherry /rose/’; ‘rosy-cheeked’; ‘with rosy cheeks’.

The examples of usage of Russian phraseological units were taken from our own card index including citations from authentic texts of Russian and Soviet writers and numbering more than 15000 illustrative quotations (the List of Sources of Illustrative Material is presented at the end of the dictionary). If no appropriate examples of usage (including abbreviated citations) were found in the authentic texts, the compiler of the dictionary presented her own competence examples trying to convey not only the denotational component of the meaning of PUs but also all the components of connotation. Russian examples of usage are not translated into English and it can be considered as the main drawback of the dictionary. There are also no grammatical labels, which may be of great value for English native speakers. Besides the dictionary lacks an index listing all the Russian phraseological units given in the dictionary.

The *Russian-English-German-Turkish-Tatar Phraseological Dictionary* published in Kazan, Russia in 2008 contains more than 7500 Russian phraseological units and their counterparts in four languages. It is the first multilingual phraseological dictionary of its type. The Russian-English part is based on the same principles as in the previously mentioned dictionary. Russian illustrative examples especially for more than 2500 units added to the dictionary are also taken from Russian National Corpus (www.ruscorpora.ru).

It goes without saying that the obvious advantages of the dictionary are the maximum repletion of the English part of entries with different counterparts, the use of more than 9000 examples of contextual translation of Russian illustrative examples into English, and a rich list of Russian labels which includes labels of PU functional-stylistic reference, emotiveness, etymology, and typical abbreviations.

The *Translator’s Russian-English Dictionary* compiled by Kuz’min includes phraseological units widely used by Russian journalists in modern mass media. We can also find in the dictionary some expressions which for different reasons are not included in any other dictionaries of the Russian language, e.g. *болевая точка, на компьютер надейся, а сам не плошай*.

The dictionary entry is of the following type: after the lemma (which is presented as a rule by the noun irrespective of the grammatical structure of the Russian PU), the unit itself with lexical and/or optional variant/variants,

imperfective and perfective forms of the verbal component. The English part contains a descriptive translation and phraseological counterparts. As the main task of the dictionary compilation was the search of corresponding English counterparts and their adequate presentation in the dictionary, Kuz'min proposes new methods, which according to his point of view help to translate Russian units without such phraseological counterparts. “English equivalents are presented as “blocks of counterparts” which usually use interpreters, especially simultaneous ones” (Kuz'min 2001:III). The search of rhymed translation for the purpose of preserving the image of some Russian proverbs and sayings are of special value: *доверяй, но проверяй* – ‘verification before ratification’, *чем дальше в лес, тем больше дров* – ‘the deeper into the wood you go, the more timber seems to grow’. Among other merits of the dictionary we can mention author’s commentaries and abundant illustrative material with the translation into English. The dictionary entry also contains (using the terminology of the compiler) ‘combinatory abilities’ of Russian PU, ‘stylistic effects’ (including the labels “irony” and “humor”), ‘negative evaluation’ (the label “disapproval”), as well as cross-references and in some cases etymological data. AQ3

We can mention the non-elaborated system of labels as one of the drawbacks of the dictionary. The list of abbreviations includes only ten denominations, six of which are the names of languages. In some cases different phraseological units are included into the same entry, e.g. the unit *не дать медного гроша за что-л.* is presented in the same article with the PU *что-л., кто-л. гроша медного (ломаного) не стоит*. The initial form of some phraseological units is presented in the wrong way, e.g. the PU *сосать лапу* is given in the form of *придется (должны будем, etc.) лапу сосать*.

In spite of the mentioned drawbacks, the *Translator’s Russian-English Dictionary* is of great value especially for specialists working in the sphere of mass media. Only this dictionary contains a great number of Russian illustrative examples taken from different newspapers and magazines, which can’t be found in other Russian-English phraseological dictionaries. All these Russian illustrative examples are translated into English.

The *Russian-English Dictionary of Comparisons* compiled by Shadrin presents a special type of phraseological dictionary. It contains more than 500 Russian stable comparisons (which are considered by the author as phraseological units of a special type) and their counterparts in the English language.

As Shadrin points out in the Preface, the entry consists of three main parts. The first (Russian) part begins with an ordinal number, which is followed by the Russian stable comparison with all its lexical and optional variants. Besides we find here the definition, the grammatical equivalent of the unit and different

types of labels: functional-stylistic, temporal, emotive, expressive and territorial (which means whether the unit belongs to the American variant). Sometimes the use of the label showing expressivity (“экспрес.”) is not definitely clear, e.g. the verbal comparison *гореть как на огне* has the label “экспрес.” while the unit *жечь как огнем* which is also characterized by expressivity doesn't have such a label in the dictionary. The meaning of the Russian stable expression is interpreted or specified in Russian if there are no phraseological counterparts of this unit in the English language.

The second English part of the entry presents different types of English phraseological counterparts, interpretation of the meaning or descriptive translation of the Russian stable expression. The presentation of several English counterparts enriches the practical value of the dictionary.

The distinctive feature of the third part of the entry is a great number of illustrative examples and their translation into English, the majority of which are taken from the best translations published beforehand. Russian citations are given both in their core use and with contextual modifications such as ellipsis, componential substitution, phraseological reiteration, etc. Such presentation of the illustrative material is a vivid form of showing the speech potential of Russian stable comparisons and ways of their proper translation into English.

3 Conclusions

Diachronic analysis of Russian-English phraseological dictionaries points to the fact that they are continually being improved and the quality of information units in them is enhanced and perfected with each new publication. First, each new publication exhibits more regular and thorough presentations of grammatical and lexical variants of phraseological units or their components, and in dictionaries published later even variants of head-phrase equivalents are given. Second, later dictionaries have more thorough presentations of equivalents (presenting a greater number of them, and an increased number of labels giving different types of information about the head-phrase and their use becoming more systematic). More attention is increasingly paid to the description of grammatical and lexical collocations of head-phrases, and illustrative material has become more reliable, with more examples from literary texts used, a greater number of examples per entry, often illustrating different types of use and through different forms, including pictures. Finally, information about obsolete or archaic components and phrases is more readily available in later editions of dictionaries.

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References

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