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PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATING ENGLISH MILITARY LEXICAL UNITS

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Abstract: Translation of military texts is a very challenging task for the novice translators who work in the military sphere. In most cases translators find it hard to work with them texts due to their complexity. This paper is focused on the basic problems military translators can face when work with military lexical units.

The data of the study is taken from the UK, US and Russian Army glossary. The results of the survey show that military texts are very specific therefore special preparation is needed to translate them properly. Military translator should be linguistically and culturally competent in languages, experienced enough in the military sphere and, of course, have good knowledge of military lexical units in both languages. Such strategies as compensation, cultural equivalence and paraphrasing should be used by translators.

Keywords: military lexical units, military language, professional competence, cultural competence, military slang terms

1. Introduction

Translation from one language into another is primarily a means of cross-cultural communication. The practical work of

translators and translation studies provide an opportunity to constantly improve the theory and practice of translation, but it should be pointed out that there are still different views on some issues, which are associated with different processes in society and attitudes to translation and communication. Indeed, the theory of translation has come a long way of development. Today there are a lot of questions and problems that require rethinking. Nevertheless, there are ideas with which all scientists agree, namely, in order to become a highly qualified translator it is necessary to constantly improve translation and professional skills. This is especially important when it deals with *special translation*.

Military translation is “a type of special translation with a bright military communicative function” (Nelyubin, L.L., 2003: 32). Its distinguishing feature is the use of special vocabulary and extremely accurate presentation of the material with a lack of figurative emotional expressive means.

Problems connected with the translation of military lexical units are essential for military translation. They are in the center of scientific attention since they carry a special information load in the field of communication. The same can be said about military terminology. Military terms differ from neutral vocabulary semantically and functionally. English military terminology is extremely heterogeneous. Along with unambiguous terms that have clear semantic boundaries, there are also polysemantic terms. The multiplicity of military terms can be observed when they are used in various areas of the military sphere or in different contexts. Thus, it can be said that a military term is a word or a phrase related to a particular section of military science or military technology.

In a military translation, a translator must know not only terms in a foreign language, he must understand and find equivalents in his native language, as well as know how they are used in the military sphere. That is why the translation of terms is one of the most difficult tasks of military translation.

Thus, the main task of a military translator is the compliance of the translation with the requirements of adequacy and equivalence.

2. Objectives/Purpose of the study

The purpose of this article is to study and justify the need for special study of the features of the translation of military lexical units.

The scientific novelty of the article lies in the attempt to analyze the peculiarities of the translation of military terms and to consider the features of the translation of some military lexical units in British English, American English and Russian language. The results of such an analysis can help novice military translators.

3. Methodology

The researcher conducted a comprehensive survey of the related materials, provided a concise overview of what has been studied and established in the field of the study. The researcher aim is to examine the data using qualitative method in order to find meaningful general patterns and themes which will then lead to the findings that will be derived from the data.

Translation theorists have long attempted to describe and explain the process of translation. In line with this many methods of translation have been proposed in order to be used in the translation process. V.N. Shevchuk focused on the description of language and translation difficulties associated with structural differences between British English, American English and Russian language, national and territorial differences between the American and British versions of the English language, which complicate the process of translation of certain linguistic and cultural realities. His main aim was to develop the ability to correctly perceive the stylistic function of military lexical units and clearly orientate translators in extremely extensive interlanguage homonymy.

V.V. Alimov suggests two translation methods namely the semantic and communicative translation methods and a translation procedures model.

Based on a combination of the theoretical concepts of V.N. Shevchuk and V.V. Alimov the problems of translation of military lexical units will be examined. After collecting the data it will be analyzed with the aim of making a sort of a comparison of translations and to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the process of translation of military lexical units. The data will be chosen based on how best to answer the research question which was mentioned earlier. The data which will be selected to support the idea.

The method of collecting data in this research will be conducted through examining military texts.

4. Result/Findings

It was mentioned earlier that the study will attempt to answer which translation problems professional translators can face in transferring military units from English into Russian and vice versa. After analyzing the data it was found that military lexical units (especially military slang terms) and differences in military cultures of different countries can lead to serious translation problems. Besides, there are no standardized solutions, no standard translation guidance or principle standards for the translation of military lexical units that the translators can use. See table 1.

Table 1. Translation of military lexical units in different cultures

1. Russian language	2. BrE	3. AmE
4. Министр обороны	5. Minister of Defence	6. Secretary of Defense
7. Отделение	8. Section	9. Squad
10. Аэродром	11. Airfield	12. Aerodrome
13. Противогаз	14. Respirator	15. Gas mask
16. Грузовая автомашина	17. Lorry	18. Truck
19. Антенна	20. Aerial	21. Antenna
22. Боевая группа	23. Battle group	24. Task force
25. Самолет	26. Aeroplane	27. Airplane

Military terms can lead to a semantic gap between both languages. Translators sometimes fail to convey all the nuances of military slang terms due to lack of awareness and being unaware of differences in norms and conventions between languages (in this case between Russian and English). Some examples are in the table below.

Table 2. Translation of English military slang terms

Bird	Вертолет, самолет
Heli	Вертолет
Snake	Вертолет огневой поддержки
Slick	Невооруженный вертолет
Dustoff	Санитарный вертолет, эвакуация больных и раненых вертолетом
Pig	пулемет М-60

The difficulty of overcoming the problem of translating specific terms is a major problem as some of these terms may not be translatable.

“In many cases dictionaries are of limited use, even the newest specialized dictionaries can hardly keep up with the pace of advance and development in science and technology and offer sound translations. Translating military terms is rather difficult, as there is often a lack of equivalents in ordinary dictionaries therefore dictionaries covering current language must be updated to reflect new words, and new senses of existing word. Military language is highly practical, loaded with technical terms.” (Mohammad F.H., 2016: 60). See table 3.

Table 3. Changes in translation of military lexical units

Russian	Old English variant	Modern English variant
Председатель	Chairman	Chair
Пожарник	Fireman	Firefighter
Военнослужащие	Servicemen	The military
Рядовые	Enlisted men	Soldiers
Радист	Radioman	Radio operator
Больные	Sick men	Patients

Military language makes it hard for the translators to understand and master the connotation and denotation of some terms. Inability to comprehend the language due to lack of knowledge of the source language or lack of proficiency which leads to misunderstanding of the intended meaning of terms which also leads to inaccurate translation. See table 4.

Table 4. Military terms and Russian translation

Term	Translation
Ammunition	Боеприпасы (снаряды и патроны)
Aviation	Армейская авиация (т.е. вертолеты)
Cavalry squadron	Разведывательный батальон
Fortifications	Укрепления
Mortar	Миномет
Tank	Чаще всего бак или емкость
Battalion	Дивизион
Commanding officer	Командир
Executive officer, chief of staff	Начальник штаба
Cavalry troops, reconnaissance company	Разведывательная рота

5. Recommendations

The findings of the study present a number of recommendations that can be useful and should be used by translators when translating military texts.

✓ Translation of military texts should be done by translators who are familiar with cultures of both languages (SL and TT), as awareness of the cultural context helps translators in conveying the right message.

✓ Military translators are recommended to do some research about the military lexical units they are going to deal with before doing their translations. It is important for translators to have the background information relating to the subject. When translators understand the background of the original, it provides them with some hints about the meaning and helps them better choose the word.

✓ Before starting the process of translation translators should read and analyze the text comprehensively to make sure that he correctly understands the text.

✓ Translators of military texts are recommended to keep up with current military terms and the development of technology.

✓ Dictionaries are not the only source to resort to in dealing with the meanings of military lexical units.

6. Conclusion

“A translator should be smart and intelligent enough to get the meaning accurately. Besides, the text type should be taken into consideration. The translator has to find out the meaning of military lexical units based on the context in which these terms are used. To translate these terms one should first understand those lexical units accurately, which is not so easy. Being a good translator means to understand the intended meaning of a linguistic utterance, and being proficient in the target language” (Mohammad F.H., 2016: 61).

A previous military experience with good knowledge of military language such as: names of ranks, weapons, meaning of orders. Using appropriate techniques of translating military lexical units will improve the level of translation. As translation is not simply transferring words with similar meaning in another language but of finding appropriate ways of saying things.

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