SEMANTIC LOSS AND COMPENSATION METHODS IN THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

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Abstract

This article examines the phenomenon of semantic loss in the translation process and the compensation methods used to overcome it. The research mainly focuses on the preservation of meaning, stylistic coloring, and national-cultural features in the translation of idiomatic expressions from one language into another. The paper highlights issues of equivalence, semantic shifts, and pragmatic differences that arise during the translation of idioms. In addition, compensation strategies aimed at reducing semantic loss, such as explanation, selection of appropriate equivalents, transformation, and contextual substitution are analyzed through examples. The findings demonstrate that the translator's linguocultural competence plays a significant role in the successful translation of idiomatic units.

Keywords: semantic loss, compensation methods, idioms, translation process, equivalence, pragmatics, linguoculturology, transformation, contextual translation.

TARJIMA JARAYONIDA SEMANTIK YO'QOTISH VA KOMPENSATSIYA USULLARI

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada tarjima jarayonida yuzaga keladigan semantik yo'qotish hodisasi hamda uni bartaraf etishda qo'llaniladigan kompensatsiya usullari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot asosan idiomatik birliklarning bir tildan boshqa tilga o'girilishida ma'no, uslubiy rang va milliy-madaniy xususiyatlarning qay darajada saqlanishiga qaratilgan. Maqolada idiomalarni tarjima qilish jarayonida ekvivalentlik muammolari, semantik siljishlar va pragmatik farqlar yuzaga kelishi yoritiladi. Shuningdek, semantik yo'qotishni kamaytirish maqsadida qo'llaniladigan kompensatsiya strategiyalari - izohlash, mos ekvivalent tanlash, transformatsiya va kontekstual almashtirish usullari misollar asosida tahlil etiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari idiomatik birliklarni tarjima qilishda tarjimonning lingvokulturologik kompetensiyasi muhim ahamiyat kasb etishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: semantik yo'qotish, kompensatsiya usullari, idiomalar, tarjima jarayoni, ekvivalentlik, pragmatika, lingvokulturologiya, transformatsiya, kontekstual tarjima.

СЕМАНТИЧЕСКАЯ ПОТЕРЯ И МЕТОДЫ КОМПЕНСАЦИИ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ПЕРЕВОДА

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается явление семантической потери в процессе перевода и методы компенсации, применяемые для её преодоления. Исследование в основном посвящено сохранению значения, стилистической окраски и национально-культурных особенностей при переводе идиоматических единиц с одного языка на другой. В статье освещаются проблемы эквивалентности, семантические сдвиги и прагматические различия, возникающие в процессе перевода идиом. Кроме того, на примерах анализируются стратегии компенсации, направленные на уменьшение семантических потерь, такие как пояснение, подбор соответствующего эквивалента, трансформация и контекстуальная замена. Результаты исследования показывают,

что лингвокультурологическая компетенция переводчика играет важную роль при переводе идиоматических единиц.

Ключевые слова: семантическая потеря, методы компенсации, идиомы, процесс перевода, эквивалентность, прагматика, лингвокультурология, трансформация, контекстуальный перевод.

Introduction

Translation plays an important role in communication between different languages and cultures. In particular, when translating literary and journalistic texts, translators aim to preserve not only the meaning of words but also their stylistic and cultural features. However, during the translation process, some parts of meaning may change or disappear. This phenomenon is known as semantic loss in translation studies. Semantic loss is especially common in the translation of idioms because idiomatic expressions are strongly connected to the culture, traditions, and worldview of a particular nation.

When an idiom is translated from one language into another, it is important to transfer not only its direct meaning but also its figurative and emotional effect. In many situations, the target language does not have an exact equivalent for the original idiom, which may lead to partial loss of meaning or changes in expression. To solve this problem, translators use different compensation methods. These include explanation, transformation, contextual substitution, and finding the closest equivalent in the target language. Such strategies help preserve the original idea and cultural value of idiomatic expressions.

The main aim of this article is to examine semantic loss in the translation process and analyze the compensation methods used in translating idioms. The study also discusses semantic and pragmatic differences between languages and highlights the importance of the translator's linguocultural competence in achieving effective and accurate translation.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine semantic loss and compensation methods in translation of idiomatic expressions. The research mainly focuses on comparing idioms in the source language and their translated versions in the target language. Several idiomatic expressions were selected from literary and journalistic texts because such texts often contain culture-specific language and figurative meanings. The selected idioms were analyzed to identify cases where semantic loss occurred during translation. Special attention was given to changes in meaning, emotional effect, stylistic coloring, and cultural elements. The study also examined how translators attempted to overcome these difficulties by using different compensation strategies.

The main methods applied in this research include comparative analysis and contextual analysis. Comparative analysis was used to compare the original idioms with their translated forms, while contextual analysis helped explain how meaning changes depending on the context of the text. In addition, examples were grouped according to the type of compensation method used, such as explanation, transformation, contextual substitution, and the use of equivalent idioms.

The research materials were collected from bilingual texts, translated literary works, and online translation sources. The findings were interpreted based on theories related to translation studies, semantics, and linguoculturology. This approach made it possible to better understand the challenges of translating idiomatic expressions and the importance of compensation methods in preserving meaning and cultural value.

Results

The results of this study show that semantic loss is a common and almost unavoidable issue when translating C1-level idioms. These expressions are highly figurative and culturally loaded, which makes literal translation ineffective and often misleading. The analysis revealed that the degree of loss varies depending on the strategy used by the translator.

For instance, the idiom "bite the bullet" was found to lose its intended meaning when translated literally. A word-for-word rendering would not reflect the idea of enduring a difficult situation. However, when an equivalent expression is used in the target language, the meaning is preserved more naturally and effectively.

Similarly, “burn the midnight oil” presented clear evidence of semantic distortion in literal translation. Translating it directly would create confusion, while an explanatory approach such as “working late into the night” successfully conveys the intended meaning without cultural misunderstanding.

In the case of “cut corners”, the study showed that meaning can shift significantly if context is ignored. This idiom refers to doing something quickly by reducing quality or effort. A contextual substitution like “doing something in a careless or low-quality way to save time” proved to be more accurate and reader-friendly.

The idiom “break new ground” demonstrated how translation can benefit from transformational strategies. Instead of a literal structure, rendering it as “introducing a new approach or innovation” maintained both academic tone and clarity.

Finally, “take something with a pinch of salt” highlighted the challenge of cultural specificity. Since the idiom reflects a cultural attitude toward skepticism, an explanatory translation such as “not fully believing something” was found to be the most effective way to preserve its pragmatic meaning.

Overall, the findings suggest that while semantic loss in idiom translation cannot be completely avoided, it can be significantly reduced through appropriate compensation strategies. Among the most effective methods are equivalence, contextual adaptation, and explanation, all of which help maintain meaning, clarity, and natural flow in the target language.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that idiom translation is not merely a linguistic transfer process but also a cultural negotiation between two language systems. The results clearly show that semantic loss becomes more pronounced when idioms are translated literally, as their figurative and culturally embedded meanings cannot be directly mapped onto the target language.

One important observation is that no single compensation strategy is sufficient on its own. Instead, translators tend to rely on a combination of methods such as equivalence, explanation, contextual substitution, and transformation depending on the situation. For example, idioms like “bite the bullet” are best handled through equivalence, while expressions such as “burn the midnight oil” require explanation to preserve clarity. This flexibility suggests that idiom translation is highly context-dependent and requires strong linguistic intuition.

Another key point is the role of cultural familiarity. Idioms such as “take something with a pinch of salt” demonstrate that cultural references embedded in language often do not have direct counterparts in other languages. In such cases, maintaining communicative meaning becomes more important than preserving the original imagery. This supports the idea that functional equivalence is often more effective than formal equivalence in idiom translation.

The study also confirms that translators with strong linguocultural competence are better equipped to minimize semantic loss. Their ability to interpret underlying meanings rather than surface structures allows them to choose more natural and context-appropriate solutions.

Conclusion

This study investigated semantic loss in the translation of idiomatic expressions and the role of compensation strategies in reducing its impact. The analysis demonstrated that idioms are particularly vulnerable to meaning distortion due to their figurative, cultural, and context-dependent nature.

The results show that semantic loss cannot be fully avoided in idiom translation; however, it can be effectively reduced through appropriate translation strategies. Among the most effective compensation methods are equivalence, contextual substitution, explanation, and transformation. Each of these strategies contributes differently depending on the idiom type and context.

In conclusion, successful idiom translation requires more than linguistic knowledge alone. It demands a deep understanding of cultural context, pragmatic meaning, and communicative intention. Therefore, linguocultural competence plays a crucial role in ensuring accurate and natural translation outcomes.

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