THE MODERN APPROACH OF STUDING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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The article deals with theoretical and practical problems of contrastive linguistics, as one of the areas of comparative linguistics. The goal of language contrastive description is revealing the national peculiarities of linguistic mentality. The analysis was based on Russian and English lexemes denoting speech events. The use of formalized parameters in the form of indices is described to identify the degree of similarity of language correspondences. The contrastive method of lexemes description allows to reveal quite clearly and authentically semantic equivalence in the two languages. Contrastive linguistics directly related to the theory and practice of translation and is important for the practice of compiling bilingual dictionaries.

Key words: contrastive linguistic, vocabulary, language correspondences, national peculiarities, seme description, contrastive dictionary, denotational, connotational and functional identity.

At the end of the XX century the contrastive linguistics has been formed as a theoretical and applied science. Today the increasing attention is devoted to comparative analysis of languages. Contrastive analysis is closely connected with the tasks of teaching foreign languages as well as the theory and practice of translation and lexicography.

The significance of lexicography as a branch of linguistics dealing with the theory and practice of compiling dictionaries is generally recognized. Lexicography as a dictionary work is an ancient form of linguistic human activities, there is evidence of bilingual dictionaries which are about four thousand years.

There are different types of dictionaries, which vary in volume, peculiarities, the arrangement of material, concepts, etc. Each of these dictionaries has its own circle of users and its own characteristics [2]. The basic principle of lexicography is the maximum information at a minimum of space without prejudice to the interests of readers [1].

Lexicography cannot ignore the fact that a bilingual dictionary is one of the main tools for teaching foreign languages, a person usually remembers words or phrases and in his/her own way comprehends information extracted from the dictionary.

An important area of contrastive linguistics is revealing the national peculiarities of the various groups of words, which, in turn, allows to create the basis for the compiling of new types of translated dictionaries. The need to create bilingual dictionaries of language correspondences where would be indicated national peculiarities of translation semantics, I.A. Sternin writes [5].

Revealing of national peculiarities of the word semantics is to identify the diversely components of meaning in the compared correspondences of two languages. Currently, linguists, lexicographers, translators and teachers of foreign languages are increasingly aware the need for more precise translation of the semantic volume of a unit. National peculiarities of word semantics

is a real problem, which translators are constantly facing during translation, as well as teachers of foreign languages. Speaking about the contrastive lexicology, V.N. Yartseva points out that "bilingual dictionaries always contain in germinal form contrastive comparison of lexical units" [6, p. 30].

The need for comparative studies on the lexical level is related to the revival of special lexicographical genre – differential bilingual dictionary comprising only the vocabulary by which differ the compared languages. Lexicography of Church Slavonic language of the Eastern Slavs began with such dictionaries as: anonymous "Lexis with the Interpretation of Slovenian Words Merely" (XVI century), "Lexis" Lawrence Zizaniy (XVI century), "Lexicon Slovenorossiysky and Name Interpretation" Pamva Beryndy (XVII century).

The development of Philology in general and Lexicography in particular could not lead to the emergence of new approaches to resolving traditional and new problems in the study of the language vocabulary.

Modern linguistic studies seek to identify similar and divergent phenomena in languages and offer comparison methods. One of such methods is the contrastive analysis of lexemes of the compared languages, which allows to identify word national peculiarities in the shortest way. National peculiarity of the lexeme meaning of any language is determined only by comparison with other language and only in relation to the given language. The different comprehension of the same object by people of different nations and cultures is reflected in the language.

For example, the Russian word *бутерброд buterbrod* (sandwich) meaning "a slice of bread or bun with butter, cheese, sausage, etc." has a national peculiarity regarding to the semantics of the English language as its correspondence is semantically different from Russian word: *sandwich* - «two pieces of bread with butter or jam filled in the middle». Thus, comparing the meanings of the words, *бутерброд buterbrod* and *sandwich*, we describe as the national peculiarities of the Russian word semantics the availability of the differential seme "one piece of bread," and English - "two slices of bread with a filling in the middle."

The relevance of this research is caused to the need to improve bilingual dictionaries where national peculiarities of semantic correspondences are indicated.

Practical studies carried out currently within the contrastive linguistics and contrastive lexicography; allow creating the basis for the compiling of new types of translated dictionaries. In such dictionaries either per seme description of lexemes of two compared languages is given parallelly, in which clearly can be seen both identity and differences of semes (contrastive seme dictionary) or a full list of semes of a lexeme of a source language, indicating the possible translation counterparts and their differences on the seme level is given (contrastive explanatory and translated dictionary) or nonequivalent semes of lexemes of the source and the compared languages are listed (contrastive differential dictionary).

Contrastive dictionary reflects both a form of oral and written speech, the formal and informal styles, the British and American English, etc.

A very important problem in the translated dictionary is the system of marks i.e., clarifying meanings using explanations in brackets. Since the objective of this information is to show how the word is actually realized in speech practice of native speakers, it is quite clear how important this information is. And as this information is contained in the connotative and functional components of vocabulary, they should get reflected in the translated dictionary.

It should be noted that all types of contrastive dictionaries make the work of translators essentially easier. But none of these dictionaries can solve the most important problem for translators determining which of the translation variant of a lexical unit is optimal for the given context. However, having a detailed description of the semantics of a particular lexical unit in the dictionary, or its differences from the units of another language, the translator has to choose the most suitable counterpart him\herself but in this case that choice is often quite subjective.

In order to avoid subjectivity in the choice of a translation counterpart and provide the optimal translation variant we offer a new type of the contrastive Russian-English seme dictionary [3, p. 189-374], which contains all the possible counterparts of lexemes with the indication of the optimal translation variant. Revealing of the optimal translation counterpart with contrastive seme description in such dictionary is possible due to the introduction of a number of formalized parameters in the form of corresponding indices – those of denotational, connotational and functional identity, each of which is counted as the ratio of respectively denotational, connotational and functional semes to the general number of semes of this category revealed in the meaning of a concrete lexeme. The optimal translation variant is considered to be the one which demonstrates the highest values of the above-mentioned indices with the dominated role of index of denotational identity.

The main in the contrastive vocabulary study is the semantic equivalence of the compared units, which is often understood as their optimal translation from one language to another [4]. Contrastive linguistics stimulates the development of lexicography. The contrastive dictionary includes only that vocabulary that distinguishes the compared languages. A contrastive analysis of the lexemes of the compared languages allows in the shortest way to reveal the national peculiarities of the word, to find out lacunas in the semantic space of one of the compared languages, and to see the peculiarity of the metaphorical images used in the works of art.

It should be noted that on the basis of developed principles for revealing the optimal translation counterpart Russian-English contrastive seme dictionary of the lexical group "speech events" has been prepared [3], including 131 Russian lexemes denoting "speech events", and 174 their English correspondences, i.e. in total, 409 Russian-English contrastive pairs. In such dictionary for every Russian lexeme the seme analysis of all possible correspondences is given, and on the basis of counting the indices of denotational, connotational and functional identity of lexemes the optimal translation counterpart is defined and indicated.

Thus, an urgent problem for modern lexicography is the creating of such translated dictionary, where the national peculiarity of semantics of the lexical units will be shown taking into account denotational, connotational and as well as functional components. Such dictionaries can be contrastive dictionaries of different types. The offered dictionary might be considered most suitable for professional translators, students and teachers, specialists in international relations, etc. because it contains all the necessary information and helps them to choose the optimal translation counterpart. However, such seme dictionary is labour-intensive due to the counting of the corresponding indices and the work on such dictionary takes a lot of time.

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