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AUTHORS: Ögrgör Ferah SARIKAS

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PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING COLLOCATIONS

Öğr.Gör. Ferah SARIKAŞ

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi
fsarikas@comu.edu.tr

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, ilk olarak eşdizimlerin farklı tanımları ve örnekleri sunulmaktadır. Daha sonrada çeviri yaparken eşdizimlerde (collocations) karşılaşılan başlıca sorunlar değinilmektedir. Son olarak da, eşdizimlerin çevirilerinde karşılaşılan sorunlara çözüm önerileri ileri sürülmektedir.

Bilindiği üzere, basit tanımıyla çeviri; kaynak dildeki bir mesajı(ileti) veya bildiriyi hedef dildeki bir mesaja veya bildiriye aktarma bilimidir. Çeviri hiç de kolay bir iş olmadığından çevirmen genellikle çeviri yaparken çeşitli sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadır. Sosyal, kültürel farklılıklar ve iki dilin sahip olduğu sözcüksel ve dilbilgisel değişmezler gibi bir çok sebebe bağlı anlam yitirme ile karşılaşılmaktadır. En kaçınılmaz anlam yitirme, iki dilinde farklı sözcüksel ve dilbilgisel yapılara sahip olması gerçeğinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, eşdizimlerde dilin dilbilgisel değilde, sözcüksel çeşitliliği içerisinde yer aldığından, bu çalışmada eşdizimler ve çevirilerindeki sorunlar konu edinilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Eşdizimler, çeviri, anlam yitirme, farklı sözcüksel ve dilbilgisel yapı.

ABSTRACT

In this study, firstly different definitions and examples of collocations are being presented. Then the main problems that occur in translating collocations are mentioned. Lastly some remarkable suggestions are put forward to solve the problems that occur in translating collocations..

We have already known that by its definition in broader sense, translation is a scientific study in which the translator attempts to replace a written message or statement in one language(source language) by the same message or statement in another language(target language).The translator most probably has various problems in translating since it is not an easy task at all. There could be loss of meanings due to a number of factors such as; social, cultural differences and lexical and grammatical invarities of two different languages. One of the most inevitable sources of loss is the fact that two languages have different lexical and grammatical systems.

In this context, as the collocations are the lexical, not grammatical tramlines of language, collocations and their problems of translating will be studied in this study.

Key words: Collocations, translation, loss of meaning, different lexical and grammatical systems.

PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING COLLOCATIONS

1. COLLOCATIONS

1.1. DEFINITION OF A "COLLOCATION"

Recent studies made on translation have proved that words are extremely important lexical items in translation. .The words that are frequently used both in written and oral language have many variant combinations and functions. These variant functions appear to be an obstacle in translation task because combination of words in a language can be ranged from the simple to the fixed and idiomatic. One of the regular combinations of words is collocations and these collocations run through the whole of the English Language.

Oxford Collocations Dictionary gives the definition of collocations as follows: "Collocation is the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing."(2002-7) Strong "wind" and "heavy rain" are given as examples for collocation in English. It would not be normal to say" heavy wind "or "strong rain."As for collocations, we can give English collocations; "by accident", "strong tea", "feel well", "work hard" and Turkish collocations; "geri dönmek", "doğru yol", "aşırı sıcak", "tabii güzel".

These examples of collocations in both languages very well illustrate the fact that words having different meanings come together and form group of words having totally different meanings than their own isolated forms but comparing to idioms(kick the bucket used to describe dying)collocations still retain their lexical meaning thus can be labeled as decipherable.

Let's have a look to these collocations in English and in Turkish.

Strong (ad): Not easily broken or injured.

Tea (n): A drink made by pouring boiling water on the tea leaves.

Strong Tea. (collocation): It's a kind of tea having a lot of tea in it.

Aşırı: Alışılan veya dayanılabilenden daha fazla,daha çok,taşkın.

Sıcak: Yakmayacak derecede ısısı olan.

Aşırı Sıcak: Çok sıcak, dayanılamıyacak kadar bunaltıcı sıcak.

In both examples, it is well shown that it takes a greater degree of competence with the language to combine collocations correctly in productive use. Most probably to a native speaker these combinations are highly predictable but to a beginner they are nothing.

Newmark states the definition of collocation as follows: "A collocation is the element of systems in the lexis of language .It may be syntagmatic or horizontal, therefore consisting of a common structure; or paradigmatic or vertical, consisting of words belonging to the same semantic field which may substitute for each other or be semantic opposites".(1978-114)

As very clearly pointed out in the above definition collocation is concerned with how words go together .i.e. .which words may occur together occasionally and some combinations of words are not likely to occur.

1.2. CLASSIFICATION OF COLLOCATIONS

Having given the definition of what collocation is or what collocations are, it is necessary to classify as lexical items. The word collocate means to put side by side and combinations of words will differ from language to language.

According to Larson (1984:142) there are certain combinations of words in any language which are *fixed combinations*. They always occur in a certain order or they always occur together. This is especially true of expression like *to and fro, now and then, neat and tidy* in English a*şağı yukarı, güzel çirkin, dere tepe* in Turkish. If the order is changed, the result will sounds unnatural. It sounds strange to a speaker of English to hear someone say *gentleman and ladies*

Also idioms are classified as fixed combinations of words which have a meaning as a whole, but the meaning of combination is not the same as the meaning of individual words. They often have the same meaning as other lexical items in the language but carry certain emotive connotations not expressed in the other. For example, kick the bucket has the same meaning as die, but it shows a certain lack of respect.

Varieties of English Collocations and Turkish Collocations

Collocations in English

.1-.Verb plus verbal noun	2.Determiner plus adjective plus noun
pay attention	a tall man
suffer a defeat	a pretty girl
run a meeting	a good-looking man
do a wrong	a handsome boy
give damage	a classical language
do a favor	a suppressed laughter

3-Adverb plus adjective	4-Verb plus adverb or adjective
immensely important	work hard
bloody heart	feel well
very practical	shine brightly
painfully honest	smell sweet
instinctively rejected	look tired

5-Subject plus verb	6-Count noun plus mass noun
the door creaks	a loaf of bread
the bell rings	a pinch of salt
the dog barks	a bar of chocolate
the cat purrs	a drop of water
teeth chatter	a great deal of work

7-Collective noun plus count noun	8-Idıom
a bunch of keys	pull one's leg
a bunch of flower	kick the bucket
a flock of geese or sheep	rain cats and dogs
a pack of cards (Newmark,1978:115)	

Collocations in Turkish

1. Adjective plus noun	2..Noun plus noun
temel düşünce	ağacın dalı
baş çavuş	çoban köpeği
alt tabaka	talih kuşu
hanım kadın	para delisi
yanlış hesaplar	bir kilo kesme şeker
üç metre kumaş	çeviri kılavuzu
kör talih	ekmek teknesi
acı haber	geçim sıkıntısı

3.Verbal Nouns	4.Idioms
erken kalkmak	sakla samanı , gelir zamanı
ütü yapmak	etekleri zil çalmak
yemek yemek	ak akçe,kara gün içindir
geç kalmak	öfkeyle kalkan zararla oturur
yoldan gelmek	
idare etmek	
yardım etmek (Erdoğan, 2006:8, 11; Banguoğlu, 1998:298, 372)	

As we have witnessed in the above examples, knowing which words go together is an important part of understanding the meaning of a text and translating it well. Some words do not occur together because the combination would be nonsense; that is, it would not make sense because it is outside of reality. For example: In English the verb "have" collocates with the word "dream". They say "I had a dream" but in Turkish we say "Rüya gördüm." The meaning is the same but different words are combined to indicate the meaning.

1.3. FUNCTIONS OF COLLOCATIONS

Compared with other languages English said to be quite simple: nouns don't have gender. However English contains more words, expressions, idioms, collocations. and these make it rich and appealing. Especially collocations are important combinations of words that endow the language with natural sounding speech and writing.

Collocations are the most important lexical items in English and Turkish languages and they have certain functions. One function is noted in Oxford Collocation Dictionary as follows:" language that is collocationally rich is also more precise. The precise meaning in any context is determined by that context:by the words that surround and combine with the core word-by collocation." (2002-9)

Another function of collocations is that with collocations people are able to talk about any subject and communicate effectively.

Also knowing which nouns are used with which adjectives or which adjectives are used with which nouns improve one's linguistic competence which includes the learning of linguistic rules as well. The more one learn about the collocations, the better he/she express his/her ideas in a natural way.

Shortly, collocations make the language more natural, more colorful and interesting.

2. PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING COLLOCATIONS

2.1. TRANSLATION TASK

In recent researches that are related to translation, many definitions have been given on what a translation is and what happens in the translation task. As our subject matter is to put forward the problems that occur in translating collocations, it is better to point out a simple definition of translation.

Roger defines translation as follows:" Translation is the expressions in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences." (1993-5)

As well defined in the above, translation is the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language In translating task most probably involves some kind of loss of meaning due to a number factors. These factors make the translation task difficult. .For example: Words have extended meanings ((primary, secondary, figurative) and in the same way grammatical forms have extended usages (secondary and figurative functions)

Also, the basic loss is reported to be on a continuum between overtranslation (increased detail) and undertranslation (increased generalization) in the translating task. Since two languages both in their basic character have different lexical, grammatical systems, what a translator should do

is to choose from transcribing the foreign word (which can be a collocation) and then translate it substituting a similar word in his/her own language. If the collocations' translation is in question the translator should be very careful because different words collocate with each other. Köksal gives an example for this: "high" in English collocates with "probability" and form collocation "high probability" but in Turkish "büyük ihtimal" is used.
(1995:59)

It is certain that the translator must have sufficient knowledge on all the collocations and their verities in order to make a sensible and correct translation from source language to target language.

2.2. THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATION

It's widely accepted that exact equivalence in translation is almost impossible due to a number of reasons: One of the most important reason is that both English and Turkish languages are coming from different origins. While English is belonging to Indo-European language family group, Turkish pertains to a group of Ural Altai language family.

In (www.1001kitap.com/Turkce/Dogan_Aksan/turkcenin_gucu) it's being remarked that Turkish is an agglutinating language in which words can be divided into a linear sequence of morphemes, each of which typically has a single consistent meaning or function. Constant roots and derivational and inflectional suffixes are present in it. The preference is on derivational suffixes. While the derivational suffixes determine the meaning, the inflectional suffixes determine the functions.

Contrary to Turkish, English is an isolating language in which word orders are more fixed and determining and some suffixes have the posibility of lining one after another to a certain extend and at the same time the words that combine together play an important role in enriching the language. The collocations are quite good example for the combining word groups. Kocaman exemplifies the following English collocations and their equivalents: "to knock at the door (kapıyı çalmak), to slip away (yan çizmek), to be in difficulties (darda kalmak), to labour (emek vermek) to prove to be right (doğru çıkmak)" (1990:8)

As clearly put forward in the examples, words (collocates) that are used together to form collocations, are totally different in two languages. At this point Crystal refers to the problem of translation as such "the aim of translation is to provide semantic equivalence between source and target language. This is what makes translation different from other kinds of linguistic activity, such as adapting, abstracting." (1989:344)

Of course exact equivalence referred above is accepted as impossible. There is always some loss of meaning. A translator should take into account differences between source and target language if he/she aims at doing a good translation.

2.3. PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING SOME NEW ENGLISH COLLOCATIONS

New English collocations which are noun compounds or adjective plus noun are proved to be difficult to translate. These are usually common in social sciences and computer language.

Newmark gives a list of these new collocations. Some of them are; lead time, acid rain, sunshine industries, domino effect, walkman. etc. (1988-145)

He also states that if we don't have a standard term in the target language for a collocation, then it will have to be translated by a descriptive term.

"lead time" a term for the time between design and production or between ordering and delivery of a product, should be translated in context.

"Acid rain" which is unfortunately a universal term, is likely to be translated easily in every language since it is transparent.

"Norm" and "criterion reference testing" are both recent terms for educational assessment so they should be explained until the terms become more widely known.

"Sunshine industries" refers to electronics and other high technical industries. The metaphor can be ignored or reduced to sense in translating.

As we see English collocations which appear arbitrarily to juxtapose nouns with verb-nouns because they indicate the two most significant meaning components, but have varied and sometimes mysterious case relations. Languages which can not convert verbs to nouns, can not imitate this procedure. So this reason, English collocations are difficult to translate.

3. THE SOLUTIONS FOR THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATING COLLOCATIONS

3.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE RELATONSHIPS AMONG WORDS

As we see there is an interwoven relationship among words. If a translator fails to see these relations then it would be very difficult for him to find its equivalent meaning in the target language; moreover his translation most probably becomes erroneous.

Köksal gives a list of some English compound words with their incorrect and correct Turkish translations.

In English	Incorrect Turkish Translation	Correct Turkish Translation
record -office	kayıt bürosu	evrak kalemi
lady- killer	kadın katili	çapkın
dog -eared	köpek kulaklı	bükülmüş sahife
bee -eater	arı yiyici	arı kuşu
hot-blooded	sıcak kanlı	sinirli,çabuk kızan
blood-sucker	kan emici	sülük
test paper	sınav kağıdı	deney kağıdı
red-sheep	kırmızı koyun	bozkır koyunu (1995-60)

Collocations which are combinations of words can usually be replaced by equivalents in the other language .While doing this, the translator shouldn't forget to choose the right equivalent in the target language. Otherwise a loss of meaning inevitably may occur.

Since every language has its own words, structures which are peculiarly organized, the translator must be keen on the word relations, grammatical systems of source language while he is translating collocations into the target language. Otherwise there would be a loss of meaning in translating collocations.

The translator must have enough information about the relationships of words both in source language and target language, if she/he wants to make a good translation. What do we mean by the term relationships of words is that certain nouns are used with certain verbs in a language; also some adjectives go with some certain nouns..

3.2. THE NECESSITY OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE OF THE TRANSLATOR

I believe that the translator who attempts to translate collocations of one language into another should better have full varieties of knowledge on both source and target language. That means he must possess the linguistic knowledge of a fluent speaker

About the   linguistic competence of translator Roger notes that "The translator must as a communicator, possess the knowledge and skills that are common to all communicators at least in two languages."(1993:36).

In translating task, sometimes the translator can not find the words that correspond to the words that he want to translate. This does happen by no means only to beginners or to those who do not know their languages well. When they are unable to find the simple words that are in existence, they go looking for flaccid circumlocutions that can not possibly take their place.   In that case, the best thing they should do is to study first and to learn their own language well .When all the necessary variants of the languages are learned patiently, then the problems of translating should be shared by the people who have more experience since they have been using the language for a longer period of time.

3.3. EQUIVALENCE TRANSLATION

It has already stated that collocations are the lexical tramlines of language. Whenever a translator find current and equally corresponding collocations in source and target language texts, he/she must use them because they are among the invariant components of translation.

In the translation process of collocations, one of the problems that a translator faces is that he/she has to differentiate accepted collocations from the other group of words in the source language. Then what's an accepted collocation?

Newmark explain this as follows": A collocation consists basically of two or three lexical (sometimes called full, descriptive, substantial) words, usually linked by grasmmatical (empty, functional, relational) words. (1978-115)

The translator must know that the collocates; (words in collocation) within a collocation define and delimit each other by eliminating at least some of their other possible meanings. For example he/she can thus; regard" to pay attention" as a collocation because it reduces the number of

senses in which pay" can be used to one and the word "attention" is not so radically affected but it excludes attention in the sense of "care, solicitude" .She/he must not regard "to buy a hat" as a collocation because it doesn't obviously eliminate the sense of meaning "buy" or "hat".

Moreover the translator must do an equivalence translation in order not to lose the meaning and cause confusion. Otherwise to preserve the features of the original collocation or a text will be impossible.

Roger makes the problem of equivalence very plain:" Texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), in respect pf different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis; collocations. etc) and at the different ranks (word-for-word, sentence-for-sentence)." (1993:6)

As clearly put forward above it is the translation equivalence which must be applied in order to prevent loss of meaning. Although some equivalent translation of collocations are present, to find the right equivalence needs to be more competent on both languages because in some occasions one-word collocation need to be translated with two or three-word collocation in the target language. and to do this translation acquires the translator's competence.

CONCLUSION

We stated that one of the most inevitable sources of loss in translating is due to some collocations in both source and target language. The translator should not ignore the varieties of collocations and the relationships between words. He/she must use his/her language competence while deciding which noun goes with which adjective and what its correct corresponding meaning is in the target language. If there is no corresponding meaning for a collocation of source language in the target language, the best thing a translator should do is that he/she should not translate it and use its original in his translation.

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