

Kryshchal S. M.,

Candidate of Philological Sciences,

Associate Professor at the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation

Donetsk National University

METAPHOR AS A PRODUCT OF LANGUAGE AND THINKING (COMPARING ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN METAPHORS)

Summary. Article studies metaphorical transference involving lexis of a definite thematic type in English and Russian.

Key words: language structural type, metaphor, associations, style restrictions, motivation.

Problem statement. There is a vast literature on metaphor which elucidates different aspects of this multi-faceted phenomenon. The role of extra-linguistic factors in the metaphor-building process is an important approach in the investigation of metaphor. Physical and historical background, physiological experience, cultural surroundings and communal knowledge are the association-shaping factors which are, in their turn, considered to be some of the most important factors stimulating metaphorical transference of a name [1; 2; 3] and others. Common psychological characteristics, typical associations and universal character of human thinking explain why both closely-related and distantly-related languages are often found to share the same or very similar metaphors. For example, almost all European languages have metaphors built on the negatively associated words *left*, *down*, *narrow*, *shallow* etc. and, on the contrary, display «an amazing consensus of opinion which regards the position of «right» positively» [4, p. 250]. As far as differences in the metaphorical development of the words and the metaphors created are concerned it has become traditional to ascribe them to differences in history, culture and knowledge.

Extra-linguistic factors do play a significant role in the metaphorical processes and go some way to helping us understand their logic. However, they do not in themselves provide a complete explanation as to why a certain metaphor is possible in one language and inappropriate in another. The problem of the factors influencing metaphors linguistically has received little attention as compared to extra-linguistic constituents. It would therefore be interesting to trace how one and the same association chain is realized on the structural basis of two different languages. For purpose we studied the metaphorical potential of 30 lexical units, naming deviations from the physiological norm (symptoms) in English and Russian. These include: *bloating*, *bruising*, *chill*, *cough*, *depression*, *dizziness*, *fatigue*, *hiccup*, *indigestion*, *insomnia*, *itch*, *rash*, *stammer* and others.

The main material research. The above group of words is highly revealing in terms of metaphorical transference: the exclusively negative associations they evoke for the speakers suggest that the boundaries of their metaphorical development will be somewhat limited. S. Ullman called such lexemes a taboo, a product of tact [5, p. 282]. However, the study shows that in English there exist no limitations of a psychological-emotional character on the words used as a basis for metaphorical nomination. The words we are examining here develop their basic meanings in accordance with various metaphorical models which have the effect of broadening the nominative powers of a word.

For example, the metaphorical development of the word *cough* (to expel air from the lungs with a sudden sharp sound) is based upon the associations which connect the process of coughing with any process which signals failure in the proper functioning of a system and which is undesirable: *the engine coughed and spluttered into life*; *the company coughed up \$40m in settlement of the legal claims* [OAL].

The word *itch* develops additional meanings following a different metaphorical model: «Words describing deviation from physiological norm → the field of moral or emotional experience, worry and anxiety». The explicitly expressed component «desire to do something» unites semantically the definitions of the word used in its direct and figurative meanings and makes the process of semantic transference clear.

Itch (feeling of irritation on the skin, causing a *desire to scratch*) → *restless desire or longing to do something* [OAL].

The definition of the word in its metaphorical meaning makes it possible to use it as a part of word-combinations to describe various spheres of human activity: *to have an itch for something, to do something; have an itching palm; have itchy feet, the seven-year itch*.

Transparent meaning resulting from motivated metaphorical transference is a distinctive feature of the words belonging to the group studied. Metaphorical transference of the words which mean deviation from a physiological norm is based in most cases upon actually existing, rather than imaginary, similarities, or associations shared by all the members of a language community which contributes to their universal character. Through metaphorical transference, words denoting negative processes in their direct meaning start denoting negative processes in spheres which may be some distance from the initial one. Metaphors built upon the units under studies inherit their negative connotations.

For example, the lexeme *rash*, which in its first direct meaning names spots and papules on a human body, gives metaphorical name to unattractive buildings and in general represents the idea of an unpleasant characteristic or characteristics pertaining to certain phenomena and objects: *a rash of strikes by health-service workers; a rash of ugly new houses*.

The lexeme *bloating* is used to describe a state in which the body accumulates liquids and gases. As a metaphor it names any unreasonable and invalid extension and increase in number (it may concern functions, staff, words, etc.): *bloated bureaucracy, bloated deficit, bloated language*.

The examples cited demonstrate other units naming phenomena belonging to different spheres of human life and knowledge which are united both by similarity and attitude to the things nominated: *hiccup* (sudden involuntary stopping of the breath with a sharp gulp-like sound, often recurring at short intervals) → temporary small problem or stoppage; in financial terminology – slight reduction in price, profit; *nausea* (feeling of sickness) → feeling

Table 1
Metaphorical transference with the words denoting deviation from physiological norm in English and Russian

| | The lexeme denoting deviation from physiological norm | Metaphorical development on the basis of definition | |
|----|---|---|---------|
| | | Languages | |
| | | English | Russian |
| 1 | Belch (regurgitation)/otryzhka | + | - |
| 2 | Bleeding / krvotecheniye | + | - |
| 3 | Bloating (flatulence)/vzdutiye | + | - |
| 4 | Bruising / voznikoveniye synyakov | + | - |
| 5 | Chill/oznob | + | - |
| 6 | Constipation/zapor | + | - |
| 7 | Contraction, cramp/sudoroga | + | + |
| 8 | Convulsion/konvulsiya | + | + |
| 9 | Cough/kashel | + | - |
| 10 | Depression/depressiya | + | + |
| 11 | Dizziness/golovokruzheniye | + | + |
| 12 | Fatigue/ustalost | + | + |
| 13 | Fever/likhoradka | + | + |
| 14 | Hiccup/ikota | + | - |
| 15 | Incontinence/nederzhaniye | + | + |
| 16 | Indigestion/nesvareniye | + | + |
| 17 | Insomnia/bessonitsa | - | - |
| 18 | Itch/zud | + | + |
| 19 | Limp/lame/khromota | + | + |
| 20 | Nausea/toshnota | + | - |
| 21 | Pain/bolh | + | + |
| 22 | Palpitation/uchaschennoye serdzebiyeniye | + | - |
| 23 | Rash/syph | + | - |
| 24 | Short-wind/odyshka | + | - |
| 25 | Stammer/zaikaniye | + | - |
| 26 | Sweating/pootooteleniye | + | - |
| 27 | Swelling/prypukhlost | + | - |
| 28 | Temperature/temperatura | + | + |
| 29 | Tic/tik | + | - |
| 30 | Vomiting/rvota | + | - |

of disgust; *constipation* (a condition in which there is difficulty in emptying the bowels) → a high level of constraint or restriction; a pronounced lack of ease; chill (an unpleasant feeling of coldness in the atmosphere, one's surroundings, or the body) → a coldness of manner; *regurgitation / regurgitate* (bring (swallowed food) up again to the mouth) → repeat (information) without analyzing or comprehending it; *temperature* (a body temperature above the normal) → the degree of excitement or tension in a discussion or confrontation; *fatigue* (extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness) → weakness in metal or other materials caused by repeated variations of stress; *indigestion* (pain or discomfort in the stomach associated with difficulty in digesting food), indigestible (difficult or impossible to digest) → hard to understand.

The following sentence shows the functioning of one of the units in a broader context: «*Fertility stalls are not unknown elsewhere: Argentina's fertility remained at three for decades; South Korea and Costa Rica also experienced hiccups*» [The Economist].

The propensity of the English language to create metaphors on the basis of limitless numbers and groups of words is quite conspicuous; it is a prevalent feature of the language which becomes more obvious still when English is compared to other languages of a different structure.

Out of 30 units nominating deviations from a physiological norm 29 words develop metaphorical meanings in the English language and only 12 in Russian.

The table shows what units are involved in the process of transferring names in English and Russian.

The table illustrates a number of cases where the metaphorical meanings of the words under consideration coincide, but it is important to emphasize that these similarities only concern the formula which is used in both languages to build metaphor. One and the same word spawns far more metaphorical meanings and shades of meaning which are realized within different word-combinations in English than in Russian.

This point can best be illustrated by the lexeme *to limp*.

Metaphors built on the basis of the verb «to limp» serve as an example of motivated metaphor. Metaphorical transference is quite transparent: the verb describing a certain type of action performed by a living being is used to name the same kind of action performed by an inanimate object: *he limped heavily as he moved* → *the badly damaged aircraft limped badly to Sicily* [OAL].

The English adjective *limp* coincides in form with both noun and verb. It is only used metaphorically to denote quality which lacks energy or vigor, or that which is not stiff or firm, different meanings being specified by different word surroundings. For example, *limp day, limp flag, limp handshake, limp binding, limp flowers*.

In English there is another lexeme with a similar meaning – *lame*. The adjective develops its metaphorical meanings in the following word combinations: *lame excuse, lame spring, lame duck, lame-duck session, lame-duck year, lame-duck budget*. The word combinations specify and extend the basic direct meaning of the adjective; as a metaphor *lame* accentuates such qualities as being feeble, unconvincing, uninspiring, dull, poor, weak, halting, and defective.

In Russian the number of word combinations with the *lame/limp* component is limited and their use is stylistically restricted. The only typical model of metaphorical transference is a personification of the names of sciences: *lame mathematics, lame spelling, lame knowledge*.

A style and genre restriction is another significant difference between English and Russian metaphors.

English metaphors effortlessly cross the borders of different genres, while in Russian style restrictions govern both the quantity and quality of metaphorical units. Too many metaphors enhance the degree of expressivity, which is not welcome in certain texts, especially those belonging to «serious» genres.

The word *incontinence* serves as a good example. It develops metaphorical meaning in the Russian language, but its use is restricted – first, by the frames of a phraseological unit whose part it makes (*slovesnoye nederzhaniye* – tendency to talk at length and pointlessly; verbosity) and second by the requirements of style. The word combination has an ironic connotation. The use of the Russian word *nederzhaniye* (incontinence) in its metaphorical meaning is hardly possible, for example, in the context of a serious financial article. In English its use is free from any style restrictions:

The euro has thus obviously not been a perfect cure for governmental incontinence, but it has been a reasonably stable unit of account for the Continent for a decade [The Economist].

It is noteworthy that a proper translation of the given word combination into Russian would require a sentence of a descriptive character: *inability to spend money effectively*.

The comparative study of the metaphorical potential of the words denoting deviations from a physiological norm in English and Russian and the data obtained raises the question of the reasons underlying the extensive and universal character of metaphorical transference in English as compared to Russian. The analysis made suggests that the biggest factors influencing active creation of metaphors in English lie in the nature of the English language itself. There are certain features of the morphological structure of the English language that encourage the process of metaphorical nomination. The most significant of them are scarcity of affixation word-building means, outstanding polysemy of English words and the active role of conversion as a means of word-building.

A characteristic example of conversion as a means of stimulating metaphors is provided by the words *cough, bruise, vomit*. The given words develop metaphorical meanings in their verbal forms which are formed by means of conversion. Through conversion, one and the same word can function as a noun, verb and adjective. Such morphological richness makes the meaning of the word even more diffuse and evocative. Conversion means that in English associations which are connected with object, process, action and quality are concentrated in one form of a word which creates a favorable ground for metaphorical transference.

The metaphor *to bruise* broadens the sphere where injuries are possible from human skin to the sphere of emotions and – further – to any object which can be damaged by a blow or the exertion of pressure: *bruised knee – bruised pride – bruised peaches*.

It is necessary to note that in Russian we deal with three different forms of the words (verbal, attributive and substantive). Furthermore, in some cases the meaning of action is rendered by two or more words, which considerably hampers their functioning as metaphors. For example the meaning of the English verb *to bruise* is rendered into Russian by two lexemes: *to put bruises, be/get covered with bruises*.

Metaphors in English stem from the system of a language which is not rich in affixes. As Professor L.A. Bulakhovsky puts it: «in such languages creativity is mainly directed at finding new metaphors... The boundless field of verbal activity makes up for a certain dryness of the morphological system» [6, p. 359].

Language factors play a crucial role in forming metaphors. However, it would be a mistake to imagine that they are the only driving force behind them. Comparative analysis of the lexical units denoting deviation from a physical norm in English and Russian reveals that Russian words do not develop metaphorical meanings even when there are no obstacles of a linguistic nature.

Native speakers of Russian seem to find metaphorical use of the words naming unpleasant human bodily functions incongruous and inconceivable. There are barriers, including aesthetic ones, which block the appearance of certain types of metaphors. The structural type of the language, metaphor as its constituent element, and mentality seem to be interconnected and interdependent: the structural type of language encourages and shapes metaphors while metaphors in their turn tune the mind in to figurative nomination. In other words «material organization of the system fosters spiritual proclivity for a particular kind of expression» [7, p. 235]. Analysis carried out on the basis of the group of words used as examples here demonstrates the ability of the English language to use any lexis as a basis for metaphorical nomination. As distinct from English, Russian is rather

selective in the choice of bases for transference, which makes most original English metaphors difficult to render in any literal sense into Russian because of the inadmissibility of the imagery used.

The comparative study of metaphors and differences discovered raises some issues of great practical importance: namely, problems associated with translation. The availability of certain language phenomena in one language and their absence in the other, or a different degree of this availability, makes their translation a tricky translation problem. Most English metaphors based on the words naming deviation from a physiological norm do not find metaphorical correspondence in Russian and their meaning is rendered with the help of neutral non-metaphorical words or descriptive word-combinations. For example, the word *hiccup* in the sentence «*Those other incidents could be dismissed as hiccups*» is translated as *sboj*, which corresponds to «setbacks», «insignificant problems». The idea which the word *regurgitate* implies, as in the sentence «*He is simply regurgitating the stuff remembered from lectures*» is rendered with the help of the word combination «*bezumno povtoriyet*» – repeats uncritically.

Exclusively neutral non-imagery translation would be considered appropriate in the case of such metaphors as those given in the following sentences taken from the Economist:

Over the last decade, Greece went on a debt binge that came crashing to an end in late 2009.

Government's 2 million kiss of life for the ailing cotton industry.

The first step toward imposing such discipline would be a Greek default with haircuts for creditors.

Why does the Obama Administration insist on obtaining a symbolic and toothless U.N. resolution?

It should be noted that metaphors found within genres different from those making up the belles-lettres (scientific articles, newspaper articles, terminological systems etc.) are the most difficult cases for translation from English into Russian because they appear to be alien elements within systems whose style requirements are rather strict.

English metaphorical terms serve as a good example. It is generally recognized that the most natural way for them to enter the terminological system of the Russian language is in the form of material adoption (transcribing or transliterating) and explanatory translation, which considerably increases the number of components.

We may add that semantic transference of the processes taking place in a human body onto the subjects and phenomena from different fields and spheres of human knowledge presents one of the most popular metaphorical models in any language. A characteristic example of this is a financial system where anthropomorphic metaphors are routinely employed to define and characterize phenomena. Here are some examples from the Economist:

The European Central Bank unveiled new measures to support banks and prevent a credit crunch from sweeping the euro zone, but stopped short of cutting interest rates to spur an anemic economy, citing too-high inflation.

Insee's forecasts, now more in line with the government's outlook for the year, show the French economy will be on shaky footing at the end of this year.

The Basel Committee knew putting such a heavy burden on banks could jeopardize the recovery.

Unable to devalue its currency and with its economy spiraling down, officials are pinning their hopes on longer-term measures like the reform of Greece's sclerotic labor markets.

Conclusions. Focusing on a concrete group of lexis enables us to make a detailed and accurate analysis of the phenomenon under study. Having described metaphors created on the basis of the words naming symptoms in English and Russian, we must conclude that

the same associations may give rise to different metaphors in different languages. The qualitative and quantitative analyses undertaken in this study reveal that metaphorical transference is a much more active way of nomination and thinking in English than in Russian. The reasons for this are rooted in the grammatical structure of the English language, which determines the number and shapes quality of metaphors. The predominance of metaphor in English is an important factor to be taken into account in the process of translation into Russian, as the stylistic requirements of the target language must be carefully evaluated.

Literature:

1. Lakoff G., Jonsen M. *Metaphors we live by* / G. Lakoff., M. Jonsen. – London : The University of Chicago Press, 2003. – 192 p.
2. Black M. *Models and Metaphors* / M. Black // *Studies in language and philosophy*. Ithaca. – New York, 1965. – P. 39–41.
3. Richards I.A. *The philosophy of Rhetoric* // I.A. Richards. – New York, 1965. – 284 p.
4. Корнилов О.А. Языковые картины мира как производные национальных менталитетов / О.А. Корнилов. – М. : ЧеРо, 2003. – 349 с.
5. Ульман С. Семантические универсалии / С. Ульман // *Новое в зарубежной лингвистике*. – 1970. – Вып 5. – С. 250–299.
6. Булаховський Л.А. Загальне мовознавство / Л.А. Булаховський // *Вибрані праці* : в 5 т. – Т. 1. – 1975. – 496 с.

7. Степанов Ю.С. Французская стилистика (в сравнении с русской) / Ю.С. Степанов. – М. : Едиториал УРСС, 2002. – 360 с.
8. OAL – Hornby A.S. *Advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. – Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1989. – 1579 p.
9. *The Economist*. – 2013. – September, 28th, October 4th.
10. *The Economist*. – 2013. – May, 25th – 31st.
11. *The Economist*. – 2014. – January, 18th – 24th.

Кришталь С. М. Послання лінгвістичного та екстралінгвістичного у метафорі (на базі метафор в англійській та російській мовах)

Анотація. У статті вивчаються особливості метафоричного перенесення в англійській і російській мовах на базі лексики конкретної тематичної групи.

Ключові слова: структурний тип мови, метафора, асоціації, стильові обмеження, мотивація.

Кришталь С. М. Объединение лингвистического и экстралингвистического в метафоре (на основе английских и русских метафор)

Аннотация. В статье изучаются особенности метафорического переноса в английском и русском языках на базе лексики конкретной тематической группы.

Ключевые слова: структурный тип языка, метафора, ассоциации, стилевые ограничения, мотивация.