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Difficult words to translate into other languages (on the material of the Azerbaijani, English and Russian languages)

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Abstract

Language and culture are closely related to each other and one can't exist without the other. Culture influences on language and it's impossible to understand language without culture. In translation process it's mentioned about at least two languages: source language (SL) and target language (TL). We learn the culture, history, interests and beliefs of a certain nation with the help of texts (mainly literary texts). There may be untranslatable parts of text, but generally speaking, all texts can be translated. Words which act as an obstacle in translation process are called variously by different linguists: "white spots" on the semantic map of a language, non-equivalent lexical unit, reality, emptiness, gap etc. In literary translation we come across realities, i.e. words and expressions, which represent customs and traditions, beliefs, lifestyle, cultural-historical development of a concrete ethnos. Realities are included in non-equivalent lexical units. They cause the formation of "vacancy" or "gap", i.e. lacuna in TL. Lacunas appear only in comparison of two languages and cultures. Lacunar unit and lacuna form the category of lacunarity. Lacunas were first introduced by Canadian linguists J.P.Vine and J.Darbelne. Generally speaking, lacunas, the typology of lacunas and methods of their elimination were best researched by Russian scholars and well-known linguists such as G. Bykova, V. Gak, I. Markovina, A. Sorokin, I. Sternin, V. L. Muravyov, O. A. Ogurtsova, Z. D. Popova and others. There are several classifications of lacunas in linguistics. According to well-known Russian linguist V.L.Muravyov's classification, there are linguistic and ethnographic lacunas in linguistics. At the same time, linguistic lacunas are subdivided into absolute, relative, vector and stylistical lacunas. Ethnographic lacunas are subdivided into absolute ethnographic, relative ethnographic, vector ethnographic and associative ethnographic lacunas. According to Russian linguists I. Sternin and Z. D. Popova's classification there are different types of lacunas such as motivated and non-motivated lacunas, concrete and abstract lacunas, general and special lacunas, interlingual and intralingual lacunas and

lacunas related with parts of speech. In this research project we have mentioned about motivated and non-motivated lacunas. Motivated lacunas are related with the reality that belongs to one of the comparative languages. In this case, we observe lacuna in another language. Let's look through several examples: щи (shchi) – a Russian-style cabbage soup, “матрёшка” (matryoshka) - a set of wooden dolls, “pudding” – a traditional English food, Yorkshire pudding (Yorqşir pudinqi) – a type of pudding which is made mainly with flour, eggs, water or milk, Gaelic coffee/Irish coffee (İrland qəhvəsi) – a type of drink made with İrland viskey, sugar, coffee and cream, “piti” - national Azerbaijani soup, prepared using mutton, vegetables and chickpeas, “kəlağayı” (kelaghayı) - a traditional Azerbaijani women's headgear. These words have no equivalent, they form lacunas and are transliterated or transcribed into TL. In non-motivated lacunas situation is a bit different. Any notion or idea may exist in both comparative languages, but due to the historical-cultural or any other reason, native speakers of one of these languages haven't called or considered it important to call this notion. In English the verb “to marry” is used both for men and women. But in Azerbaijani the verb “ərə getmək” is used for women and “evlənmək” for men. The situation is the same in Russian: two different verbs “выйти замуж” (for women) and “жениться” (for men) are used instead of “to marry”. The Russian word «хамство» which means «хамское поведение, хамский поступок» has a special colouring in Russian. Depending on context it may be translated into Azerbaijani as “kəbudluq, qanmazlıq, ədəbsizlik, heyvanlıq”, English as “boorishness, rudeness, impoliteness”. But none of these words has the same meaning with «хамство». So this word forms lacuna in target languages while translating. In Russian the man who loves only one and the same woman during his life is called «однолюб», and in the same way, the woman who loves one and the same man during her life is called «однолюбка». The word «однолюб» may be translated into Azerbaijani as “ömründə ancaq bir qadını sevən, ömründə ancaq bir qadına məhəbbət bağlayan kişi”, and the word «однолюбка» as “ömründə ancaq bir kişini sevən, ancaq bir kişiyə məhəbbət bağlayan qadın”. In the given example, Russian words form lacuna in the Azerbaijani and English languages.

Keywords: language, culture, realia, lacuna, motivated and non-motivated lacuna.

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Introduction

Translation is a process of formation the equivalent of the original text in the target language. The main aim of translation is to keep the maximum equivalence between original and target texts. If both texts are able to make the same impression on readers, it is accepted as a successful translation. **Source language** (ST) and **target language** (TL), respectively **source text** (ST) and **target text** (TT) are used in the translation process. Source and target languages together are called as **working languages of translation**. The source language is a passive language, but the target language is an active language. There are two forms of translation: **written** and **oral translation**. If translation is performed in a written form, it is considered as written translation, if it is performed orally, it is considered as oral translation. Both forms have their own peculiarities and difficulties in translation. Each form of translation demands special skills from translator. Another important classification is related with the theme of the source text. According to this classification there are 2 types of translation: literary and informative translation. **Literary translation** is a translation of literary texts (poems, novels, stories, plays etc.), **informative translation**, vice-versa, is a translation of non-literary texts (scientific and technical texts, official papers, judicial documents, advertisements, film scripts etc.). There are lots of important issues discussed in translation and plenty of articles and books are written about them. One of actual problems of translation is about words which make it difficult to translate from one language into other language. Actually it is a wide notion. It is possible to include different types of words in this group. One of these groups includes realities which belong to a certain language and culture. Realities are words which express the names of national food and drinks, national clothes, musical instruments, national currency, names of national dances etc. They have no equivalent in other languages. Realities are translated with the help of translation techniques such as **transliteration**, **transcription**, **calque**, **descriptive translation**, **analogue substitution**. They form "vacancy" or "gap", i.e. **lacuna** in TL. Different types of lacunas are given in linguistics.

V.L.Muravyov divided them into **linguistic** and **ethnographic lacunas**. (9, p.147) According to I. Sternin and Z. D. Popova's classification there are following types of lacunas: **motivated** and **non-motivated lacunas, concrete** and **abstract lacunas, general** and **special lacunas, interlingual** and **intralingual lacunas** and **lacunas related with parts of speech**. (6, p. 93)

As realities given below are non-equivalent words, they make the translation process difficult. Such realities form motivated lacunas in other languages. Let's look through such examples:

1. **"Narşərab"** (nar+şərab) – it is an Azerbaijani reality and belongs to the national Azerbaijani cuisine. "Narşərab" is made of pomegranate juice and its flavor is sour. This traditional sauce, which is full of vitamins, is mainly used with meat and fish dishes, also in different salads. Being Azerbaijani reality this word has no equivalent in the English and Russian languages. It is translated into English as "narsharab" and into Russian as «наршараб» with the help of transliteration method.
2. Words such as **"tar"**, **"kamança"**, **"nağara"**, **"balaban"**, **"qarmon"**, **"tütək"**, **"zurna"** etc. are the national Azerbaijani musical instruments. As they are Azerbaijani realities, they have no equivalent in other languages. "Tar" is a long-necked string musical instrument and is transliterated into Russian as «тар», into English as "tar". "Kamança" is four-string instrument performed with kaman. It is often decorated with bone and mother-of-pearl. "Kamança" is transliterated into Russian as «кеманча», into English as "kamancha". Azerbaijani "naghara" is one of such national instruments. It is placed under the arm and beaten with the hands.
3. **«Сарафан»** and **«КОКОШНИК»** - both of these words belong to the Russian culture. «Сарафан» (literally, from head to feet) is a traditional long, trapeze-shaped jumper dress for girls and women. Actually it is taken from the Persian language. (16) The word «сарафан» went under different names such as "feryaz" and "klinnik". «Сарафан» is transliterated both into English and Azerbaijani as "sarafan". Both languages use the Latin script, so this word is the same in English and Azerbaijani. «КОКОШНИК» is a head-dress usually worn with «сарафан». This word comes from the Old Slavic «кокош» (hen/cockerel). (17) The word is transliterated into English as **"kokoshnik"**

Difficult Words to Translate into Other Languages (on the Material of the
Azerbaijani, English and Russian Languages)

and into Azerbaijani as **"kokoşnik"**. Young women used to wear «жемчужный кокошник» ("pearl kokoshnik") in their wedding day, then until the birth of their first child. Afterwards they used to wear it only on holidays and special days. Nowadays, only when performing national Russian dances girls and women wear «сарафан» and «кокошник».

4. **«Балалайка»** is a Russian stringed musical instrument. This is the most outstanding and oldest musical symbol of Russia. Alexander III ordered the Andrievsky band to attend Parisian exhibition. For the first time Europe could see and hear balalaika in Paris. The length of this instrument is 60-70 centimeters. It has only three strings. It was also possible to see two stringed balalaikas before. There are different presumptions about the etymology of this word. According to one of these variants, the word is taken from Russian words **«балакать»** or **«балаболить»**. Defenders of eastern origin think that it is taken from the Turkish word **"bala"** (18). As it's a Russian national musical instrument, it doesn't have any counterpart in other languages. **«Балалайка»** is translated into Azerbaijani as "balalayka" and English as "balalaika" with the help of transliteration.

5. **"Gretna Green marriage"** – is a British reality which means "an easy way of marriage". "Gretna Green" is a village located on English-Scottish border. According to the 1754 Marriage Act, in England and Wales couples under the age of 21 couldn't get married without their parents' consent. (19) It was carried a sentence of 14 years transportation for anyone who broke this rule. It's very interesting that the rules were in Scotland. In this country anyone over the age of 15 could marry without such consent. Nowadays, the legal minimum age to marry in England and Wales is 16 years, but again parents' permission is needed. In Scotland the minimum age is also 16, although as in the past parents' permission isn't necessary. So young people who wanted to marry easily used to visit Gretna Green. "Gretna Green marriage" is translated into Russian as **«свадьба в Гретна-Грин»**, into Azerbaijani as **"Qretna Qrin evliliyi"**. In this case the technique of half-calque is used to translate this expression. The name of the village is transliterated and direct equivalents of the word "marriage" are found in Russian and Azerbaijani.

As we see translation of realities makes difficulties for translators and except using translating techniques such as transliteration, transcription or calque, it's very important to give explanation of this reality in footnote or endnote. In all languages there is another group of words which troubles translators. Sometimes any notion or idea may exist in both comparative languages, but due to the historical-cultural or any other reason, native speakers of one of these languages haven't called or considered it important to call this notion. Words given below form **non-motivated lacunas** in other languages. Let's look through some of such words:

1. **"Quarter"**. This word is of Latin origin. It was taken from the word **"quartarius"** and was used in Old French as **"quartier"**, in Middle English as **"quarter"**. (15) In the "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary" (7th edition) following meanings of this word are given: **one of four equal parts of sth.** (nəyinsə dörd bərabər yərə bölünmüş hissələrindən biri); **a period of 15 minutes either before or after every hour** (bir saatın 1/4 -i, yəni 15 dəqiqə); **a period of 3 months, used especially as a period for which bills are paid or a company's income is calculated** (şirkətlərdə bir ildə dörd dəfə, yəni üç aydan bir aparılan maliyyə hesabatlarının vaxtalarını ifadə edir-Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4); **a district or part of a town** (sahə, rayon); **a coin of the US and Canada worth 25 cents** (Amerika və Kanadada 25 sentə bərabər qəpik pul); **a unit for measuring weight** (çəki vahidi); **pity that somebody shows towards an enemy or opponent who is in their power** (düşməyə, rəqibə göstərilən mərhəmət) etc.(13, p. 1234)

In English-Azerbaijani dictionary this word is translated into Azerbaijani in this way: **çərək, çətvər** (yəni dördüdə bir hissə); **kvartal, üçaylıq; rüb** (məktəbdə); **dolların dördüdə biri, 25 sent; dördüzlü tir/dirək; çəkmənin, ayaqqabının dalı; məhəllə, sahə, rayon; dünyanın cəhətləri, dünyanın/kainatın bir hissəsi/tərəfi; yer, tərəf, guşə; aman, rəhm, mərhəmət** etc. (1, p. 910)

The notion of **"a period of 15 minutes or ¼ of an hour"** exists in all languages, but in some languages there isn't any special word to call this notion. Let's look through given examples:

- Mən hər səhər beşə **on beş dəqiqə** qalmış oyanıram. (in Azerbaijani)

Difficult Words to Translate into Other Languages (on the Material of the Azerbaijani, English and Russian Languages)

- Ben her gün beşe **çeyrek** kala kalkıyorum. (in Turkish)
- Я просыпаюсь без **четверти** пять каждое утро. (in Russian)
- I get up at **quarter** to five every morning. (in English)
- Ich stehe jeden morgens um **Viertel** vor Fünf auf. (in German)

As we see, only in Azerbaijani there isn't any special word to call this notion.

2. **"Fortnight"** – This word is given as **"a period of two weeks"** in the "Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary". (12, p. 292) In Old English it was used as "feowertyne niht", in Middle English as "fourteniht". (15) This word was formed from the word combination **"fourteen nights"**. In English-Azerbaijani dictionary this word is translated into our language as **"iki həftə, on dörd gün"**. (1, p. 497) In both languages we have the same notion and meaning. But in Azerbaijani there doesn't exist any single word to call this notion.

3. **"earworm"** – This word is borrowed from German and it exists in the German language as **"der Ohrwurm"**. (15) In the "Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary" its definition is given as **"a song that you keep hearing in your head"**. (12, p. 227) An earworm is a tune or piece of music that sticks and always repeats in your mind. Literally this word may be translated into Azerbaijani as **"qulaq qurdu"**. There isn't any word to call this notion or idea in Azerbaijani. This word needs extra explanation in our language.

It's possible to give plenty of words which troubles translators. In linguistics realities and other non-equivalent lexical units cause the formation of "vacancy" or "gap", i.e. **lacuna** in target language. The interpretation of lacunas, their different classifications and the elimination of lacunas are very important issues for modern linguistics and translation studies.

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