

WHEN TRANSLATION GOES WRONG: TRANSLATING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to illuminate specificities of literary translation focusing on translating idiomatic expressions as highly expressive parts of the lexicon with a strong connotative dimension. More specifically, the paper will outline problems which arise when idiomatic expressions are translated inappropriately and the ways in which these situations affect the translation itself. The methodology of the research includes a corpus based study of examples as well as a comparative analysis of inappropriately translated idiomatic expressions from English into Macedonian with an emphasis on the effects and influences which they have on the translation and its overall stylistic dimension. Ultimately, this paper will also provide guidelines for overcoming translation problems with an educational purpose – to raise the awareness of what literary translation really means and the standards that it should meet.

Key words: original, translation, style, connotative meaning, idiomatic expression, stylistic effect

Introduction

Literary translation and the challenges it poses to translators have always been a vital issue. To translate a literary text and to make a translation which has the necessary stylistic effect on the reader, who will be able to assess it as ‘readable and smooth’, is far from an easy task. On the contrary, it is an intricate procedure which requires mastery of languages and cultures as well as quality of being a creator and an artist, bearing in mind that literary texts have distinctive aesthetic and communicative dimension. This dimension is essential and it should by all means be reflected in the translation itself.

Recognition of the stylistic dimension of the original and its appropriate rendering into the target language will ensure a high-quality translation which appeals to the reading audience. Therefore, tackling and discussing issues and challenges related to literary translation as well as suggesting guidelines for overcoming them is of prime importance.

1. Style – an important dimension of a literary text

Apart from specific use of language (Eagleton, 2008: 9; Leech and Short, 1981: 2; Parks, 1998: 9) and foregrounding (Leech, 1969: 57, Михајловски, 2007: 78-79), which are both intended to ensure artistic effect, literary texts have another vital feature – **the style**. The concept of style has always been in the spotlight of the intellectual thought and the attempts to define it are numerous. Plato’s reflections on style reveal that he considered it to be “the distinctiveness or the quality of the literary work” (Минова-Ѓуркова, 2003:11); for Buffon it

is “the man himself”, while according to Leo Spitzer “it is the expression of the author’s individuality”(ibid).

According to Crystal and Davy, “style may refer to some or all of the language habits of one person – as when we talk of the style of Joyce, but more often it refers to a selection of language habits, the occasional stylistic idiosyncrasies which characterize an individual’s uniqueness” (Crystal and Davy, 1969:9).

For Leech and Short style refers to “the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a specific purpose” (Leech and Short, 1981:10-11).

When it comes to ‘measuring’ the style of an artistic work, Leech and Short explain that style is restricted to choices of *manner* rather than *matter*, of *expression* rather than *content* (Leech and Short, 1981:15-16). The author is consciously motivated to prefer particular linguistic choices to others depending on the function or the meaning he/she wants to create. All linguistic choices have a specific meaning and stylistic function and they are intended to produce an artistic effect upon the reader (ibid).

Leech and Short explain that “style is regarded as a function of frequency and prominence. To find out what is distinctive about certain corpus or text we work out the frequency of the features it contains and then measure these figures against equivalent figures which are ‘normal’ for the language in question. The style is measured in terms of deviations – either higher or lower frequencies – from the norm (ibid: 43). Prominence is considered to be the phenomenon of linguistic highlighting, which is the basis for a reader’s subjective recognition of a style. A feature is prominent if it draws the reader’s attention” (ibid: 48).

2. Style and translation

To translate a literary work means not only to convey the content from one language to another, but also to transfer the manner in which the content is communicated from the source to the target language in order to create maximum stylistic and artistic effect on the reader. Since style is an essential element of the original it is logical to conclude that it is also of vital importance for the translation process.

When it comes to style and translation, “the translator should pay attention to what is unique to the text and the words in it, he should be aware of the schemes in the text and to bear in mind the function of the text. To pay attention to style in translation means to consider how all these factors are reflected in the text and then in its translation” (Boase Beier, 2006:2).

Style is one of the main components of the uniqueness of the literary translation; “it can make a difference between a lively, highly readable translation and a stilted and artificial text that strips the original of its artistic and aesthetic essence – its soul” (Landers, 2001:7). Consequently, the key point is “how to perceive the style of the source text and how its effect is conveyed or changed and to what extent it is preserved in the translation (Boase Beier, 2006:5).

This viewpoint accentuates the reader and is cognitive role when it comes to understanding a text, which then determines how he/she will experience the effect of the original and to what extent it had been preserved in the translation (ibid:6).

3. Idiomatic expressions as an important stylistic feature of the source text

Idiomatic expressions belong to the group of words which have emotional and expressive nuances. Speaking of various types of fixed word combinations and expressions, Boyadziev defines idioms as “expressions which occur as a result of assigning new meaning to free word combinations. They are used in speech to add expressiveness to what is being communicated” (Бояджиев, 2002: 302). Furthermore, he explains that “the lexical units of which idioms are composed do not motivate their phraseological meaning; it is enormously complex and it encompasses several aspects reflecting both denotative and connotative dimensions. Hence, most idiomatic expressions have a highly expressed emotional and expressive function rather than a basic nominative function (ibid: 306-307).

Minova-Gjurkova defines idioms as “fixed word combinations which are used as ready-made expressions. They usually consist of several words and the meaning of the whole idiomatic expression does not correspond to the separate meanings of the words it is composed of (Minova-Gjurkova 2003: 146).

According to Fromkin and Rodman, “idiomatic expressions are phrases whose meaning is not predictable on the basis of the meanings of the individual words. These phrases start out as metaphors and are repeated so often that they become fixtures in language” (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2009: 190-192).

Stefanovski defines idioms as “fixed expressions consisting of more than one word whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words” (Stefanovski, 2006: 57).

This means that idiomatic expressions are highly connotative; apart from the denotative meaning, they also have additional stylistic nuances and associative components which serve as a basis for assessment and pragmatic elements dependent on culture and tradition, stereotypes and the ways in which language is used within a society. All these factors make up the expressive stylistic nuance of the idiomatic expressions. The classification of the key components of connotative dimension of expressive lexical units given by Stana Ristic gives the most important elements of connotative dimension of idiomatic expressions (Ристић, 2004:22-23):

- 1) **expressiveness** – this component is most often manifested in semantic structures which express a degree of a certain feature or phenomenon;
- 2) **emotionality** – it serves for expressing an emotional and evaluative attitude towards what is being communicated;
- 3) **assessment** – this component has a social character and it is dependent on the norm. People, their behavior and activities as well as social phenomena are all subject to assessment
- 4) **imagery** – optional component which is based on comparison

4. Analysis of examples

The examples used in the analysis are excerpted from the short story collection “*What We Talk about When We Talk about Love*”¹ from Raymond Carver written in English and its Macedonian translation². The author and his short stories are chosen because of the

¹ Carver, R. (2009). *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. London: Vintage Books

² Карвер, Р. (1990), *За што зборуваме кога зборуваме за љубовта*. Скопје, Култура

authentic language he uses, rich in informal vocabulary and expressions. Carver is one of the leading representatives of minimalism (dirty realism)³. Minimalism as a literary movement has specific characteristics such as very short, terse sentences and colloquial and informal vocabulary and register, by which impression is created on the reader; it depicts the dull, mundane aspects of life of ordinary marginalized people. These specificities convey a strong and powerful message through characters who speak little, but say a lot.

Understandably, these short stories abound with idiomatic expressions. Bearing in mind that recurrent and obvious presence of certain language elements in a text gives an insight into its style (Leech and Short, 1981:34), then the frequent usage of idiomatic expressions in the original can be considered as its stylistic feature⁴.

Since the aim of this paper is to tackle challenges of literary translation focusing on translating idiomatic expressions as highly expressive parts of the lexicon with a strong connotative dimension and to outline problems which occur when they are translated inappropriately, a corpus based study of examples will be carried out as well as an analysis of inappropriately translated idiomatic expressions from English into Macedonian. The effects and influences which they have on the translation and its overall stylistic dimension will be emphasized and discussed and, where necessary, alternative translations will be offered with a view to providing guidelines for overcoming translation problems as well as to raising the awareness of what literary translation means and the standards that it should meet.

Example 1⁵

O: *If the weather was good, they'd be over at Jerry's to barbecue hot dogs and turn the kids loose in the wading pool Jerry had got next **to nothing**, like a lot of other things he got from Mart.*

T: *Ако времето беше убаво, се собираа кај Џери да печат на скара колбаси и да ги остават децата да газат по базенот кој Џери го направи **за многу малку пари**, како и многу други работи кои ги земаше од Март.*

AT: *Кога времето беше убаво, се собираа кај Џери да печат колбаси на скара додека децата лудуваа по базенот кој Џери го направи **речиси за џабе/за ич пари/за мали/евтини пари/за бадијала**, како и многу други работи кои ги земаше од Март.*

According to the Cambridge Dictionary Online, the expression *for nothing* means *free or without paying*.

The analysis shows that the translator diminished the stylistic dimension and the imagery of the expression in the original by using the stylistically neutral *за многу малку пари*, which has the same meaning as the expression in the original but does not possess the necessary stylistic nuance. In Macedonian, there are several idiomatic expressions meaning *free of charge or without paying* such as *за џабе, за бадијала/за ич пари* (Македонска фразеологија со мал фразеолошки речник). There is also another expression, *за евини/мали/ситни пари*, with a slightly different meaning (*very cheap, but it still has a price*), so it is possible to use it in this context, bearing in mind that the pool described in the

³ Dirty realism is a term coined by Bill Bufford. It appears in the 60s and the 70s of the 20th century and it refers to a relatively passive minimalist movement of American short story whose representatives are Raymond Carver, Richard Ford and Tobias Wolff. The laconic prose and the elliptical style in dirty realism originate from Hemingway. (The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English, Cambridge University Press, 1993:260)

⁴ For more detailed information on literary style and how it is measured consult Leech and Short, 1981:43-48 and Crystal and Davy, 1969:12-77.

⁵ In the analysis, O stands for original, T stands for translation, AT stands for alternative translation offered by the author of the paper.

story was *almost* free of charge, meaning that the owner still did pay a certain amount of money for it.

Example 2

O: *But once, in the middle of all this happiness, Bill looked at Jerry and thought how much older Jerry looked, a lot older than twenty-two. By then Jerry was the happy father of two kids and had moved up to assistant manager at Robby's and Carol had one in the oven again.*

T: *Бил погледна во Џери и помисли колку постар изгледа Џери, многу постар одошто е, на дваесет и две години. Тогаш Џери беше среќен татко на две деца и стана помошник управник кај Роби, а Керол пак беше бремена.*

AT: *Тогаш Џери беше среќен татко на две деца и стана помошник управник кај Роби, а и трето дете беше на пат.*

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the expression *to have a bun in the oven* as a humorous, old-fashioned way to say that somebody is *pregnant*. In the original, this expression is used in a modified form, *have one in the oven*, but the contexts indicates the similarity in meaning.

In the Macedonian translation, we come across the stylistically neutral and even slightly formal expression *бремена*, which does not contain the colorfulness of the original expression. The translator failed to find a stylistically more suitable equivalent which should have accentuated the connotative dimension of the original. It is much better to say *дете е на пат* in this context, an expression which is very frequently used in the everyday speech and it is far more expressive than *бремена*; it could be considered as an appropriate translation for the original expression from this example.

Example 3

O: *"The man's going off the deep end," Dad said. "Clear crazy if he don't watch out."*

T: *Човекот е многу вознемирен, " рече тато. „Чиста лудост ако не се чува.“*

AT: *„Човекот жив се изеде/јаде/зи губи нервите/забегува“, рече тато. „Ќе побудали, ако не се чува.“*

According to the Cambridge Dictionary Online, *to go off the deep end* is an informal idiom which means *to suddenly become very angry or emotional over something*.

The analysis shows that by using the stylistically neutral expression *тој е многу вознемирен*, the translator neglects the connotative stylistic aspect of the original. Thus, the translation loses the expressiveness and the imagery which should be its hallmark instead. In Macedonian, there are several idiomatic expression used to express a state of anger or nervousness, such as *жив се јаде/изеде, губи/изгуби нерви* and they mean *to became angry about something* (Македонска фразеологија со мал фразеолошки речник), while in the colloquial register the word *забега* (*to lose mind, control over something, to go crazy*) is very often used. Any from these expressions would be a much more suitable translation in this context because of the expressiveness and vividness they possess.

Example 4

O: *"I'm going," L. D. said. "All right, I'm going right now," he said. "It suits me to a tee. You're nuts here anyway. This is a nuthouse."*

T: „Одам,“ рече Л. Д. „Си одам сега веднаш,“ рече. „Сосема ми одговара. Овде сте лудаци и онака. Ова е лудница.“

AT: Одам“, рече Л. Д. „Си одам сега веднаш“, рече. „Тоа е баш како за мене/баш тоа ми треба/тоа е најдобро за мене/едвај чекам/не ни сакам да останам. Овде сте лудаци и онака. Ова е лудница.“

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines the idiom *to a tee* as an informal expression used to say that *something is exactly right for somebody or that somebody succeeds in doing something in exactly the right way*.

In this example, the translator once again overlooks the stylistic nuance of the original expression by using a stylistically neutral expression *сосема ми одовара*. This expression sounds rather formal and it is very unlikely that anybody would use it in a fierce family quarrel. Macedonian language offers far more expressive translation equivalents in this context such as *баш како за некого, како створено за некого, најдобро за некого*. It would also be useful to change the perspective and to search for more contextual translation solutions like the expression *одвај чека (can hardly wait)* or to use a negation (*не ни сака да остане*).

Example 5

O: *She unbuttoned her coat and put her purse down on the counter. She looked at L.D. and said: “L.D. I’ve had it. So has Rae. So has everyone who knows you. I’ve been thinking it over. I want you out of here. Tonight. This minute. Now. Get the hell out of here right now.”*

T: Го откопчи палтото и ја остави чантата на столчето. Погледна во Л. Д. и рече: „Л. Д. Доста ми беше. И на Реј. И на сите што те знаат. Размислив за тоа. Сакам да си одиш одовде. Вечерва. Овој миг. Сега. По ѓаволите оди си веднаш сега.“

AT: Го откопча палтото и ја остави чантата на шанкот. Погледна во Л. Д. и рече: „Л. Д. Доста ми е. И на Рае. И на сите што те знаат. Размислував. Сакам да си одиш одовде. Вечерва. Овој миг. Сега. Губи се/тргни ми се од пред очи/криши глава оттука/ веднаш сега“.

According to the Cambridge Dictionaries Online, the expression *get the hell out of somewhere* means *to leave a place quickly* and it is used in rather informal situations, like the one in the example above which describes a family quarrel.

In the Macedonian translation, the translator uses the expression *по ѓаволите*, most probably because of the word *hell* from the original expression, and then he combines it with the stylistically neutral *оди си*. This option is justified to a certain extent since the expression *по ѓаволите* is used in Macedonian as a swear-word, although it lacks the necessary expressiveness and frequency of usage. Macedonian language has several other expressions which would be far more suitable in the context above like *зуби се, магла, маглоса, се, да те нема, очи да не ти видам, криши глава, истави/тргни ми се од пред очи* (Македонска фразеологија со мал фразеолошки речник). They all mean *to leave a place quickly*, but they tell it in a very explicit and colorful way.

Example 6

O: *“That’s bingo for tonight,” the woman on the stage proclaimed. “Thank you all for coming. God bless you and good night.”*

T: „Тоа е бинго за вечерва!“ објави жената на бината. „Ви благодарам на сите што дојдовте. Бидете благословени и добра ноќ!“

AT: „Бингото за вечерва заврши!“ објави жената на бината. „Ви благодарам на сите што дојдовте. Да сте живи и здрави/Останете со здравје и добра ноќ.“

According to Cambridge Dictionary Online the expression *God bless (you)* is used *when saying goodbye to someone or to say that you hope good things will happen to them.*

In this case, the translator used the expression *будете благосолвени*, but in Macedonian it is typical for completely different contexts like weddings, christenings or expressions of gratitude for something. It would be more appropriate to use other expressions which are more common when leaving a place or greeting someone like *да сте живи и здрави* or *останете со здравје*.

Example 7

O: *Myrna went to the meetings, and then she went over to Mr. Fixit's house to cook for him and clean up. His kids were no help in this regard. Nobody lifted a hand around Mr. Fixit's house, except my wife when she was there.*

T: *Мирна одеа на состаноци, а потоа одеа во куќата на г. Фиксит, да му готви и да чисти. Неговите деца не биле од никаква полза во тој поглед. Никој не подигал рака во куќата на г. Фиксит, освен жена ми кога била таму.*

AT: *Мирна одеше на состаноци, а потоа одеше во куќата на г. Фиксит, да му готви и да му чисти. Немаше фајде од неговите деца. Никој со прст не мрдаше во куќата на г. Фиксит, освен жена ми кога беше таму.*

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the idiom *not lift/raise a finger/hand to do something* as an expression which means *to do absolutely nothing to help somebody with something*.

In the Macedonian translation, the expression from the original is translated literally with *подига рака*. *Подига рака* in Macedonian sounds awkward in contexts like the one in the example above and it does not contain the necessary meaning and colorfulness. There are other examples which would be more suitable in this context like for example *не мрда со прст, ни со прст не мрда, ни со малиот прст не мрда*, which are far more expressive and stylistically more appropriate.

Example 8

O: *I think maybe Myrna really loved the man. But he also had a little something on the side – a twenty- two- year-old named Beverly. Mr. Fixit did okay for a little guy who wore a button-up sweater.*

T: *Мислам, можеби Мирна навистина го сакаше човекот. Но и тој имаше нешто малечко настрана – една дваесетидвегодишна која се викаше Беверли. Г. Фиксит добро постапуваше како мал човек што носи елек закопчан до вратот.*

AT: *Мислам, можеби Мирна навистина го сакаше човекот. Но и тој се онадеше/се ебаваше со една дваесетидвегодишна која се викаше Беверли. За едно кускуле со џепмер закопчан до гуша, тоа беше супер, не беше лошо.*

According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Idioms, the expression *on the side* means *secretly*. Example 8 describes a secret relationship with another woman.

The sentence *He also had a little something on the side* is literally translated with *И тој имаше нешто малечко настрана*. This sentence is unintelligible in this context and it is confusing for a Macedonian reader. Bearing in mind the informality of the context in the original, the translator should have found a more colloquial and informal translation like for example *онади, се* и *ебава, се* which both mean *to lead a promiscuous life, to seek/have a lot of sexual partners*. They live up to the stylistic standards of the original and, despite of being more explicit, are far more suitable in this context.

Example 9

O: *We are drinking Teacher's with ice and water. We'd slept awhile between morning and afternoon. Then she was out of bed threatening to climb out the window in her undergarments. I had to get her in a hold. We were only two floors up. But even so.*

"I've had it," she goes. "I can't take it anymore."

T: *Пиеме Тичерс со мраз и со вода. Спиевме некое време меѓу утро и попладне. Потоа таа стана од креветот и се закани дека ќе излезе на прозорецот во долна облека. Морав да ја задржам. Бевме само на првиот кат. Но дури и така. „Доста ми беше,” вели таа. „Не можам повеќе“.*

AT: *Бевме на вториот кат. Ама сепак. „Преку глава/нос ми е“, вели таа.*

The idiomatic expression *to have had it* has several meanings, but in the example above it means *to be unable to accept or tolerate a situation any longer* (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

In the Macedonian translation, the expression is translated literally with *доста ми беше*, which is wrong because the present perfect tense from the expression does not refer to the past (In Macedonian *беше* is past tense of *to be*), but to the time up to the moment of speaking and it stresses that the speaker tolerated the situation up to the moment indicated in the example but not any longer. This is one of the main usages of the present perfect tense in English (Hewings, 2005:6) and the translator seems to have ignored it. He should have used the expression in the present tense instead (*доста е/ми е*) or he should have sought for more stylistically nuanced translations like for example *дојде преку глава/нос, дојде до гуша/нос* etc.

Example 10

O: *But we had stopped caring, and that's a fact. We knew our days were numbered. We had fouled our lives and we were getting ready for a shake-up.*

T: *Но нам веќе не ни беше гајле, и тоа е факт. Знаевме дека деновите ни се изборени. Ги заплеткавме животите и се готвевме за стресување.*

AT: *Но нам веќе не ни беше гајле, и тоа е факт. Знаевме дека маф ни е работата/го обравме бостанот. Ги заплеткавме животите и се готвевме за она што следува.*

According to The Cambridge Dictionary of Idioms if *someone's or something's days are numbered they will not exist for much longer*.

The translator uses the expression *деновите се изброени некому*, which is borrowed in Macedonian from English. For a Macedonian, this expressions sound rather awkward and it would be more appropriate to use other more colorful expressions such as *готов е, печен е, маф му е работата, го обра бостанот* or others with a similar meaning and stylistic dimension (Македонско-англиски речник на идиоми).

Example 11

O: *The brunette glanced back onto the highway. It seemed to Jerry that she was looking at him in the right kind of way. But with a girl you could never be sure. "We'll be seeing you!" Bill said as they went speeding by. "It's in the bag," Jerry said. "You see the look that cunt gave me?" "I don't know," Bill said.*

T: Црнката погледна назад. На Цери му се стори дека гледа во него како што треба. Но со девојка човек никогаш не може да биде сигурен.

„Ќе се видиме!“ викна Бил додека брзо поминуваа.

„Ја **имам в торба**,“ рече Цери. Го виде погледот што ми го упати таа чанта?“

„Не знам,“ рече Бил.

AT: „Ќе се видиме!“ викна Бил додека брзо поминуваа. „Ја **имам/печена е/моја е**,“ рече Цери.

As it is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary of Idioms, **if something is in the bag, you are certain to get it or to achieve it**. In the example above, the character from the story is certain that the girl he is talking about likes him.

The translator once again translated the original literally with **ја имам в чанта**. The expression **ја имам в чанта** sounds ridiculous in the context given in the original. An expression with similar meaning to **it's in the bag** could be **има нешто в џеб**, while there are other more colloquial idioms which could be taken as stylistically appropriate in this context like for example **моја е, ја имам, печена е, завршена работа etc.** (Македонско-англиски речник на идиоми).

Example 12

O: *Me, I held on to the night job. A monkey could do that work. But things were going downhill fast. We just **didn't have the heart for** it anymore.*

T: *Јас па се држев за ноќната работа. Мајмун може да ја врши таа работа. Но, работите овде брзо одеа надолу. Просто веќе **немавме срце** за ништо.*

AT: *Јас па се држев за ноќната работа. И мајмун може да ја работи таа работа. Но, работите овде брзо одеа надолу. Просто **веќе не ни беше до ништо/немавме кеиџ за ништо**.*

According to The Free Dictionary and Thesaurus, the expression **to have/not have the heart to do something** means **to not have the necessary willingness or strength to do something**. The expression is usually used in negative contexts.

The translator used the expression **нема срце (за нешто)**, most probably relying too much on the original, but in Macedonian this expression is used with a different meaning (**when someone is not capable of doing something or does not have the courage to do something**). There are other, more appropriate expressions in Macedonian which would serve as better translations in this case like for example **не му е до ништо/нема кеиџ за нешто** etc.

Example 13

O: *“**Keep you nose out of** things you don't know anything about,” said L.D. “I can't take anybody seriously who sits around all day reading astrology magazines.”*

T: *„**Држи си го носот подалеку** од работите за кои не знаеш ништо,“ рече Л. Д. „Не можам да го сфатам сериозно никого што по цел ден седи и чита списанија по астрологија.“*

AT: *„**Не никај го носот/не мешај се/не плеткај** се во работи за кои не знаеш ништо“, рече Л. Д.*

According to The Cambridge Dictionary Online, **to keep your nose out of something** means **to not become involved in other people's activities or relationships**.

It can be noticed that the expression from the original is literally translated in Macedonian with the expression **го држи носот подалеку од (нешто)**. This expression is

understandable for a Macedonian reader, but it is not a fixed expression with regular usage, which is why it sounds rather awkward and unnatural. There are fixed expressions which mean *become involved in other people's activities or relationships* such as *ника нос (секаде), се меша/плетка во нешто* or, more freely, *во секоја манџа е мирудија* (Македонска фразеологија со мал фразеолошки речник); their connotative dimension is stronger, making them better solutions in this context.

Example 14

O: *“That fellow over there who has our place is cheating. I can't believe my eyes,” James said.*

T: *„Оној тип онаму што ги зазел нашите места мами. Не можам да им поверувам на очиве,“ рече Џемс.*

AT: *„Оној тип онаму што ги зазел нашите места мами. Не ми се верува/да видиш да не верувам“; рече Џемс.*

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the idiom *not believe your eyes/ears* as an expression which *means to be so surprised by what you see or hear that you think you are imagining it.*

This idiomatic expression is translated literally in the Macedonian version of the story with *не можам да им поверувам на очиве*, which in Macedonian sounds rigid and unnatural because it is rarely used in such a form to describe a situation where somebody is surprised at what they see or hear. When somebody is very much surprised by what they see or hear, in Macedonian they would say *не ми се верува, да видиш да не верувам*. These are fixed expressions with regular use in Macedonian and are quite expressive, which makes them better translations in this case.

Example 15

O: *He saw the couple stop at the van. Of course. He should have put two and two together. “The dumbbell,” James Packer said.*

T: *Ја виде двојката како застана кај комбито. Се разбира. Требаше да собере колку се два и два. „Глупак,“ рече Џемс Пекер.*

AT: *Ја виде двојката како застана кај комбито. Се разбира. Јасно беше како два и два/како бел ден/требаше да сфати колку е саатот.*

The idiomatic expression *to put two and two together* in English means *to guess the truth about a situation from what you have seen or heard* (Cambridge Dictionary Online).

In the Macedonian version of the story, the original expression is translated literally with the expression *собере два и два*. A Macedonian reader would understand this expression, but like in some of the previous cases, it sounds awkward and artificial. Expressions like *јасно е како два и два (to refer to something which is very clear), виде колку е саатот (to understand what is happening), јасно како бел ден (very clear)* etc. can be considered as better and more suitable translation equivalents in this context (Македонска фразеологија со мал фразеолошки речник).

Example 16

O: *Laura is a legal secretary. We'd met in a professional capacity. Before we know it, it was courtship.*

T: Лора е секретарка на еден адвокат. Така и се запознавме. Пред да го знаеме тоа, почна додворување.

AT: Лора работи како секретарка кај адвокат. Така и се запознавме. Додека да трепнеш, почна додворувањето.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary the idiomatic expression *before you know it* means *very soon*.

The analysis of the example shows that the original expression is translated literally with *пред да го знаеме тоа*, which sounds strange and unusual in Macedonian and it spoils the dialogue by making it less colorful. For creating a maximum stylistic effect upon the reader, it would be much more appropriate to use an expression which means *quickly* and which is regularly used in every-day situations like for example *додека да трепнеш*. It is much more colloquial and colorful and it is regularly used in Macedonian.

5. Discussion

After having analysed the examples of inappropriately translated idiomatic expressions from English into Macedonian, attention will be paid on the effects these unsuccessful translation have on the quality of the translation itself.

Table 1
Effects on translation

Effect	Number of cases	Percentage
Loss of meaning	9	56.3%
Minimisation of stylistic dimension	5	31.2%
Inappropriate meaning in context	2	12.5%
Total	16	100%

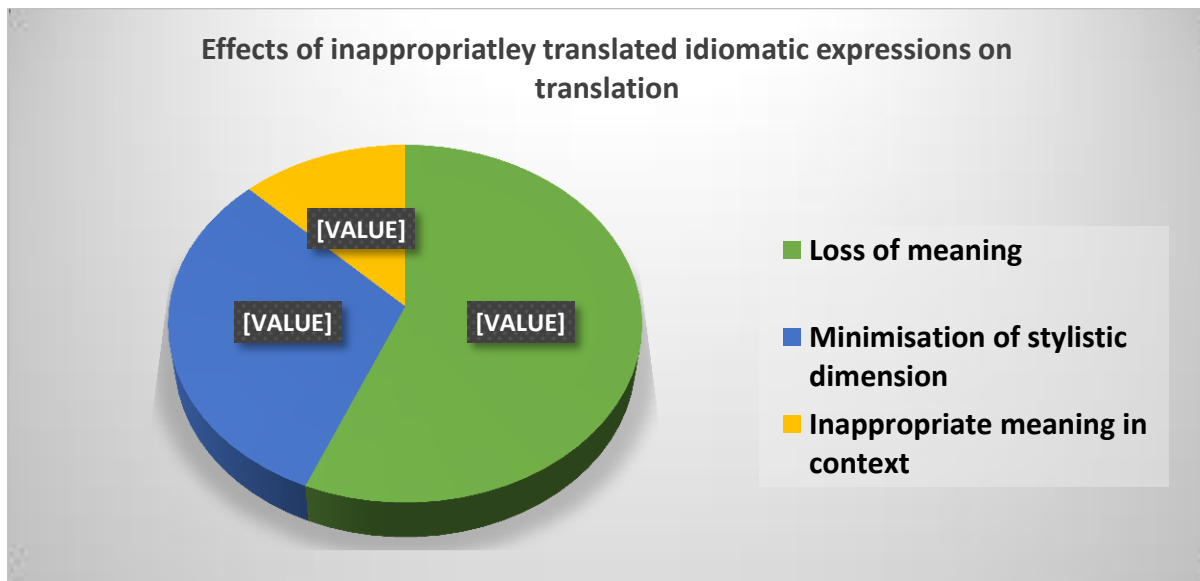
The analysis show that when it comes to how inappropriately translated idiomatic expression affect the translation itself, three effects can be perceived and they are shown in Table 1 above. It can be noticed that most of the analysed examples of inappropriate translations result in **loss of meaning in the translation** (56.3%); two other effects are also evident in the translation such as **minimisation of stylistic dimension** (31.2%) and **inappropriate meaning in context** (12.5%).

In most of the analysed examples, it can be noticed that the idiomatic expressions are translated literally, which means that the translator changed the overall context and did not keep the meaning from the original in the translation. Hence, the translation abounds in ridiculous constructions and expressions which impair the reading and make the whole impression about the story unusual and strange. Thus, idiomatic expressions lose their coloring and their expressiveness, which are their most important elements; this tendency has a considerable influence on the translation itself and negatively affects the overall stylistic impression on the reader. Cases of minimised stylistic value and inappropriate meaning in context can also be noticed in the translation, which comes as a result of overlooking the stylistic dimension of the original.

Chart 1 shows that when it comes to inappropriately translated idioms, the effect of loss of meaning is more prevalent than the other two. This indicates that in cases like these,

the translation loses a considerable amount of meaning, sense and expressiveness and does not meet the necessary stylistic standards.

Chart 1



6. Conclusion

When it comes to the way in which inappropriately translated idioms influence the translation itself, the analysis shows that three effects are evident: loss of meaning, minimization of stylistic dimension and inappropriate meaning in context.

This means that when idiomatic expressions are translated literally the context and their connotative dimension, which is strongly expressive and stylistically marked, are not taken into consideration. This produces bizarre constructions and phrases in the translation, which obstruct the reading of the text and make it sound rigid and artificial. Furthermore, the imagery of the idioms is spoilt, which means that their vital element is missing from the translation and in a situation like this the reader is deprived of the stylistic effect that he/she should experience while reading. In addition, when idiomatic expressions are translated inappropriately instances of minimised stylistic value and words or phrases with meaning different from the one in the original can be noticed, which means that the style of the original has been neutralized. This has a negative effect on the reader because it changes his/her impression of the text and the mental image that should be created while reading.

The findings of this survey aim at understanding the seriousness of literary translation and the importance of style for literary translation. Speaking of idioms as an important stylistic feature of the original, it is absolutely necessary to translate them with all their expressive charge and energy because ignoring them and their expressive nuances in

translation will result in reading a dull and monotonous translation, a translation without a soul. This is exactly what happens when translating idiomatic expressions goes wrong.

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