



LEXICAL SEMANTICS AND THE TRANSLATION OF METAPHORS

Parpiyeva Gulshodaxon Murodiljon qizi

*Student of group 401, 4th year, Faculty of English Philology, Teaching
Methodology, and translation Studies,
Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages*

Abstract: This paper talks about how lexical semantics helps in translating metaphors. Metaphors can sometimes be very tricky because they carry cultural and figurative meanings. Translators need to understand words deeply when translating, and sometimes use creative ways to make the meaning clear in another language. This paper explains common problems and practical strategies for translating metaphors. It also illustrates the importance of context, where even small mistakes can change the meaning of metaphor or of words.

Keywords: metaphor, lexical semantics, translation, figurative meaning, culture

Introduction

We use metaphors very frequently in our daily life. We see them in books, media, conversations, and even in advertisements. They represent how people think and express ideas. However, translating metaphors is not easy, as translators must know both literal and figurative meanings of words. Lexical semantics, which studies word meanings, helps a lot in this process. The translations will be more accurate and natural if translators understand the words with their clear meanings.

Understanding Lexical Semantics

Words often have various meanings. The meanings of words and how they are connected is called lexical semantics. For example, the word “**light**” means “not heavy,” “brightness,” or “something easy.” The translation may sometimes go wrong if translators do not understand these differences. With the help of lexical



semantics translators can understand the correct meaning, recognize figurative uses, and find clear meanings in the target language.

Challenges in metaphors

When we compare one thing to another, we call it a metaphor. For example, “a broken heart” means emotional pain, not a real heart. Translating it word by word does not make sense in another language. Cultural differences may also cause some challenges, as different cultures use different metaphors. A metaphor that works in English may not make sense in another language. English may use metaphors related to money, sports, or weather, while other languages may use family, nature, or other ideas. Translators must find the best way to make the metaphor understandable.

Practical difficulties in translation

Translators might face these challenges:

Cultural differences – Some metaphors do not exist in the target culture.

Multiple meanings – Words might have literal and metaphorical meanings. Choosing the wrong one creates serious mistakes and misunderstandings.

Fixed expressions – Some metaphors are idiomatic. Literal translation may sound strange or funny.

Translators must pay attention to context and decide carefully how to render the metaphor correctly.

Strategies for translating metaphors

Common strategies for translators include:

1. Keep the metaphor – if it makes sense in the target language.
2. Replace with another metaphor – find a similar metaphor in the target language.
3. Explain the meaning – give a short explanation if the metaphor is unclear.
4. Remove the metaphor – only if it makes the sentence confusing.

Good translation requires both understanding and creativity.

Conclusion

In translating metaphors, lexical semantics is essential. Translators should understand word meanings, cultural differences, and figurative language. Strategies



such as keeping, replacing, explaining, or removing metaphors help produce clear and natural translations. Successful translation of metaphors combines knowledge, attention to context, and creativity.

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