


# Theory of Lexical Units of Translation in Modern Translation Studies

 Tursunov Elmurod Umrzoqovich

Senior teacher, Dept. of Theoretical Aspects of the English Language No. 1, Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** From the beginning of translation studies to the present, many translation schools, literature on translation studies, and terms and specific terms that directly unearth the secrets of this science have emerged. One such term is “a unit of translation”. This article discusses this term, which has emerged in translation studies. According to the definition given to this term by various translators and translation scholars, a translation unit can be a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a phrase, and a text. The article discusses the lexical translation unit, and the author presents the opinions and comments expressed by various scholars, translation experts, and linguists on this unit. In addition, examples of lexical translation units are given.

**Keywords:** A unit of translation, equivalence, perevodema, translema, fragment, correspondence.

**Introduction:** Translation is an “invisible golden bridge” connecting people from different cultures and speaking different languages and serves the interests of other people. In other words, new signs of life sprout for the work, gradually serving to create new ideas, a new aesthetic reality”[1.16]. In the domain of translation, our country has achieved significant achievements since independence. For example, many literary masterpieces from English and other languages have been translated into Uzbek, and Uzbek literary legacy has been translated into English and other languages. From the beginning of the science of translation studies to the present, many schools of translation, literature, and terms that directly unearth the secrets of this science, as well as specific terms, have emerged. One of such terms is the term “a unit of translation”.

## METHOD

Although the science of translation studies itself has a history of several thousand years, the term a unit of translation which is considered its “internal working mechanism” came to life in the 1960s. This term was first mentioned by Jean-Paul Vinay & Jean Darbelnet in their work on translation theory entitled “Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for

Translation” which showed not only the importance of identifying a unit of translation, but also the existence of many and diverse approaches to tackling this issue.

According to Canadian linguists, “We could define the unit of translation as the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated individually.” [2.21]. Since then, much scientific literature has been published on defining this term, interpreting it, isolating it in context, providing a detailed explanation of this concept in linguistics, comparing it with other units in the language, studying its content, and classifying it. The translator perceives the text in a certain sequence and recreates it into the translation text. In other words, translation is a gradual, “step-by-step” process. The individual parts that participate in the entire translation process can be called translation units [3.248].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The most striking aspect of the uniqueness of a word combination, its creation, is that it is “cultivated”, formed, and becomes an actual unit in the process of speech. A word combination arises from the interconnection of words (lexemes) with independent

meanings. A word combination acquires a certain contextual meaning, and this contextual meaning is based on the meanings of the words in the combination. The semantics of a phrase arises from “combining” of the meanings of several words, their interconnected relationship, and their chain connection. A compound word expresses a thing, sign, or action not in isolation, but through the interconnectedness of two or more words [4.377]. Therefore, the general semantics of the term a unit of translation consists of the combination and blending of the sets of meanings expressed by the words translation and unit, and the separate chain of meanings of the two lexemes that make up this combination. The term translation is defined in the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language as follows: “Translation is a type of literary work consisting in recreating a text in one language in another” [5.680]. The concept of a translation unit itself is in some sense conditionally accepted and cannot be an unchanging or constantly applied unit. Researchers have made many attempts to introduce the term translation unit into the science of translation theory. A.F. Shiryaev notes that the activity of a simultaneous interpreter is “explained by two interrelated features. One of them is the possession of a multi-stage property, and the other is the possession of a single-stage property” [6.19]. However, not only is the work of a simultaneous interpretation based on sequencing, but the entire translation process itself is carried out “in stages.” In fact, sequencing is based on the sequence of speech activity itself [7.79].

Thus, Shiryaev states that “the very concept of a translation unit is contradictory from the point of view of terminology” [8.71]. Shiryaev cites as evidence the following definition of “translation unit” given by the German researcher O. Kade, “a translation unit is the smallest part (unit) of the translated text that, due to potential equivalence relations, is contrasted with other parts of the translated text and retains the invariance of the content of the original text” [9.90].

According to A. Schweitzer, the fact that translation theory considers a part of the original text as a unit, and not certain terms, as in linguistics, shows that it is impossible to define a translation unit. “As for the translation process,” the researcher says, “it is never formed by a simple combination of units. Here we are talking about a more complex process” [10.71].

Meanwhile, the scientist, while studying the category of equivalence, which is considered the central category of translation theory, emphasizes that “when discussing the issue of equivalence, it is important to remember that in translation theory, the equivalence of the text is more important than the equivalence of

its constituent parts” [11.94]. Some translation scholars have made a number of observations regarding the impossibility of defining a translation unit. First, let us pay attention to the characteristics of the term “translation unit” and the phenomenon called units.

According to N.G. Valeyeva, “a word performs the function of a connection and takes on the status of a small speech unit.” [12.180] For example, the word lives in the English sentence she lives in Moscow corresponds to the Uzbek word yashaydi in the Uzbek sentence u Moskvada yashaydi, but the word staying in the English sentence she is staying in the Plaza corresponds to the combination u Plaza mehmonxonasida vaqtincha yashab turibdi.”

According to L.K. Latyshev, “In the translation process, the translator (in most cases) divides the original text into parts with certain meanings and then reconstructs them in the target language.” It follows that the translated text is the result of the sequential adaptation of small parts present in the original text to other parts that correspond to them. Describing such practical units that serve as a lighthouse in the search for variants that are suitable (consistent with the meaning) for the unit being translated, the scientist emphasizes that translation units can be considered as grammatically independent units of the original text. [13.169-171].

In many cases, one word in the original corresponds to another word in the translated text. However, units can be matched to different degrees. That is, a word to a word, a word to a phrase, or vice versa, a phrase to a phrase, etc. The same idea is also emphasized by Uzbek translation scholars. “In translation, cases where one concept corresponds to one concept are relatively rare. Experience on translation shows that a-word-to-a-word, a-phrase-to-a-word, a-sentence-to-a-sentence corresponds are always observed” [14.57].

L.K. Latyshev emphasizes that translation units are of paramount importance in finding an alternative version in translation, while at the same time the original text should be perceived as a grammatically independent unit.

V.N. Komissarov proposes several methods for determining a translation unit, and he approaches it differently. He calls the translation unit perevodema (r., – perevod (translation) + leksema (lexeme)) in French and emphasizes that the translation unit can be any unit (or units) that can be distinguished in the language, or it can be a completely specific unit, “used specifically in the translation process.” [15.186].

According to V. N. Komissarov, a method of determining the translation unit is focused solely on the content of the original text. The translation unit is

considered to be the smallest meaningful unit of the original text that is re-expressed in the translation text. As a kind of generalizing remark, one can take the opinion expressed on the subject by Y. I. Retsker. According to him, in the process of translating a written text, a word, a phrase, a syntagm, a whole sentence, a paragraph, or even the entire text to be translated can serve as a translation unit [16.29].

For example, in chapter 13 of the novel "Navoi" by Oybek, the following sentence appears: "Ulfatchilik ayni qizigan paytda lapanglab mag'rur To'g'onbek kirib keldi – egnida zarrin yoqali ko'k shohi chakmon, boshida mo'g'ulcha qalpoq, belida rang-barang toshlar qadalgan serbar kamar, qo'lida kumush bandli qamchi..." [17.190] This sentence can be translated as follows: "When the feast was just flaring up, Tugonbek went in waddling and proudly with his blue garment with gilded collars on, a lash with a silver handle on his hand, a Mongolian cap on his head and wearing a wide belt adorned with various stones..." During the translation process, a simple sentence in Uzbek that involved several separate determiners was translated into English as a compound sentence with a subordinate clause and a coordinating determiner. In the English translation of this work, the excerpt has been translated into English as follows: "In the midst of the fun came Togonbek. On the shoulders of his blue silk checkmen and adorned with on embroidered collar on his head was a Mongolian cap; on over tightly milled belt studded with a silver handle"[18.53].

It is obvious that some parts given in the original did not find their equivalent in the translation. First, the lexeme of ulfatchilik (a feast) in the novel is expressed in the translation text through the word fun, which cannot fully reveal the lexical-semantic meaning understood through this word, because the word fun is translated into Uzbek as xurdsandchilik, o'yin-kulgu, vaqtichog'lik.

The English word feast is a word that is relatively similar in content to the Uzbek lexeme ulfatchilik, ziyofat. On the other hand, the word combination ayni qizigan paytda in the original is given in the translation of the work as a prepositional phrase in the midst of, and the middle of the feast is taken as a midst of the feast. However, any part of the feast (beginning, middle, or end) can be its most pleasant part. In doing so, it is important to pay attention to the gallery of semantic, psychological, social, and paralinguistic meanings that a given combination conveys. It would be appropriate to translate this combination using the verb phrase to flare up. In addition, although in this book a certain degree of correspondence is established between the excerpt and its English translation at the level of some units, the correspondence and adequacy between the

general expressive content of both sentences (in the original and the translated texts) is not fully established.

In linguistics, a language unit is understood as a unit that cannot be divided into smaller parts [19.170], units belonging to the certain category of the language system according to their formation and function [20.149]. The nature of each aspect of the language is manifested in the uniqueness of the language units in it. For phonetics, such a language unit is speech sounds, phonemes; for lexicology, a word in terms of meaning and use; for grammar, word forms, as well as word combinations and sentences; for word formation, a morpheme, in terms of structure and formation [21.190].

As an example, we can take an excerpt from the English translation of the novel "Navoi" by Oybek. The work contains the following sentence: "Birpasta uy ichi kanizaklar bilan to'ldi." In the translated version of the work, this sentence is translated as "The room was filled with crying girls." In this case, as noted by Barkhudarov, in order to achieve full equivalence between the original and translated texts, the sentence that constitutes the original text and is considered a unit of thought expression is divided into five main content fragments. (1) Birpasda / (2) uy(ning) (3) ich(kar)i(gi qismi) / (4) kanizaklar bilan / (5) to'ldi. Taking into consideration of the internal characteristics of the target language, its syntactic and morphological characteristics and other aspects, these fragments can be translated as follows, "In a little while the inner room was filled with maidservants (kanizs)". However, in the translation of the work, the content units in Uzbek and English did not match. In addition, the word kanizaklar in the original was not replaced by a suitable word in the translation. Instead, the noun phrase "crying girls" was given. A word in one language may be expressed in another language not as a single word, but as a phrase, word, or other unit of speech. For example, the English sentence "The house is on fire" is translated into Uzbek as "Uy yonayapti." Here, it is clear that although the correspondence is established at the level of the noun that comes as the subject of both simple sentences (The house = Uy), in the subsequent part of the sentence, the correspondence is carried out in a series of different grammatical categories (simple noun with a prepositional predicate = kesim) (... is on fire = yonayapti).

## CONCLUSION

Texts can be attributed to speech activity rather than linguistic units. Barkhudarov does not distinguish language and speech from each other in classifying linguistic units and says that in the translation process

the translator works with speech. From the above, it is clear that the concept of “translation unity”, which arises on the basis of the unity of language and speech, has a relatively broad meaning.

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