

Contrastive analysis of semantic structures of names of birds and fish in English and Ukrainian and its influence on peculiarities of translation

The aim of our paper is to investigate ornithological and ichthyological terminology in respect of contrastive analysis of semantic structures of the terms in English and Ukrainian. For this purpose we picked out 90 units of the names of the most popular fish and birds from the dictionaries "Oxford Learner's Thesaurus", "Macmillan's Dictionary" and "Longman dictionary of contemporary English" as well as from the Ukrainian dictionaries «Новий словник української мови» and «Великий тлумачний словник сучасної української мови» [1; 2; 3; 4; 5]. We placed the dictionary definitions in tables and investigated similarities and differences in their meanings. Similar investigations were conducted by us in two other spheres: names of plants and names of animals, the results of which were published in the collections of scientific articles [6; 7].

When we define terminology as a structured set of concepts and their designations in a particular subject field, it can be considered to be the infrastructure of a specialized knowledge. Terminology is a systemic study of technical terms, often classified as art of semantics, but sometimes classified as an independent study. We try to consider two different subgroups (ornithological and ichthyological) of a more general terminological sphere, which may be defined as zoological.

Contrastive typological investigations are carried out with the help of several methods, the most common being a comparative one. Comparative analysis may give us a chance to see how some features of our terminological subgroups coincide or differ in the English and Ukrainian languages. A statistical method is widely used in our investigation. It helped us to establish the necessary quantitative and qualitative representation of some features and languages data, to identify the percentage of co-occurrence of some features / phenomena or units in the English and Ukrainian languages.

Out of 90 names of fish and birds that we have investigated the semantic structures of 50 words (56%) coincide both as for the number of meanings in the Ukrainian and the English languages, e.g. *anchovy*: *анчоус*, *crayfish*: *лангуст*, *siskin*: *чиж*. Table 1 gives an example of the semantic structures of the same scope in English and Ukrainian.

Table 1.

<p><i>Shark</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a large sea fish with several rows of very sharp teeth that is considered to be dangerous to humans 2. someone who cheats other people out of money 	<p><i>Акула</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. велика хижа морська риба 2. про тих, хто діє по-хижацьки і безсоромно
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The semantic structures of 14 names (16%) of birds and fish are wider in the English language, e.g. *eagle*: *орел*, *perch*: *окунь*, *trush*: *дрізд*. The example may be seen in table 2.

Table 2.

<p><i>Eagle</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a very large strong bird with a beak like a hook that eats small animals, birds etc 2. two strokes less than par (=the usual number of strokes for a hole)) in a game of golf 3. a former US gold coin worth ten dollars: withdrawn from circulation in 1934 	<p><i>Орел</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. великий хижий птах родини яструбових, що водиться в горах або степах різних частин світу 2. про сильну, мужню людину
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The rest 26 units (28%) have more components in their semantic structure in the Ukrainian language, e.g. *vulture*: *гриф*, *gull*: *чайка*, *swan*: *лебідь*. The names of birds and fish which have more meanings in the Ukrainian language denote, as a rule, these zoological objects which are popular in Ukraine. The example may be seen in table 3.

Table 3.

<p><i>Swan</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. any large aquatic bird of the genera <i>Cygnus</i> and <i>Coscoroba</i>, having a long neck and usually a white plumage: family <i>Anatidae</i>, order <i>Anseriformes</i> 	<p><i>Лебідь</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. великий перелітний дикий водоплавний птах з довгою, красиво вигнутою шиєю і білим (рідше чорним) пір'ям 2. пестливе звертання до чоловіка 3. <i>астр.</i> сузір'я
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The total number of meanings in 90 zoological names investigated by us in the English language is 124, out of them 34 meanings are derivative. The first place is taken by metonymic transference of meanings from a bird or fish to a person who is characterized by this or that feature which is associated with an animal, there are 11 such meanings (30%), e.g. **crab** "4. someone who becomes annoyed easily about unimportant things"; **shrimp** "2. someone who is very small – used humorously"; **vulture** "2. someone who uses other people's problems and suffering for their own advantage – used to show disapproval"; **magpie** "3. informal someone who likes collecting things". The second place in the English language is taken by meanings of device – 10 units (27%), e.g. **kite** "3. a light frame covered in coloured paper or plastic that you let fly in the air on the end of one or two long strings"; **crane** "4. a large tall machine used by builders for lifting heavy things"; **perch** "5. frame on which cloth is placed for inspection". The third place – the meaning of the flesh of a certain animal – 7 units (19%), e.g. **lobster** "2. the flesh of a lobster, which is eaten"; **crab** "2. the flesh of this animal that you can cook and eat"; **goose** "2. the cooked meat of this bird". In the fourth place the rest of the meanings which account 6 units (16%) denote frame, sound, cheque, colour, place or position. In the fifth place – meaning of the disease, medical condition – 3 units (8%), e.g. **crab** "medical condition in which a type of louse (=insect) is in the hair around sexual organs (crabs)"; **thrush** "2. an infectious disease that can affect a person's vagina or mouth".

The total number of meanings in the investigated material of the Ukrainian language is 137, out of them 47 are derivative. The first place is taken, like in the English language, by metonymic transference of meanings from an animal to a person who is characterized by this or that feature which is associated with an animal, there are 15 such meanings (31%), e.g. **в'юн** «2. про хитру, спритну людину»; **ворона чорна** «4. про неуважну людину; гава, роззява»; **жайворонок** «5. про людину, у якої фаза найвищої фізіологічної активності припадає на першу половину дня». In the second place – meanings of a device – 13 units (27%), e.g. **йорж** «2. щітка для чищення лампового скла, пляшок і т.ін.»; **пугач** «2. іграшковий пістолет, що стріляє пробками або пістонами»; **журавель** «2. довга жердина, приладнана біля колодязя як важіль для витягування води, або й весь пристрій з такою жердиною». In the third place the rest of the meanings which account 10 units (20%) denote hairdo, disease, constellation, clothes. In the fourth place – meanings of the flesh or tinned food of a certain animal – 8 units (16%), e.g.: **краб** «2. консерви з крабового м'яса»; **шпроти** «2. консерви з цієї та іншої дрібної копченої риби (салаки, кільки і т. ін.) в олії»; **сьомга** «2. м'ясо цієї риби як їжа». In the fifth place – meanings of a dance: 3 units (6%), e.g. **чечітка** «2. чіткий за ритмом танець із частим постукуванням підшви й каблука об підлогу; мелодія цього танцю»; **журавель** «3. народний сюжетний танець, в якому танцюючі зображують журавлів»; **горлиця** «3. давній український народний танець і пісня до нього».

The results of our investigation show that polysemy is characteristic both to the English and the Ukrainian languages. It is also typical to terminological sphere though in a smaller degree than to common words. The Ukrainian language has a higher percentage of polysemantic terms in such subgroups of zoological terminology as names of birds and fish than the English language. The development of meanings goes in the following directions: the predominant way is metonymic transference of meanings from a bird or a fish to a person, then to the meanings of other species, on the third place are devices, then some other meanings. Having made a contrastive analysis of semantic structures of English and Ukrainian names of birds and fish, we came to a conclusion that meanings widen mostly in the same directions in both languages. The results of our investigation may be used for teaching students some peculiarities of translation, especially of technical texts.

References

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