The urgency of considering “false friends of a translator” for construction specialists

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Abstract. Construction employees are required to have good knowledge of foreign language professional terms. The survey of higher school students revealed the fact of their being reluctant to the issues of good knowledge of terminology and safety in future professional activities. They should be able to cope with homonyms that may cause confusion. Therefore, the research considers ‘false friends of a translator’ taking account of their similarities or differences in the pronunciation, meaning and spelling in English and Russian. To realize this aim the authors empirically surveyed two groups of a higher school final-year students to contribute to their language development through good knowledge of terms. The research was conducted on the base of comparison, observation and empirical methods and the teaching-practicing-controlling approach. The results obtained show that proper educating the future specialists to the use of the lexical units under consideration correctly can improve their professional growth and safety. The results can be used in language teaching practice, in making dictionaries for special purposes, as well as for making some possible contribution to terminology science.

Key words: communication skill, construction, safety, ‘false friends of a translator’, work-place accident, student, language.

1 Introduction

The effective use of the professional English language by just graduated young specialists at construction sites means understanding the speech properly and extracting useful information from it for advancing in the carrier and keeping safe and sound during the professional activity. The achievement of this goal can often be hampered by the so-called interlingua interference, which refers to the erroneous identifying of the elements or structures of one language with the elements or structures of another one when they are transferred from each other. We are talking about the interlanguage homonyms known as "false friends of a translator."

This phenomenon caused the interest of researchers at the end of the 19th century. The concept was examined in 1928 by the French lexicographers M. Koessler and J. Derocquigny on the basis of French-English and English-French parallels, where only the sound similarity of the words of two languages was considered [1]. In Russia the term under consideration appeared in the late 60s - early 70s of the twentieth century under different terminological designations [2].

The process of terms managing can get complicated because of the existence of words completely similar in pronunciation and spelling in the target and the origin languages, but different in the meaning and words with identical pronunciations but different spellings and meanings. This paper considers also partially mismatched terms and the terms which have several meanings. When dealing with the ‘false friends of a translator’ one may come across a lot of misunderstandings because of the fact that many English words are homonymous with the Russian ones.

The problem of emergence of a great number of the words under consideration in different professional areas, in construction one as well, has been under consideration of many scientists since the remotest times. This phenomenon causes many questions in connection with the necessity of regulation of these language units, with the ways of their interpretation in a proper way. The paper considers the problem of choosing and determining the correct meaning of such construction industry...
lexical terms as "false friends of a translator" that have similarities and differences in pronunciation, spelling and meaning in the target language and the origin one. The question is of particular relevance, since the category of words in question creates interpretation difficulties not only for those who are starting to learn the language, but also for experienced professionals who know the language at a high level.

So, the aim of the study is to explore lexical units of construction industry from the point of view of their similarities and differences in their phonetic, orthographic, semantic features considering their belongings to parts of speech, meanings and structure. In linguistics they are usually defined as homonyms, paronyms, homophones, heteronyms, capitonyms, and onomems. The paper considered the use of non-verbal language as well the right use of which can contribute to excluding accidents at construction sites. Such actions as, for example, inappropriate handling of excavators and misuse of material hoists may immediately cause fatal accidents. So safety communication should be identified as a key safety problem facing future construction workers.

The necessity and actuality of this research are underlined by such scientists as [2, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, and others. “False friends of a translator” as interlanguage phenomenon was studied by [6, 8, 10, 21, 22, and 27]. The issue of the relationships of language proficiency, communication patterns, and safety performance was considered by such researchers as [3, 5, 9, 14, 17, 19, 24, and 26]. The construction lexical units that represent “false friends of a translator” were not completely analyzed linguistically from the point of view of their ability of causing some confusion for construction young specialists in the process of their use. The main methods the research is based on are the comparison, observation and empirical methods and the teaching-practicing-controlling approach. The comparison and observation methods ensure consideration of the differences between the English and the Russian construction terms. Compared are phonetic, orthographic, semantic features of the terms of both languages. The empirical method allowed to learn and analyze the data got from the survey of students’ knowledge, skills of use of ‘false friends of a translator’ hypothetically.

The research conducted showed that the terms in both languages have similarities and differences which may cause confusion during the interpretation process. The study proves that when choosing an appropriate interpretation option from several ones it is necessary to take into account the general meaning of all the material being interpreted, its part, sentence or part of the utterance. To comprehend the material it is necessary also to use dictionaries for the correct meanings of the terms being comprehended.

2 Materials and Methods
The research is based on the scientific works of such scientists as Borisova L.I., Comissarov V.N., Akulenko V.V., Basmanova A.G., Comissarchic S.Yu., Pogorelova R.V., Grossman E., Baker M., Bell R.T., Robinson D. and others. For conducting the research the survey’s results made among higher school students and two construction workers teams were used. The main methods the research is based on are the comparison, observation and empirical methods and the teaching-practicing-controlling approach. Essential information was got from contacting with the workers of two construction sites. The comparison method ensures taking into account the similarities and differences between terms of the languages under consideration in their phonetic, orthographic, semantic features. Through the observation method we analyzed literature, as well as dictionaries, and find out the similarities and differences of the meanings of the terms in the languages under consideration. The methods allow learning complete and partial mismatch values of the terms, as well as the words of the target and origin languages that are used in several meanings.

3 Results
False friends of a translator may be a problem not only for learners of a foreign language but also for those whose command of foreign languages is excellent. And it is quite natural because the first reaction of a person to a foreign word resembling his/her native word is to consider its meaning as
coinciding with the meaning of a similar native word. Moreover, the existence of the international vocabulary and borrowings can be misleading. An effective way for a specialist to distinguish ‘false friends of a translator’ from international vocabulary and borrowings is to learn, know and practice them. The experimental teaching process was conducted just on the base of this principle. At learning stage the students were informed of the existence of “false friends of a translator” lexical terms that can easily confuse them in managing professional communication situations in a proper way.

One of the ways of teaching these terms to the language learners is training them in hypothetical professional situations. Such kind of work provides the future specialists with vital theoretical experience. Supposed is that the approach ensures to the young specialists professional communication skills development and safety work at construction sites through the necessary knowledge got from the teaching process. Practicing the students in proper use of “false friends of a translator” in different situations strengthens the students’ awareness of possible accidents that may happen because of ignoring their correct comprehension. The approach supports their confidence in right behavior during the professional activity.

The research showed that proper knowledge of the lexical units allows the students to manage with the hypothetical professional problematic situations connected with the use of ‘false friends of a translator.’ While conducting the teaching-practicing-controlling process we observed increased compliance with injury protection and decreased unsafe behaviors hypothetically. The experimental teaching resulted in future specialists’ confident way of making decisions in accepting right options from several ones during the survey. The research allowed distinguishing such groups of false friends of a translator as complete mismatch values, partial mismatch values and the words used in several meanings.

3.1 Complete mismatch values
Difficulties for young specialists during the work performance at construction sites may arise while dealing with the so-called complete mismatch values of the terms. These are the English words completely similar to the Russian ones in spelling and sounding, but different in meaning: ‘clay’ (noun) – ‘глина’, not ‘клей, приклеивать – glue’; ‘accurate’ (adjective) – ‘точный’, not ‘аккуратный – neat, tidy, orderly’; ‘lift’ (verb) – ‘поднимать’, not ‘лифт – elevator’; ‘commutator’ (noun) – ‘эл. переключателя’, not ‘телефонный коммутатор – telephone switchboard, telephone switch’; ‘electric’ (adjective) – ‘электрический’, not ‘электрик – electrician’; ‘focus’ (noun) – ‘оптический фокус’, not ‘трюк фокуника – magician's trick’. On the whole these terms refer to nouns, though some adjectives also can be found among them. The reason of incorrect interpretation of such terms is in an inappropriate way of rendering of international words. It should be noted that not only sounding and spelling of some terms coincide in the target and the origin languages, but their meanings as well (atom, element).

From the linguistic point of view these terms are called homonyms, i.e. words with identical spelling and pronunciation but different meanings. They also are called homographs. Another group of false friends of a translator are paronyms, i.e. words with almost complete similarities in pronunciation but different spelling and meaning (accept – verb – to take or receive what is offered; except – preposition – excluding; collision – noun – crash, clash, conflict; collusion – noun – a secret agreement that is oftentimes illegal). As it can be seen from the examples, the terms belong to different parts of speech, particularly to main parts of speech (nouns, verbs) and the official parts of speech (preposition). Paronyms are also called homophones that mean words with identical pronunciations but different spellings and meanings too (to – preposition; too – adverb – also; two – determiner – numeral 2). Besides, among the terms there can be found the words with identical spellings but different meanings. They are called homographs which may have both identical and different pronunciation as well (wind [wind] – noun – movement of the air; wind [waind] – verb – to tighten, to coil).

While dealing with these terms it is important to clarify what part of speech they represent, for example, noun or verb. Such approach would help specialists in avoiding possible mistakes.
Specialists should also pay attention to the terms containing differences only in one or two letters which can distort the whole meaning of the information interpreted (collision – collusion; accept – except). Among ‘false friends of a translator’ could be those used as a term in English and become obsolete in the Russian language: ‘invalid’ – ‘несостоятельный’, ‘непригодный’ (adjective). In the Russian language the term ‘invalid’ means a disabled person (noun). The term is used in different main parts of speech: noun and adjective. While using it attention should be given to this factor to avoid possible errors. Choice of the appropriate meaning is the matter of paying great attention to when working with such terms. It is better to remember such words, since mistakes are inevitable.

Great help with “false friends of a translator” is usually provided by special dictionaries of false translator friends, for example, edited by V.V. Akulenko (4). Thus, when dealing with the terms with complete mismatch values from English into Russian and vice versa specialists shouldn’t get confused relying only on the initial meanings of these lexical units. As one and the same word may have several meanings it is necessary to consider the general idea of the information being interpreted. The text should be divided into parts for relating the term under consideration to one of them. Then, the sentence or part of the utterance is to be analyzed for defining the proper meaning of the term. The meaning of the term could be defined due to the current situation as well. Even if the information comprehended is more or less acceptable, the worker should double check the meaning of the term by dictionaries or more experienced colleges.

3.2 Partial mismatch values
Partial mismatching among construction terms occur usually in word combinations when one component of the origin language word combination is completely similar to the corresponding word in the target language, but its meaning is different (Effective inductance – кажется индуктивность). ‘Effective’ means ‘эффективный’ (striking, showy) but in the expression ‘effective inductance’ ‘кажущаяся’ is translated as ‘apparent’. The translation of such terms should be dealt, if necessary, with specialists of the field the term belongs to. Only specialists are able to cope with the right way of interpreting this or that term of the professional fields, construction fields as well. Such words are considered to be narrow specialism terms the interpretation of which is usually under the competence of professionals only.

The terms having differences in one-two letters in both origin and target languages also can be classified as those to which peculiar is a partial mismatch value. Among the terms in the languages considered there are found words similar in spelling to the words of common use (current — смородина и current — ток, поток, complement — дополнение, комплект и complement — похвала) [18]. While dealing with “false friends of a translator” one can get confused dealing with word combinations, one component of which is a complete mismatch in both the origin and target language in meaning, spelling and pronunciation. Such word combinations can be related to terms of partial mismatch values.

The most comprehension difficulties may occur with the second component of the word combination. We are talking about collocations of the word, for example, accurate which should be treated as set phrases (accurate description, accurate information, accurate translation, accurate timing, and accurate watch). As for the Russian false version of the word accurate, it can be combined only with definite Russian words (аккуратный работник, аккуратная команда, аккуратный почерк, аккуратный человек). This state of affairs obliges specialists to take into consideration indestructibility of set word combinations in languages as they may cause considerable difficulties and errors. The same phenomenon should be paid attention to when dealing with the term ‘general’ (general idea, general usage, and general terms). In the Russian language the word ‘гénéral’ is collocated to ‘генеральный директор, генеральная репетиция, генеральная уборка’.

Examples can be multiplied. So, not to distort the content of the original option one shouldn’t transfer the usual meaning of a native word to the foreign word which has another meaning. Dealing with the form of an international word we can forget that complete identification rarely exists on the
level of content and gives a false equivalent. But if we pay attention to the collocations of Russian and English words then it is obvious that these words cannot be interchangeable.

3.3 The words used in several meanings
One of the most difficult issues related to interpreting “false friends of a translator” is connected with words used in several meanings. The problem is in the right choice of the necessary option from two or more meanings (current – 1. ток – electricity; 2. настоящий – present / resin – 1. резина – rubber; 2. смола - resin). A specialist may also come across the words which in the plural usually have another meaning (compass – компас; compasses – циркуль; difference – различие; differences – разногласия – dissensions / development – развитие; developments - события, обстоятельства - events, circumstances / security – безопасность; securities - ценные бумаги – securities). Attention should be paid to the words with identical spellings but both different and identical pronunciations and only different meanings that are heteronyms. Many heteronyms have similar or related origins or meanings. Heteronyms are also homographs. These terms usually belong to different parts of speech (hurt – повреждение; вред – noun; повреждать, причинять вред – verb; place – место, положение - noun; помещать, ставить, размещать - verb).

Another group of words with identical spellings except for a difference in the capitalization but different meanings are capitonyms. Capitonyms may have identical or different pronunciations. For example: mercury – noun – a chemical element; Mercury – noun – a planet. Among paronymous phrases there may be found oronyms, phrases with similar pronunciations but different spellings and meanings (four candles - fork handles). There can be found terms used in several meanings among which there exist those similar to and different from Russian analogues. For example: complex
1. сложный - Consisting of many details and difficult to understand.
2. комплекс – An emotional problem, when someone worries about something, usually without a real reason.
3. группа - A group of things.

So, learning and considering the differences between paronyms, homophones, homographs, homonyms, heteronyms, capitonyms, and oronyms in the English and the Russian languages is necessary for construction specialists for avoiding confusing situations and embarrassing errors.

4 Discussion
The work conducted revealed that although the problem of “false friends of a translator” has been attracting attention of many researchers since long period of time, there still are issues to be analyzed and undergone profound investigation, particularly in the construction fields. This category of words is to be studied thoroughly in most languages. Previous investigations have resulted in publication of such dictionaries as
1. ‘English-Russian and Russian-English dictionary of “the false friends of a translator” by Akulenko V.V.’ [4];
2. ‘German-Russian and Russian-German dictionary of “the false friends of a translator” by Gotlib K.G.’ [7];
3. ‘Russian – French dictionary compiled by Muravev V.A.;
4. ‘False friends of a translator in Czech’ by Zhuravlev A.I. and Zaharov S.S.’

It should be stated that these dictionaries make the process of terms use much easier by helping the specialists find words similar in spelling in both origin and target languages but different in meaning. Generally speaking, a language depicts the culture of the people speaking in it, and different people own different cultures which in its turn make the languages differ from each other. This fact makes workers find «equivalence» while dealing with the professional terms instead of rendering word for word [15, 12, 25, 16, and 28]. We completely agree with W. Wilss who defines translation as «a text-oriented event. Translation is a procedure which leads from a written source language text to an optimally equivalent target language text and requires syntactic, semantic and stylistic and text — pragmatic comprehension by the translator of the original text» [29].
The paper states that while dealing with the “false friends of a translator” special attention should be paid to phonological, lexical, grammatical, morphological, syntactic and semantic features [13, 23, 24, 26, and 27]. Revealed is that the main problems usually occur in comprehending paronyms, homophones, homographs, homonyms, heteronyms, capitonyms, and oronyms which belong to different parts of speech and may represent words with complete and partial mismatch values, the words that are used in several meanings. Not to get misled by ‘false friends of a translator’ we should consider interlinguistic paronyms which can be reversible and bilateral, as interlinguistic paronymies are usually based on intralinguistic paronyms. Such terms can make difficulties even for Englishmen as well.

The research showed that while using the terms under consideration students should be able to specify their belonging to parts of speech, their phonetic, orthographic, semantic features, whether they are homonyms, paronyms, homophones, heteronyms, capitonyms, and oronyms. This will help to avoid possible confusions by comprehension process. Important is to consult not only English – Russian, Russian – English dictionaries but also English – English ones. The research found out that it is necessary to compile Russian – English, English – Russian dictionaries for specific purposes in the construction fields by consulting construction subjects’ teachers and other specialists of the fields considered.

5 Conclusions
There is no doubt that dealing with a language, especially with professional terms, is a serious intellectual activity. It requires a lot of skills, experience and cultural awareness of both source and target languages. Comprehension of terms is not always possible due to the process of a simple substitution of words from one language to another. That is why, the main task of all the participants of communication is to use a variety of literary devices to render the speaker’s or the author’s thought as carefully as possible. When dealing with any professional terms in construction fields the following ideas should be taken into consideration:

1. Do not rely completely on your native language where the terms coincide with terms of the target language in pronunciation, spelling and meaning. Every term should be checked up.
2. Consult the dictionaries. Do not look up the meaning of “false friends of a translator” in the Russian – English and English – Russian dictionaries only. The best way to deal with them is to use English- English dictionaries as well.
3. Comprehension process should be conducted by dividing the text being interpreted into parts for relating the terms under consideration to one of them.
4. A construction specialist shouldn’t transfer the common meaning of a native word to the foreign word which may have another meaning in the terminological field.
5. Both interpreting and compiling a dictionary processes should be conducted by cooperation with specialists of the appropriate field of construction industry.
6. The rational solution of the problem considered in this paper is in creating English – Russian and Russian- English dictionary of construction fields’ “false friends of a translator.”

According to the results of the research, international vocabulary and borrowings can easily be misleading. To avoid this phenomenon it is recommended to learn and to know all these lexical units. Communicants should carefully deal with construction texts in order to escape misunderstandings. For this, they should be able to distinguish the terms by their belonging to parts of speech, to differ them in their meaning and structure, pronunciation and spelling.

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