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Д. О. Добровольский. 2013. *Беседы о немецком слове*. Москва: Языки славянской культуры, 752 с.

The book under review here deals with the features of the German lexical system, often in comparison with Russian. It is the result of many years of research on lexical semantics, bilingual lexicography, phraseology, corpus linguistics, and translation studies. The title *Беседы о немецком слове* (*Conversations on the German Word*) continues the tradition begun by V. G. Gak's *Беседы о французском слове* (*Conversations on the French Word*). Indeed, each chapter is a kind of chat with the reader that presumes relative freedom on the part of the author with respect to selecting topics while it also considers in a simple and accessible format the basic questions of the German and Russian lexical systems. Each chapter is more or less autonomous and can be considered a relatively independent text. At the same time, all chapters are clearly structured and consistently presented and are arranged according to the strict logical system “word – construction – idiom.”

The book consists of two parts and eight chapters. The first chapter precedes part I and contains a brief analysis of the historical roots of German lexicology. The development of German lexicology is profoundly influenced by Humboldt and the subsequent elaboration of his theories by neo-Humboldtian linguists. Also noted is Humboldt's influence on the linguistic and philosophical views of Aleksandr Potebnja and the Xarkov school as a whole, as well as various areas of modern linguistics, from Noam Chomsky's Generative Grammar to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Particular attention is devoted to Theory of Semantic Fields as developed by Jost Trier and other representatives of neo-Humboldtian linguistics. The description of lexis as a system of fields led to the necessity of developing the concept of semantic features.

Part I, which includes chapters 2-4, is titled “Слово как единица лексической системы” (“The Word as a Unit of the Lexical System”). Chapter 2 “Слово в словаре” (“The Word in the Dictionary”) analyzes the means for describing the German lexis and the systematic connections within the lexicon, especially polysemy and synonymy. This analysis is based on *Новый большой немецко-русский словарь* (*The New Comprehensive German-Russian Dictionary*), of which the author is editor-in-chief. Set forth here are the basic principles of bilingual lexicogra-



phy, among which those developed by Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij over the course of many years and presented in a number of his scholarly works. They include the problems of linguistic categorization, polysemy, and synonymy. The discussion of these issues in contrast with Russian is especially valuable.

Chapter 3, “Слово в корпусе” (“The Word in the Corpus”), is devoted to corpora of parallel texts and their use in lexical semantic research. It examines the use of parallel corpora in lexical semantics and demonstrates not only the expediency but also the indisputable necessity of employing such corpora in the compilation of bilingual dictionaries. Exploiting the corpus of parallel texts in the Национальный корпус русского языка (the Russian National Corpus),<sup>1</sup> this chapter shows its practical significance for the contrastive description of lexis on the basis of numerous examples such as German *nein* and Russian *nem*; German *außerordentlich* and Russian *чрезвычайно*; the Russian adjective *замечательный* and the German *bemerkenswert*; possible German equivalents of the Russian word *усмешка*; ways of conveying in Russian the meaning of the German deictics *her* and *hin*, etc. The analysis of these examples persuasively demonstrates that the contrastive analysis of lexis in modern linguistics is practically impossible without the use of parallel corpora.

Chapter 4, “Слово в переводе” (“The Word in Translation”), is dedicated to the linguistic aspects of translation; that is, to issues of cross-linguistic functional equivalence, including differences between systematic equivalence and translational correspondences. Discussion treats such topics as distinctions in language categorization and structure, as well as pragmatic conventions and world knowledge. Individual sections are devoted to the untranslatable on the basis of a detailed analysis of German translations of Dostoevskij, and to an analysis of usage norms as manifested in the translation into German of non-standard usages in Puškin’s prose. The linguistic analysis of translations is particularly relevant, since the facts of language that can be gained from translations also serve as the direct and indirect source of knowledge about the semantics of words and their national specificity and linguocultural value.

Part II, “Лексические структуры больше слова” (“Lexical Structures Larger than Word”), consists of four chapters (5-8) dealing with constructions and idioms. Chapter 5 “Конструкции немецкого языка” (“German Constructions”) discusses both the general principles of Construction Grammar (including their critical analysis) and concrete constructions that have not yet been adequately described and are

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<sup>1</sup> Dobrovol'skij is the director of the project.



poorly represented in German dictionaries. The most promising area of research is the application of the methods of Construction Grammar in the description of irregular or not fully regular linguistic phenomena such as “minor syntax,” irregular lexicalized word groups, instances where the verbs of a particular class acquire an uncharacteristic government model, and so on. German constructions are compared with possible ways of conveying them in Russian. Important here is the emphasis given to clear distinctions between Construction Grammar and phraseology and to the significance of the concepts of Construction Grammar in the study of phraseology. Two basic groups of constructions are considered in this chapter: 1) groups of words that are close to idioms but have not yet been included into the field of traditional phraseology; 2) word groups belonging to “minor syntax,” i.e. situated on the boundary between lexis and syntax. In the first group are constructional phrasemes<sup>2</sup> such as the Russian *може мне X* (*може мне подарок*) or *X как Y* (*вечер как вечер*) and German *von N1 zu N1* (*von Tag zu Tag*) or *N1 hin, N1 her* (*Freund hin, Freund her*). The second group includes, for example, non-standard German constructions with a verb of motion (*laufen, fahren, fliegen, schwimmen*) in comparison with the means of conveying these meanings in Russian. It is to Dobrovolskij’s credit that he has also highlighted the linguistic basis for the status of grammatical constructions as dynamic lexical formations. This is essentially new knowledge that allows us to surmount the rather artificial division of lexis and grammar into separate areas and to speak about the existence of a variety of channels for mutual transitions that only remain to be studied in detail. Given the significance, topicality, and promise of this current of research in both lexicography and linguistics as a whole, it would be good if this section of the book could be considerably expanded and questions connected with Construction Grammar examined in more detail.

Chapter 6, “Фразеология: структура и семантика” (“Phraseology: Structure and Semantics”), offers a more general view of the peculiarities of German phraseology. The analysis is devoted above all to German materials, but the sections addressing general questions of phraseological theory also draw upon Russian and other languages.

Chapter 7, “Немецкая фразеология в сопоставлении с русской” (“German Phraseology Compared with Russian”), discusses in particular detail cross-linguistic equivalence with respect to phraseology. Examples such as *водить за нос кого-л.* and *jmdn. an der Nase herumführen*; *лезть из кожи вон* and *aus der*

<sup>2</sup> This class of phrasemes is singled out and described by Dobrovolskij in earlier works co-authored with Baranov.



*Haut fahren; черным по белому* and *schwarz auf weiß; рвать на себе волосы* and *sich die Haare rauen* are used to demonstrate the difference between equivalence in translation focused on a specific text and equivalence in the language system oriented on the lexical system. Also discussed are the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic parameters that should serve as criteria for candidates for equivalence.

Chapter 8, "Фразеология в словаре" ("Phraseology in the Dictionary"), considers the means for describing phraseology in bilingual dictionaries. Dobrovolskij is the author of a number of both monolingual and bilingual phraseological dictionaries, including one German-Russian phraseological dictionary published in 1997 and another, based exclusively on corpus materials, that is under development. This chapter contains much new empirical data and offers fundamentally novel approaches to the lexicographical representation of phraseology. The book devotes special attention to problems of German phraseology as reflected in dictionaries and translational practice, as well as in broad comparison with Russian. Owing to Dobrovolskij's ideas and studies, this area of the German lexicon remains a priority field of research.

The book provides an exhaustive view of the dimensions of phraseological and phraseographical problems in contemporary theoretical and applied linguistics and of the state of research in this area. The materials used in the book are both clear and representative.

One distinguishing feature of the book is its combination of chapters in Russian and German. The German texts are not direct translations of the Russian chapters. Each transition from one language to the other organically develops the theme under discussion. This indisputably conveys the peculiarities of the stylistics of Russian and German scholarly texts, which, interacting with each other, give the book an original bilingual dimension. At the same time, it significantly reduces readership, in effect, to German-speaking Slavists, Russian-speaking Germanists, and linguists with a command of both languages. Considering the significance, depth, and scope of the problems treated, the chosen format seems not entirely felicitous. It would have been appropriate to select one "overall" language accessible to most specialists in various fields – English, for example, since the value of the book extends far beyond the comparison of various aspects of German and Russian.

The above remarks in no way diminish the significance of the book, which can serve as a collection of encyclopedic knowledge about various aspects of the structure of the German lexical system and the mechanisms by which lexical semantics are realized and the methods for studying it, including contrast with Russian, the linguistic analysis of translations, and the comparative study of text corpora. It is



undoubtedly also of interest to anyone who applies the findings of scholarly research to teaching, translation, and other practical activities.