

The Russian construction *дело в том, что P*, which appears to present no difficulty for translation into other languages, is in fact language-specific with respect to at least one parameter. It displays a large number of different parallels (translation equivalents) in other languages, and possesses a complex semantic structure. The configuration of semantic elements comprising the content plane of this construction is unique. The empirical data are contexts containing this Russian construction and its parallels in English, German and Swedish, collected from the corpus query system Sketch Engine, subcorpus OPUS2 Russian, and the Russian National Corpus (RNC). The analysis shows that the construction *дело в том, что P* has more than 50 parallels in English, over 30 in German, and about 30 in Swedish. The most common way of translating sentences containing the construction *дело в том, что P* is to omit it. Also frequent are the English equivalents *the fact/thing/point/truth is (that); (it's/this/that is) because*; the German expressions *nämlich; die Sache ist die (dass); denn*; and the Swedish constructions *saken är den att; problemet/faktum är att*. Analysis of the corpus data allows us to identify only the degree of variety in the means of translating a given expression into other languages. When one or another expression lacks a generally accepted standard context-independent translation equivalent, it is natural to interpret the occurrence of a large number of different translation equivalents as indicating the absence of a systematic equivalent.

According to Šmelev (2015), the more distinctive the semantic configuration of a lexical unit, the more difficult it is to find an adequate translation equivalent of this unit in another language. This allows us to measure quantitatively the degree of language-specificity, which is in fact at the focus of the present study.

The semantic structure of *дело в том, что P* includes the following components: 1) substantiation of something stated previously; 2) indication of the reason something has happened; 3) emphasis on the significance of what has been stated. The different translations of the construction are motivated by the fact that each specific context focuses on one of these meanings. The goals of the present study are:

- to contribute to the theory of language-specific aspects of lexical semantics;
- to improve lexicographic description of language-specific units;
- to develop methods for contrastive corpus investigations.

Keywords: parallel corpus, construction, contrastive corpus analysis, Russian, English, German, Swedish, language specificity, semantics