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Влияние культурного аспекта на перевод пословиц и идиом (на материале таджикско-персидского, русского и английского языков)

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Аннотация. Цель исследования - выявить влияние культурного фактора на способы перевода культурно-специфических языковых единиц, таких как пословицы и идиомы. В статье рассматриваются особенности использования пословиц и идиом и проблемы их перевода. Научная новизна статьи заключается в теоретическом описании степени влияния национальных особенностей текста оригинала на перевод «непереводимых» языковых единиц на базе конкретных примеров из художественной литературы на таджикско-персидском, русском и английском языках. Результаты исследования показывают, что выбор конкретного способа из имеющихся вариантов перевода пословиц и идиом в художественном переводе зависит от степени влияния культурного компонента.

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The Influence of the Cultural Aspect on the Translation of Proverbs and Idioms (A Case Study of the Tajiki/Persian, Russian and English Languages)

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Abstract. The paper aims to reveal the influence of cultural factors on translation strategies of culture-specific items, such as proverbs and idioms. The paper considers the specific features of the use of proverbs and idioms and the problems of their translation. The scientific originality of the paper resides in the theoretical description of the extent of the influence of the national spirit of the original text on the translation of “untranslatable” units based upon the concrete examples from the fiction texts in the Tajiki-Persian, Russian, and English languages. The results of the research revealed that the choice of a specific way of translation from among the available options for translating proverbs and idioms in literary translation depends on the degree of influence of the cultural component.

Introduction

The relevance of the research topic lies in the need to analyze the cultural factors affecting the translation of proverbs and idioms because in recent years, the science of translation has been developing and its links with other disciplines, especially cultural linguistics, have expanded. Today, it is difficult to imagine the process of learning and comparing languages without paying attention to the cultural factors of the languages being learned. The topic is also very important in terms of analyzing the quality of translation.

Given the aim of the paper, the following tasks are to be solved during the research: firstly, reviewing the theoretical basis of the topic and gathering practical material, i.e. proverbs and idioms from texts of fiction in the languages under consideration; secondly, analyzing and discussing the cases to prove the influence of the cultural aspect on the selection of a translation strategy for proverbs and idioms; thirdly, determining the translation techniques used for the translation of culture-specific proverbs and idioms.

To ensure a reliable outcome for the research, the following scientific methods were used: the method of comparative analysis, the method of component analysis, and the method of descriptive analysis.

The theoretical background of the research paper relies upon the research conducted by both Russian and foreign linguists including G. Permyakov (Пермяков, 1979), V. Anikin (Аникин, 1957) concerning the linguistic properties of Russian proverbs; B. Tilavov (Тилавов, 1967), V. Asrori (Асрорӣ, 1990), H. Majidov (Маджидов, 1995), L. Flavell and R. Flavell (Dictionary of Proverbs..., 1997) with regard to the peculiarities of Tajiki/Persian and English proverbs and idioms; L. Latyshev (Латышев, 1988), O. Ivanov (Иванов, 2006) concerning “untranslatability” of proverbs

and idioms; A. Fyodorov (Федоров, 2002), S. Vlahov and S. Florin (Влахов, Флорин, 2009) concerning the translation strategies of proverbs and idioms as well as Ya. Kalontarov (Калонтаров, 1989) in terms of Tajiki/Persian – Russian interlanguage correspondence of proverbs. In addition, the works by S. Ter-Minasova (Тер-Минасова, 2008), I. Osmanova (Османова, 2007) contributed to the analysis of the language units, i.e. proverbs and idioms, in terms of the cultural aspect.

The practical value of the research paper consists in the fact that the obtained results can be used in the translation process with the languages in question, as well as in the teaching of such subjects as comparative linguistics, translation theory and practice, and special courses in translation of proverbs and idioms.

Proverbs and idioms serve as the material of the paper due to the following reasons: a) proverbs and idioms are the language units closely connected with the speakers' cultural life; b) proverbs and idioms have no direct equivalents in other languages; proverbs and idioms play a crucial role in the process of fiction translation.

The Tajiki/Persian, Russian and English languages have been chosen for a case study in this paper because: a) there are many fiction books translated from English into the Tajiki/Persian languages via the Russian language and no researches conducted with regard to the quality of their translation; b) there is a number of Tajiki/Persian works of fiction translated into English through the Russian language and little research conducted to evaluate the translation quality of the works; c) there are many Tajiki/Persian fiction works translated into Russian and again, there is little work done to evaluate the quality of the mentioned translations; d) the author specializes in these languages.

Results and discussion

It should be noted that new sciences and specialties, such as cultural linguistics and intercultural communication, were introduced in the 1990s in connection with the study of foreign languages, comparative linguistics, and translation theory. Indeed, at present, the cognition of the descriptive features of translation as a special type of speech is considered in connection with the functions of an intercultural nature in terms of various sciences, including cultural linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. Most Russian and foreign linguists believe that the psychological and cultural aspect of human life is very clearly observed in language and speech.

Language, undoubtedly, acts as an expression of conscious spiritual and psychological states. According to many scientists, translation is a type of speech activity and at the same time it has certain stages of implementation of a psychological nature.

It should be born in mind that at present, the methodological foundations of typological, comparative-historical, and comparative linguistics are often involved in solving the issues of translation, interlanguage communication, intercultural communication, and cultural linguistics. For example, following the study of comparative cultural linguistics at the lexical and phraseological levels, comparative studies at all linguistic levels are reasonable and appropriate: not only in vocabulary and phraseology but also in paremiology, text linguistics, discourse, and many areas of linguistic science.

The topic we are considering also relates to the problem of non-equivalent vocabulary. Among other non-equivalent units, there is a group of proverbs specific to the nation, directly related to its national character and reflecting concepts, objects, realities, and phenomena of life. Such units, in terms of the way of expression, do not have direct equivalents in other languages. Proverbs and idioms are inherently national products.

In recent decades, the issue of non-equivalent words has acquired particular relevance, because when it comes to equivalent linguistic units, the comparative study of the languages under consideration and the solution of a number of translation problems is relatively smooth. At the same time, the difficulties in this direction arise mainly in connection with the “non-equivalence” of individual linguistic units of the languages. There are numerous examples of a special study of this issue in Russian and foreign linguistics since the middle of the XX century.

According to L. K. Latyshev (Латышев, 1988, p. 24), the lack of equivalence is due to two reasons. The first and main reason is that a certain phenomenon or concept, well enough known to the native speakers of the original language, is reflected in the lexical system, but it is not known or little known to the native speakers of the target language and is not reflected in the lexical system of those speakers. The author defines this category of non-equivalent vocabulary as *realia*. He classifies them as phenomena or objects that are specific to the material and spiritual life of a particular group of speakers. The non-equivalent words of one language, including *realia*, are not available in other languages. According to the researcher, the second reason is a difference in the speakers' worldview. The causes of non-equivalence are also discussed in the works of the famous scholar of translation theory A. O. Ivanov (Иванов, 2006). He believes that “traditionally, the other reasons for classification of non-equivalence include: the absence of an object, a phenomenon in the life of the people of the language being translated (material non-equivalence), the absence of an identical concept in the translated language (lexico-semantic non-equivalence) and difference in lexical and stylistic characteristics (stylistic non-equivalence)” (p. 82).

In foreign literature, there are many theoretical works that consider the issues of non-equivalent words. This term is known as “the translation of cultural elements” or “the translation of culture-bound items”. The point is that in the majority of cases, it is the cultural element that groups the language units into the category of non-equivalent words because the notion of “culture” seen in the research work of Peter Newmark (1988) “in a broad sense includes different peculiarities of a historical, political, and social nature of a people that should undoubtedly be translated truly into the target language” (p. 78). Peter Newmark attaches the same importance to both linguistic

and cultural difference between the source language and the target language and he concludes that “the difference in the culture can cause much more serious problems than the difference in the language structure” (p. 78).

Undoubtedly, the causes of non-equivalent words determine their categories and varieties and, on the other hand, the analysis and interpretation of the main types of non-equivalent words can contribute to the rational and correct identification of the causes.

It is reasonable to consider this question based upon literary texts and their translations because it is in literary works that these units are manifested comprehensively and, figuratively speaking, become more “national”. It is those wealth, national heritage, and philosophical features that are expressed in fiction by means of proverbs and phraseological units. They confirm the necessity and urgency of solving the problem of preserving the national color in the process of translation.

Now we will analyze the examples.

Among our examples, there are proverbs that directly relate to the peculiarities of the culture and life of the people, the translation of which requires a special approach by the translator.

Меғӯянд, ки дар мундӣ об хӯрдани кулол барин, дар идораи меғмории онҳо ниҳоят ҷой танг аст, шароити бобе нест (Муҳаммадиев, 1980, p. 46). / *Гончар пьет воду из черепка* (Турсунов, 2006, p. 33).

As you can see, both the form and the content of the proverb are preserved in the translation. To explain the meaning of this proverb in Russian the translator did not use the existing analogical units such as: «сам кузнец, а ножа нет» (literal translation (LT): he is a blacksmith but has no knife) or «сапожник (ходит) без сапог» (LT: the shoemaker (walks) without shoes; cf. the shoemaker’s son walks barefoot), etc. (Калонтаров, 1989, p. 235). This approach to the translation of the proverbs of this group allows the translator to preserve the oriental specificity of the work, and the translator wanted to express the meaning of the proverb precisely through the categories of thinking of the eastern people.

Another example: *Бо якраҳа баҳс кардан – мушт ба дарави задан, меғӯяд мақоли халқ* (Муҳаммадиев, 1980, p. 80). The author Fazliddin Muhammadiev uses this proverb in several of his works. Here we analyze two cases. In the second case, the proverb takes the form «гиреҳ ба бод задан» (LT: throw a knot in the air).

The translation into Russian: *Спорить с упрямым – все равно, что бить кулаком по шилу и Спорить с упрямым – все равно, что тубетейкой ветер останавливать* (Турсунов, 2006, p. 33). In the first case, the proverb is translated verbatim and retains both the form and the content. In the second case, it seems to us that the translator has selected an appropriate strategy. The use of the word **ТОҚӢ** (toqi) – *a skullcap* in the second part of the proverb gives the work an oriental specificity. Although the word тоқӢ (toqi) is not used in the original text, the translator has made a creative approach toward translation problems, and, moreover, the result of the translation meets the requirements for preserving the national coloring.

One more example: – *Ман ҳазор бор ин корро кардан мехостам, аммо занони мӯйдарози ақлқӯтоҳ кабул намекунанд, «шумо Худоро ҳам фиреб медиҳед, Куръон нахонда пули моро мегиред» меғӯянд* (Айни, 1961, p. 58). / *But my wives – well, you know how the saying goes – long of hair, short of mind. They won’t agree to such an arrangement* (Aini, 1986b, p. 245).

The saying *зани мӯйдарози ақлқӯтоҳ* (LT: woman with long hair but short mind) is known in the East and describes human beings, mainly women, as illiterate and unintelligent. According to some, although some women have long hair and are beautiful, they are unintelligent. Of course, that adage was used in the past regarding enlightened women in order to demean their dignity. Perhaps, there existed or exists something like this view in Europe to use in the translation in this case. However, it was translated verbatim. It should be noted that the general content of the saying and its national identity are brought to the attention of the English reader. We can say that a modified literal translation has been applied here.

There are proverbial units with key words denoting national-specific realia. Each culture has its own words-realities, which do not have a direct correspondence in other languages. It should be remembered that concepts or different meanings may correspond in languages, but the means of their expression can be completely different.

For instance, a Tajiki-Persian phraseological unit «*ба дасти чап бархостан*» has its correspondences in the Russian and English languages: «*встать с левой ноги*» (LT: to get up by the left leg) and “*get out of bed on the wrong side*”. The same meaning is expressed by three different words, such as **даст** (hand), **нога** (leg), and **side**. The word **даст** (hand) in the Tajiki/Persian language is associated with the religious traditions of the Tajiki-Persian speakers. Usually before going to bed Muslims among the necessary words of the corresponding prayers say: *хоб рафтан бо дасти рост, хезонӣ бо роҳи рост...* (LT: I go to bed with my right hand, I wish to wake up with my right hand).

Let us consider other examples. *Хайрият, ки дар байни мардум мақоли «гуфтаи муллоро куну кардаашро нақун» нағз паҳн шудааст* (Муҳаммадиев, 1980, p. 185) (LT: Do as mullah says but not as he does). The translation into Russian: *Хорошо, что среди мусульман распространена пословица: делай так, как говорит мулла, но не делай так, как делает он* (Турсунов, 2006). As you can see, in the translation, there is an attempt of a literal translation of the proverb. For a more intelligible interpretation of the proverb in Russian, an analogy of this proverb exists in the Russian language: *У попа два языка: один – бога хвалить, другой – людей дурачить* (LT: A priest has two languages: one is used to praise God, the other one is used to fool people). When interpreting, this Russian correspondence could be used taking into account the rapidity of the interpretation process and an intelligible understanding of the content of the unit. However, in this context, the translator did the right thing by taking into account the ideological content of fiction and its national and cultural factors, despite the fact that the translated version turned out to be verbose and deviates a little from the proverbial form.

Indeed, there are units that are not included in either the first or the second group we have discussed above, i.e. they have little to do with the national and cultural characteristics of the original text and in their form and content, they express a relatively universal concept. Some of them have no special cultural characteristics at all and belong to the group of equivalent linguistic units: *Ҳар кор вақту соат дорад* (Айнӣ, 1990, p. 36). / *All is good in its own time* (Aini, 1986a, p. 47).

For similar examples, ready-made correspondences on the level of equivalents and analogs are productively used. For instance: *Хато кардед, азизам. Ман на тарафдори ину, на талабгори он: Лаблабую каду – лаънат ба харду* (Муҳаммадиев, 1980, p. 65) (LT: You are wrong, my dear. I support neither this one nor that one. Both the beet and pumpkin are damned). For the Russian translation, an analog of the Tajiki unit in the Russian language is used: *Ошибаешься, милый! Я не заступаю ни за то, ни за другое: хрен редьки не слаще* (Турсунов, 2006, p. 35). Another example is: *Он чи ба шир омадааст, бо ҷон меравад, гуфтаанд* (Муҳаммадиев, 1980, p. 14) (LT: What comes with milk, goes out with the soul (death); cf. a leopard can't change its spots). The translation into Russian: *Правду говорят: горбатого могила исправит* (Турсунов, 2006, p. 35).

It is clear from the analysis of these translations that due to the relatively low level of connection between proverbs and the national-cultural elements of the native people, their choice of the translation option presented by the translators of the works can be considered correct and appropriate because the units of the original and the translation can replace each other regardless of the context. The examples of proverbs and their translations in the following sentences illustrate the above opinion: *инҳо монанди сагу гурба ҳамаи ба якдигар душман мебошанд ва ба болои устухон меҷанганд* (Айнӣ, 1961, p. 140). / *...they are natural enemies like dogs and cats and fight over every bone* (Aini, 1986b, p. 321). – *Ҳануз аз даҳонат бӯи шир меояд, аммо ту худро сисола мезӯӣ? – гуфт Қорӣ-Ишқамба* (Айнӣ, 1961, p. 127). / *You're still wet behind the ears, and here you are pretending to be thirty! piped up Kori-Ishkamba* (Aini, 1986b, p. 302).

As we know, the same proverb can be translated into another language in different ways. There are a number of factors that the translator takes into account when translating texts containing proverbs and phraseological units and in choosing a specific translation method in a particular case. One of the main factors when choosing the means of translating proverbs is precisely the presence or absence of national peculiarities and the cultural elements of the native speakers of the proverbs.

In the translation of proverbs, sayings, and phraseological units of a literary text, it is important to preserve two things: a) the national peculiarity of the unit of a proverb, saying, or phraseological unit, and b) the national peculiarities of the fictional text as a whole, as expressed by a proverb, saying, or phraseological unit.

Conclusion

Thus, the research findings show that the topic of the paper has an appropriate theoretical basis as reflected in the research papers, theses, and monographs by both Russian and foreign linguists and theoreticians of translation.

The translation of proverbs and idioms is of special importance in the translation process. As we know, one proverb or saying can have several translation options at the same time. However, the choice of a specific method in translation, especially in the translation of a literary text, depends on a number of factors, among which the cultural factor occupies a special place. The analysis of the usage of proverbs and idioms, as well as their translation techniques shows that to ensure a faithful translation, a translator needs to consider cultural elements and the specificity of the language units, such as proverbs and idioms, which have a critical effect on the selection of a concrete strategy of translation in a particular case or situation. Inattention in this respect by the translator does not favor a quality translation.

The analysis of translations using the example of a literary text shows that among the available methods of translating proverbs, sayings, and phraseological units from one language into another, taking into account the cultural factors, literal translation, and semantic translation are relatively productive methods. For proverbs that are devoid of special cultural elements and close to international units and concepts, it is advisable to use ready-made correspondences on the level of equivalents (full or partial) and analogies. As for interpretation, translation methods based on existing matches are relatively productive, provided that the translator can quickly remember and use them. Otherwise, of course, he can use a descriptive translation if he correctly understands the meaning of the unit undergoing translation. In the process of interpretation, the translator does not have the opportunity to analyze the cultural component or other features of the translated unit and bring them to the attention of the listener, and that is not the primary task of the interpreter. Interpretation is of a prompt nature. There are more opportunities in written translation, which allows the translator to supply his translation with the necessary additional information, as the case needs.

Further research perspectives of the topic seem appropriate in terms of the detailed analysis of the translation of proverbs and idioms based upon the originals of fictional texts and the translation of literary works in the Tajiki/Persian, Russian, and the English languages in terms of the linguoculturological aspect.

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