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**METHODS OF TRANSLATING CHINESE ONYMICON
NOMINATIONS INTO THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of nationally and culturally marked proper names and the ways of translating Chinese onymicon nominations into the Russian language. The authors demonstrated translation solutions that can be used to achieve equivalence when translating onyms into the target language based on literary texts of modern Chinese authors. The solution to this problem is of undeniable importance since it is carried out in the context of comparative linguistics and the transformational theory of translation. Based on literary texts, it was established that when translating the names of ideographic Chinese language, there is a chance to encounter a discrepancy in the levels of translatability. This is because there is practically no external word formation, a developed system of inflections and affixes in the Chinese language; the boundaries of lexical units are quite blurred so they are not always easy to recognize in the text. It was shown that proper names can be expressed not only by individual words, but also by phrases and sentences, and therefore, it is logical to use transformations affecting different levels of the language in their translation. The study concludes that the preferred method is practical transcription, while there are well-established examples of loan translation, word for word translations, dictionary matching, and combined methods of translating proper names. The results of the research contribute to clarifying the necessary rules and generally accepted principles that ensure the proper quality of the translation of fiction literature from Chinese to Russian.

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Keywords: Proper names, translation transformations, Chinese literary text, translation equivalence, translation methods



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1. Introduction

Proper names, having literary and cultural-historical value, are units that are a means of literary influence, including wordplay, irony, allusions, and references to the history, culture, religion, and literature of China. Names can "reflect a historical epoch and have a social characteristic" (Seliverstova & Zhang, 2018), and they can rightfully be attributed to the original layers of the cultural memory of the Chinese language (Biryukova & Popova, 2015). The correct transfer of names when translating literary texts can cause a certain reader's reaction, it is the same reaction that native speakers feel while reading original texts (Liu, 2000). And it plays an important role in the perception of literary work. The translation should result in a text that takes into account cultural, ideological, linguistic, and literary differences between the contacting cultures (Razumovskaya & Klimovich, 2016).

2. Problem Statement

Detailed rules and recommendations for transferring proper names from Chinese to Russian were developed in the middle of the XX century. However, nowadays there is widespread non-compliance with the established standards for translation of Chinese anthroponyms in socio-political and literary discourses, which forces linguists to return to the discussion of this topic (Shatravka, 2010).

The importance of highlighting the issue is also related to the lack of research on how the use of certain translation techniques in transferring Chinese proper names ultimately affects the achievement of translation equivalence (Bobrova, 2019; Kosar, 2018).

3. Research Questions

Detailed theoretical research in the field of translation studies conducted by such scientists as V.S. Vinogradov, L.R. Kontsevich, V.N. Komissarov, D.I. Ermolovich, V.A. Nuriev, O. Espersen, B. Russell, and some other scholars contribute to the understanding of the given problem. The works of V.A. Nikonov, A.V. Superanskaya, O.N. Trubachev, A. Bach, I.A. Vorobyov, N.B. Kovaleva and others were devoted to the problems of proper names, especially regarding the development of onomasiological field in linguistics. Onyms are "words or phrases that serve to nominate and name an object, distinguish it from other objects, individualize it, and identify it" (Seliverstova & Zhang, 2018, p. 200).

Broad functionality of an onym is possible due to its various modal characteristics, and associative relationships connected with the implementation of a specific image (Zolotarev & Privalova, 2020). Proper names are a means of creating a literary image in a piece of literature that can carry a bright semantic load, have a hidden associative background and a special sound appearance (Vashkevichus & Pavlova, 2020).

From the point of view of anthropocentric approach to a language, the study of the role of onyms in a literary text acquires special importance, since the author's work "is a product of the creative activity and at the same time bears the imprint of socio-cultural conditions of his life", and "depth of understanding of the author's intention depends on the reader's ability to consider both factors in the process of interpretation" (Seliverstova & Zhang, 2018, p. 200).

It is noted that being an integral part of literary work, proper names "contribute additional information to the understanding of the plot which is sometimes inaccessible when being read for the first time." The translator needs to take this into account to convey the imagery effect of the work; reliable backgrounds for the action depicted, and give the narrative plausibility (Shchipacheva, 2014, p.62).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the most productive methods of translating proper names in literary works of modern Chinese literature. The focus of the analysis is the problem of adequate transfer of proper names.

5. Research Methods

The solution to the above-mentioned problem is carried out under comparative linguistics and transformational theory of translation, taking into account the linguoculturological aspect. The article deals with the definition of methods and a combination of adequate methods and techniques of analysis, that rely on paradigm changes in modern linguistics and the experience in understanding man and his language (Zheltukhina et al., 2016).

5.1. The study

The basis for the study was made by 204 proper names chosen by the continuous sampling of the works of Chinese writers of the XX-XXI centuries and their translation into Russian (Wang, Lu, Qiao, etc.).

This number of studied language units made it possible to identify the main methods used when translating onyms and to analyze the ways they were translated from Chinese to Russian.

The research material was classified in the following way (see Table 1).

Table 1. Classification

| № | Classification of proper names | Number | Percentage ratio |
|---|---|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | Anthroponyms | 110 units | 54% |
| 2 | names of trademarks and brands | 17 units | 8,3% |
| 3 | names of unique objects and structures | 14 units | 6,9% |
| 4 | Toponyms | 30 units | 14,7% |
| 5 | names of literary works and pieces of art | 24 units | 11,7% |
| 6 | Chrononyms | 7 units | 3,4% |
| 7 | names of organizations and institutions | 2 units | 1% |

5.2. Research methods

The main research methods were: a descriptive method: inventory of proper names; analysis of translation techniques; quantitative: calculation of the number of analyzed lexemes in Chinese; comparative: identification of similarities and differences in the translation of onyms from Chinese into Russian.

Next, we presented the analysis of the factors that determined the predominance of a particular method of translating onyms, and their dependence on linguistic traditions and culture. Based on the existing classifications of translation transformations (Pavlova et al., 2018), the main types of translation techniques for translating proper names were identified as following: translation transcription; loan translation; dictionary matching; lexical and semantic substitutions; functional substitution; descriptive method. These methods are often combined (mixed translation method).

6. Findings

The main method of translating proper names is transcription. This technique was used to translate 99 proper names (48.5%), among which anthroponyms, toponyms, names of unique artificial objects and structures, and names of trademarks and brands. For example, the names 范素素 - Fan Susu, 雷锋 - Léi Fēng; geographical objects 岫岩 - Xu'yan (name of the County in Liaoning province), 重庆 - Chongqing (name of the city); objects and structures "蜀腴" - "Shuyu" (the name of the restaurant), "新华" - "Xinhua" (name of the bookstore); the brand names "红灯" are "Hunden" (a brand that produces transistors), "昆仑" - "Kunlun" (a brand that produces black-and-white televisions). It is noteworthy that in the group of literary works and pieces of art, only one name (the name of the picture) was translated using transcription, while the name contains an anthroponym, i.e. the name of the hero depicted in the picture "伯乐" - "BoLe".

At the same time, translators widely used the transcription method in combination with some other techniques (11.8%), which allowed them to explain and specify the translation. For example, transcription and loan translation methods were used when translating 22 proper names (10.8%), in particular, anthroponyms that had the structure "surname and word expressing the status of a carrier". For example: 新疆爷爷 - grandfather Xinjiang, 马太太 - madam Ma, 易先生 - Mr. Yi. The translator used transcription and commenting translation (0.5%): Hua Mulan (comment of the translator: a legendary female soldier who disguised herself as a man and joined the army instead of her father, a symbol of a faithful daughter). In one case, a combination of transcription and omission was used (0.5%): the alcoholic drink "茅台酒" was translated as "Maotai", the element "酒" meaning "alcohol" was omitted in the translation.

Loan translation as a translation method was used in 34 (16.7%) cases of name transfer, including various nicknames: 狼 - Wolf, 花猪 - Spotted pig; names of trademarks and brands: 三角牌餐具 - dining utensils of the Triangle brand, 星海牌钢琴 - advertisement of the pianos "Plenty of stars"; literary works and pieces of art: "社员都是向阳花" - "Communards - flowers facing the sun," "青春啊, 青春" - "Spring, oh, spring", "七月" - "July."

Loan translation, as well as transcription, is often combined with some other translation methods (5%). An interesting example was presented in the story "Wonderful Night". The translator used transcription to convey anthroponyms, but he also gave another variant in parentheses, obtained as a result of loan translation or substitution. So, the main character complains about her ex-husband, who had the

surname Hua (花). The meaning of the Chinese character is a flower or color. In the original text, this was repeatedly played out: the main character "did not know that in the end, this man would justify his surname: today everything is in flowers, and tomorrow there will be tears – his love quickly faded, and he began to plant his seeds in other people's flower beds" (Qiao). Therefore, at the first mention of the husband's surname, the translator transcribed the last name, commenting in parentheses. The mother of the main character emphasized all the comicality of this surname, saying that the names of their future children would look no less funny: a Colored Flashlight, a Colored Lens, Colored Metal, Cauliflower, Colored Paper, Color Printer, Tsvetnoy Bulvar. The translator was forced to deviate from transcription and use loan translation in both cases, and substitution in six others, while maintaining the humorous effect. For example, 花边 (frill) Color Lens, 花粉 (pollen) non-ferrous metal, 花卷 (Russian donut) Colored Paper, 花柳病 (syphilis) scaly skin disease.

21 proper names (10.2%) were translated using dictionary matching. The analysis of the examples suggests that this method is best suited for the translation of names and chronyms: 香港 – Hong Kong, 珍珠港 – Pearl Harbor; 清明 – Memorial Day, 无产阶级文化大革命 – the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as well as the names of organizations and institutions: 联合国安理会 – the UN Security Council, 港大 – Hong Kong University.

Besides this method is used in the translation of proper names, which are widely known in literature and that have fixed forms of translation: 耶稣基督 - Jesus Christ, 所罗门王 - King Solomon; "西游記" - "Journey to the West," "聊齋志異" - "Stories of Liao Zhai about the extraordinary."

Substitution as a translation technique was used in 16 cases (7.8%). Their analysis shows that translators used substitution when they wanted to simplify the original name, make it more understandable and familiar to the Russian reader. In this regard, interesting examples of translation of the toponyms 陕北 - Shaanxi (in the original text Shenbei is the Northern part of Shaanxi province) and (lit. West), but the translator used the word "Europe". Using substitution technique, the name of the herb-based alcoholic beverage was also translated as “十全大补酒” (lit. tonic wine with 10 ingredients), popular in China several decades ago. In translation, this name was replaced by a "bottle of balsam".

7. Conclusion

The study covers the main difficulties encountered when translating proper names presented in literary texts, and the way they were translated into Russian. Thus, onyms that do not have a linguocultural component in the source language can be translated to the Russian language through transcription, dictionary matching, or descriptive translation without much loss for the meaning of literary texts. However, when translating proper names that have national and cultural specificity into a target language, using transcription as an only method is not enough. Therefore, translators use a combination of two or more techniques.

It should be noted that the presence of such indicators as compliance with the object, preservation of connotation, and national-cultural specifics is a condition for achieving equivalence in translation. As a result of the analysis, it was revealed which translation solutions help to achieve equivalence when translating onyms into the target language.

For the most effective Chinese-Russian translation to be achieved one should take into account the peculiarities of Chinese pronunciation; adhere to the generally accepted principles of transcription, and master grammatical and lexical norms. It is thought that when translating at a high professional level, the translator must not only be competent in this field, but also be able to use external resources, namely dictionaries, databases, and information technologies that will ensure the proper level of translation of fiction from a foreign language into Russian.

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