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SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF CHINESE IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN TRANSLATIONS

Summary. The article focuses on the analysis of sociocultural adaptation of traditional Chinese idiomatic expressions in Russian and Ukrainian languages. Sociocultural adaptation is required for two main groups of Chengyu including phraseological units, which meaning is understood in the target language, and expressions that require full explication in the target languages due to cultural, political, and other lacunas and realia. It was identified that the vast majority of Chengyu is translated by means of an adaptive strategy of cultural substitution aimed at achieving functional equivalence of idiomatic units in source and target languages. The article reached the conclusion that a certain part of Chinese idioms partially retains its constituents in Russian and Ukrainian translations, namely, one or two lexemes of a phraseological unit are preserved, which are key in the meaning denoted by the idiom. There are some differences between translations of partially reconstructed Chengyu in Russian and Ukrainian: unlike the Russian functional equivalents, the Ukrainian phraseologies more often retain the component structure of the phraseological expression at the level of denotative semantics while the semantically identical expressions in Russian correlate with the idiom of the source language in terms of the connotative component of their meaning. The second identified group of Chengyu involves idiomatic expressions, which figurative meaning can only approximately be reproduced in Russian and Ukrainian. Sociocultural adaptation of such phraseologies to the target languages is carried out by means of translation transformation of compensation when phraseological units in the original language are replaced by non-isomorphic units of the target language with partial correspondence of the source and target languages idioms only at the connotative level of their meaning. When translating both groups of idioms, transformations of an omission of lexical unit combined with addition and using a paraphrase are applied as adaptive techniques. All analyzed examples demonstrate the application of the basic socio-cultural strategy of domestication.

Key words: sociocultural adaptation, Chinese Chengyu, Russian and Ukrainian languages, phraseologies, translation transformations.

Introducing the problem. The translation of idiomatic expressions invariably attracts the attention of researchers, since it is directly related to the specifics of the conceptual world pictures of different peoples, their sociocultural realities and the need to overcome, in this regard, cultural semantic lacunae.

Particular difficulties arise in translations of idioms when the source and target languages belong to different morphological types and are not related by genealogical classifications. Such languages are represented, in particular, by Chinese, on the one hand and by Russian and Ukrainian, on the other hand.

Translation of Chengyu into these languages represents the greatest difficulty as such idiomatic expressions are characterized by the indivisibility and figurativeness of their meaning. To reproduce the shades of semantics of such idiomatic their literal translation must be added by free translation or interpretation, which implies the need for sociocultural adaptation.

The concept of sociocultural adaptation remains one of the debatable in modern translation studies [1–6], which determines the relevance of this article.

Analysis of the previous literature. Sociocultural adaptation is defined in translation studies as ‘translating means’ with ‘comparing cultures’ [7, p. 34; 8] and as a kind of ‘cultural filtering’ [9].

According to the Chinese linguist Zixia Chang [10, p. 95] sociocultural adaptation can be triggered by a number of factors, including:

- (a) different temporal and spatial perception of reality,
- (b) a tendency to generalize notions, or a tendency to use abstract notions in different linguistic cultures,
- (c) difference in syntactic and discourse organization of languages (in contrast to the Russian and Ukrainian languages, Chinese tends to use parallel short sentences, connection between which is shown implicitly by context),
- (d) difference in the choice of lexical meaning.

Among the main factors that determine the need for sociocultural adaptation, researchers identify [11, p. 105] (a) cultural lacunas and realia specific for a particular nation, (b) names which may sound unnatural for the target reader, (c) ‘idioms’, understanding of which requires, as a rule, some cultural background, (d) play upon words, (e) translation of culture-specific gestures, etc.

With that in mind, idioms in the source text are one of the main factors that make it necessary to use sociocultural adaptation in the target texts. Moreover, for the translation of Chinese idioms, the criteria of cultural lacunas and realia specific for a particular nation are no less relevant. The same applies to the criterion ‘names which may sound unnatural for the target reader’.

For example, the idiom 愚公移山 [yúgōng yíshān] [12], which conveys the meaning ‘patience and hard work to get everything’, literally is translated as ‘Yugun moved the mountains’. Such an idiom can be translated into Russian and Ukrainian only with the help of a free translation. The functional equivalents of the Chinese idiom would be ‘терпение и труд все перетрут’ and ‘терпіння і труд все перетруть’ (patience and work will grind everything).

The purpose of the research consists in identifying the features of the socio-cultural adaptation of Chinese phraseological units in their translation into Russian and Ukrainian languages.

Materials and methods. The problem has been studied using a corpus of traditional Chinese idiomatic expressions, taken from An Annotated Frequency Dictionary of Common Chinese Idioms [12]. Chinese-Russian phraseological dictionaries and teaching aids for teaching Chinese phraseology served as additional sources of illustrative material [13–18]. The research methodology includes comparative translation analysis, definitive analysis and elements of componential analysis.

The main body. The analysis of the material has displayed that the sociocultural adaptation is required for two main groups of phraseological units, i.e.

(a) idiomatic expressions, which meaning is understood in the target language but can be translated only approximately. For example, the meaning of Chinese idioms [dan xiao ru shu] (timid, like a mouse) and [zhīyào gōngfū shen, tié chu mo chéng zhen] (if you work hard enough, you can grind even an iron rod down to the size of a needle) and their Russian and Ukrainian equivalents “трусливый как заяц” / “боязливий як заєць” (cowardly like a hare) and “терпение и труд все перетрут” / “терпіння і труд все перетруть” (it is dogged that does it) are semantically identical, but differ in their componential structure reflecting various linguistic and cultural realities;

(b) idiomatic expressions, which meaning is not understood in the target language due to cultural, political, etc. lacunas.

Most of the identified idiomatic units belong to such a type of phraseological units as Chengyu – a type of traditional Chinese idiomatic expression, which is semantically monolithic and distinguished by generalized figurative meaning that is expressive and conveys some collected wisdom, the experiences and moral concepts of the Chinese culture.

The high degree of idiomaticity of Chengyu is due to the compression of the underlying image and the complexity of motivating figurative meaning, as well as to the nature of such idioms lexical components (archaisms, historicisms, necroticisms) [13, c. 75].

The paper has revealed that the vast majority of Chengyu is translated using an adaptive strategy of cultural substitution aimed at achieving functional equivalence of idiomatic units in source and target languages.

For convenience of analysis, all identified idioms are divided into two main groups.

The first group the paper singled out includes idioms, the translation of which partially preserves the componential structure of the phraseological unit.

For example, 两面三刀 [liǎng miàn sān dāo] literally means “two sides, three knives”. The functional equivalents of this Chengyu in Russian and Ukrainian are, correspondingly, “двойная игра” and “подвійна гра” (double game). Thus, in the componential structure of phraseological units in Russian and Ukrainian both the meaning of quantity and the quantitative numeral adjective for its designation are preserved.

Let's give examples of other idioms representing this group

伸手不见掌 [shēnshǒu bùjiàn zhǎng] means in word-by-word translation

“You stretch out your hand, your palms are not visible”, which may be adopted to target languages with use of expressions “ни зги не видно” and “ні зги не видно” / “хоч око виколи” (as dark as midnight; as dark as pitch).

一言为定 [yī yán wéi dìng] to denote “every word is solid” is reproduced in Russian and Ukrainian as, respectively, “твердое

слово” and “тверде слово”, that is, sociocultural adaptation in the target languages is achieved through the strategy of omission of lexical unit combined with using a paraphrase. At the same time, two key lexemes “solid” and “word” are preserved in the componential structure of both East Slavic languages.

The idiomatic expression 少年老成 [shàoniánlǎochéng] literally means “In his younger years he became old” or “not by age an adult and respectable”. The functional equivalents of the Chinese idiom in Russian and Ukrainian include phraseological units such as “умный не по годам” (smart beyond his years) and “молодий роками, та розумний розумом” (Young for years, and smart in mind).

Such expressions correlate with the idiom of the source language in terms of the usual-connotative component of their meaning, since the lexeme “old” contains in its semantics the seme “smart”. It is this component of meaning that is reproduced in Russian and Ukrainian translations with the help of the transformation of the addition of lexical units “умный” and “розумний” (smart). Moreover, in the Ukrainian translation this seme is duplicated, resulting in a pleonastic meaning (розумний розумом).

It should also be noted that, unlike the Russian functional equivalent, the Ukrainian proverb partially retains the component structure of the phraseological expression at the level of denotative semantics, since both the Chinese and Ukrainian variants contain the lexeme “young”.

The second group of the identified Chengyu involves idiomatic expressions with generalized figurative meaning, which is only approximately can be rendered in Russian and Ukrainian, with the replacement of all lexical units. Sociocultural adaptation to the target language is carried out through the use of translation transformation of compensation when phraseological units in the original language are replaced by non-isomorphic units of the target language. Only the conventional connotative level of phraseologism remains unchanged.

The idiomatic expression 强弩之末 [qiáng nǔ zhī mò] denotes in Chinese “an arrow fired from a powerful crossbow on takeoff”. In its semantic scope, such idiomatic expression tends to mean “on the border, the forces are running out”. Thus, its functional equivalents in target languages may be Ukrainian idiom “на межі сил” and Russian phraseological unit “на пределе сил”. Both options are, unlike the original Chinese idiom, more general to overcome the lack of specificity in source language. In addition, they are more expressive stylistically.

In all the examples of idiomatic expressions illustrating the second group, the sociocultural strategy of domestication is used by means of free translation with the help of functional equivalents. Domestication is understood in this paper as an adaptive strategy, which consists in the translator's desire to adapt the source text or certain linguistic units to the norms of the host culture [3]; as a type of translation taking into account the cultural realities of the recipient of the text or discourse [4].

It is also appropriate to use the strategy of domestication for the translation of the following phraseological units.

Idiomatic expression 井底之蛙 [jǐng dǐ zhī wā] literally means “a frog in the bottom of the well” while its figurative meaning is “a person with limited outlook”. So, in Russian and Ukrainian the closest functional equivalents would be “узколобий человек” and “вузколоба людина”.

The idiom 海誓山盟 [hǎishìshānméng] denoting the literal meaning “the oath of the seas and mountains” figuratively means

the solemn oath of love and fidelity to the grave. In Russian and Ukrainian such a phraseological unit can only be translated allegorically, using the method of translation adaptation to the linguistic culture of the target text. The closest functional equivalents are, in our opinion, such idiomatic expressions as “любовь до гроба” and “любов до труни” (love to the grave), which can be interpreted as love until the end of life.

In the translation into Russian and Ukrainian, the seme “eternity”, which is the connotative seme of the lexemes “sea” and “mountains”, is lost, as well as the denotative meaning “oath”, which, however, is present at the level of the “usual” connotative meaning in Russian and Ukrainian translations, since “Love to the grave” is the oath that the newlyweds recite in front of the altar.

Conclusions. Thus, the performed analysis makes it possible to conclude that Chéngyǔ are usually translated into Russian and Ukrainian languages by means of the sociocultural strategy of domestication as an adaptive strategy of cultural substitution aimed at achieving functional equivalence of idiomatic units in source and target languages. A certain part of Chinese idioms partially retains one or two key constituents in Russian and Ukrainian translations.

However, most Chengyu possess figurative meaning, which can only approximately be reproduced in Russian and Ukrainian. Sociocultural adaptation of such phraseologies to the target language is carried out by means of translation transformation of compensation when phraseological units in the original language are replaced by non-isomorphic units of the target language with partial correspondence of the source and target languages idioms only at the connotative level of their meaning.

Further research can be carried out to analyze the specifics of translation adaptation of Chinese idioms in their functioning in the literary source text in Chinese and target texts in Russian and Ukrainian.

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Хабарова І., Ван Чжици. Соціокультурна адаптація китайських ідіоматичних виразів у перекладах російською та українською мовами

Анотація. Стаття присвячена аналізу соціокультурної адаптації китайських ідіоматичних виразів російською та українською мовами. Соціокультурна адаптація застосовується для двох основних груп Chengyu, включаючи фразеологічні одиниці, значення яких є зрозумілим у перекладі, і ідіоматичні вирази, які потребують цілковитої заміни одиницями цільових мов, оскільки містять культурні, політичні та інші лакуни та реалії. Виявлено, що переважна більшість Chengyu перекладається за допомогою адаптивної стратегії субституції, спрямованої на досягнення функціональної еквівалентності ідіоматичних одиниць у вихідній та цільових мовах. Стаття дійшла висновку, що певна частина китайських ідіом частково зберігає свої компонентні складові в російському та українському перекладах, а саме зберігаються одна-дві лексеми фразеологічної одиниці, які є ключовими у значенні, що позначається ідіомою. Існують певні відмінності між перекладами Chengyu російською та українською мовами: на відміну від російських функціональних еквівалентів, українські фразеологізми частіше зберігають компонентну структуру фразеологічного виразу на рівні денотативної семантики, тоді як семантично ідентичні вирази російською мовою співвідносяться з ідіомами мови джерела з точки зору конотативного компонента їхнього значення. До другої виділеної групи Chengyu належать ідіоматичні вислови, переносне значення яких можна лише приблизно відтворити російською та українською мовами. Соціокультурна адаптація таких фразеологізмів до мов перекладу здійснюється шляхом перекладацької трансформації компенсації, коли фразеологічні одиниці в мові оригіналу замінюються неізоморфними одиницями цільової мови з частковою відповідністю ідіом вихідної та цільової мов лише на конотативному рівні їхньої семантики. При перекладі обох груп ідіом як адаптивні прийоми застосовуються трансформації опущення лексичної одиниці в поєднанні з трансформацією додавання і використанням парафразу. Всі проаналізовані приклади демонструють застосування базисної соціокультурної стратегії доместифікації.

Ключові слова: соціокультурна адаптація, китайські Chengyu, російська та українська мови, фразеологізми, перекладацькі трансформації.