Characteristics of the G.V. Baishev’s Translation of the Yakut Heroic Olonkho Epic “Ala-Bulkun” Into Russian (Illustrated by Verbs of Motion and Epic Formulae)

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Abstract. The objective of the study is to reveal the main techniques of the translation of the Yakut Olonkho epos “Ala-Bulkun” into Russian, made by the Yakut linguist and writer G.V. Baishev – Altan Sarin (1898-1931). The study is based on the verbs of motion and some main epic formulae used in this Olonkho epos. The analysis of the techniques used for translation of the Yakut verbs of motion into Russian showed that the verbs are translated with the reformulation technique. It suggests that the translator sought to adequately communicate the semantics of the Yakut verbal forms. This, in turn, is determined by the fact that verbal forms as predicative structures are the heads of both dependent and independent predicative structures. The epic formulae are translated using parallelism or by dividing the sentence into several sentences. Besides, to expand the context in order to reveal the translated information more slowly, the repetition technique is used. It was found that the translation under consideration demonstrates some elements of authorized translation. The studies of Olonkho translation techniques aimed at communicating the stylistic and poetic features of this Yakut folklore genre are of both theoretical and practical importance.

Keywords: Olonkho, oblique translation techniques, reformulation, verb, epic formula, parallelism.

Research area: philology.

Introduction

The Yakut epos of Olonkho is a collection of heroic legends about feats of the ancient heroes, the forefathers or protectors of Sakha Urangkhay (the ancient endonym of the Yakuts) descending from a large and powerful epic tribe Ayy (Emel’ianov, 1983: 3). The heroes fought for establishing the power of the Yakuts in the Middle World, the beginning and continuation of the Sakha Urangkhay people, the interests of the Ayy tribe, peaceful and happy life on Earth. The Olonkho plot unwinds as a story a hero of the Middle World, the forefather or the protector of the Sakha Urangkhay people, the creator of life on Earth (Emel’ianov, 1983: 3).

The present paper discusses the main characteristics of the translation of the Olonkho epos “Ala-Bulkun” into Russian. The subject of the analysis are verbs of motions and some major epic formulae used in this Olonkho.

The first translation of a Yakut Olonkho into another language (German) was published in O.N. Böhtlingk’s grammar (Böhtlingk, 1851). The first translations of Olonkho into Russian appeared in the 1880s. In 1884, the Russian translation of the Olonkho by N.S. Gorokhov “Yryŋ Uolan” “providing the most full and true representation of the Yakut Olonkho” was published in the Proceedings of the East Siberian Branch of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society (Nikolaeva, 2014: 286). In 1890, “Verkhoyansk Collection” presented the interlinear translation of the Olonkho “Basymn’ylaakh Baatyr” by I.A. Khudiakov (Khudiakov, 1890). In 1929, five Yakut Olonkho eposes were published in “Examples of the Yakut Folk Literature” recorded and translated by S.V. Iastremskiy (Iastremskiy, 1929). Recently, Yakut Olonkho epos is translated into other languages including English (Nakhodkina, 2014).

The Yakut Olonkho is represented in various types of translation (compare the categories of inexhaustibility of the source text, multiplicity of translation (Razumovskaya, 2018)), including adapted translations for children, prosaic translations, versifications by Russian poets, literary Olonkho-based texts for children, full poetic translations, scientific translations (Vasil’eva, 2017: 47). In scientific translation, “attention is paid not only to the accuracy of conveying the contents, but also to the lexical and grammatical structure of the text as a unique feature of the Yakut epos worth deeper examination” (Vasil’eva, 2017: 49).

The Olonkho “Ala-Bulkun” was translated in 1926-1927 by G.V. Baishev – Altan Saryn by the order of academician E.K. Pekarskiy, who edited this Olonkho to be published in the third volume of “Examples of the Yakut Folk Literature”. However, Pekarskiy did not succeed to publish this Olonkho along with other two recorded by V.N. Vasil’ev. A part of the translation by G.V. Baishev was published in 1994 by the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Academy of Sciences of Sakha Republic (Yakutia) prepared and annotated by V.M. Nikiforov (Ala-Bulkun, 1994). The full text was published in 1998 (Altan Saryn, 1998).

In the foreword to his translation G.V. Baishev – Altan Saryn described the principle he applied: “to translate the sense of a real epos as it may be perceived by a common Yakut listening to a narrator” (italics added) (Ala-Bulkun, 1994: 226). Baishev emphasized that he “tried to make the translation closer to the text, literal when possible” (ibid). Such translation principle was determined by the linguistic interests of E.K. Pekarskiy. Working on “Dictionary of the Yakut Language”, he needed to objectively define Yakut words and phrases that he had mostly collected from folklore texts. Besides, being a reformer of the Yakut written language, Baishev probably tried to translate the Olonkho using the semantic technique to achieve a maximally full translation of the context meaning of the source test elements. In doing so, Altan Saryn chose the scientific translation strategy (Vasil’eva, 2017: 49).

Discussion

Translation of verbs of motion

The techniques used to translate the verbs of motion are illustrated by passages from the given Olonkho describing the character’s appearance, the rising sun, and the epic country.
Character’s appearance. The description of the character’s eyebrows and cheeks involves relative verbal (participle) constructions with space meaning, direction to start, marking the starting point of motion (Аллантан кийрбит. Кытайтан кэлбит), e.g.:

Source language | Target language
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(1) Аллантан кийрбит Хара саарбаны түтүү күрдү Харалаах көмүс хаастан | Имеет брови из черного серебра, словно поставленные друг против друга два алданских черных соболя (Altan Saryn, 1998: 228).

‘Has eyebrows of black silver like two Aldan black sables set opposite each other’.

In (1), the relative participle construction Аллантан кийрбит of the source language (further, SL) is replaced in the target language (further, TL) by the derivative adjective алданский that within the context of the sentence also translates the meanings of the starting point of motion.

(2) Кытайтан кэлбит кыһыл саһылы кыттыњына уурбүү күрдү Икки кыһыл көмүс иҥнээх кыл ээсээх (Altan Saryn, 1998: 228).

‘Has two burning cheeks as if made of red silver like two red foxes brought from China, put side by side’.

In (2) the verb кэл- in the fourth lexical-semantic variant (LSV4) ‘be brought, be delivered somewhere’ (Great Dictionary of the Yakut Language (GDYL, 2007: 466)) has an equivalent in the TL привезти (привезенный) ‘bring (brought)’ – доставить везя ‘deliver’ (Ozhegov, 1972: 539).

Epic country

(5) Субу күрдү Устата туората баллибэтээх. Унгургута улалаата костутбэтээ Учун кийн дойду ортотугар | Очитившись на середине этой неведомо широкой страны, с ее безграничной долготой, и стоя на средине такой обширной

‘Having found oneself in the middle of this unbelievably wide country, with its endless longitude, and standing in the middle of such vast

Rising sun


‘There is the directly rising sun in it’.

In (3) ой- of the SL is characterized by LSV3 ‘rise, appear above the horizon (of the sun)’ (GDYL, 2009: 228). The verbal analytical construction (further, VAC) of the SL ойон тахсар- ‘jump out, rise quickly’ is translated by the word combination “adverb + verb” прямо взойти: Взойти ‘rise above the horizon’ (Ozhegov, 1972: 75), прямо ‘directly, passing by everything else, intermediaries’ (Ozhegov, 1972: 579). This word combination makes the translation adequate.


‘A dazzling white mountain that was breathing with the dawn of the morning sunrise, when the master old man sun rose over it, with his eyes open’.

In (4) the verbal form (participle) тахсар functioning as the predicate of the relative clause is translated by the verb восходил functioning as a predicate of the adverbial clause of time. In this case, the participle form is translated by the finite form of the verb.
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In (5) кири- LSV5 ‘be in the middle, center of something, come into the center, middle of something (GDYL, 2007: 68). In the TG the verb кири- in the form of an adverbial particle is represented by the adverbial participle очутившийся – очутиться ‘find oneself somewhere’ (Ожегов, 1972: 446).


In (6) the adverbial participle сүүрэ is derived from the verb сүүр- in LSV4 ‘flow out something in a continuous current, run (e.g. of tears, blood)’ (GDYL, 2012: 325) is translated by the adverbial participle испаряя < испарить ‘turn into vapor’ (Ожегов, 1972: 234).

Thus, the analysis of translation of the Yakut verbs of motion into Russian in the given text shows that they are translated using transposition technique, substituting functional verb forms and parts of speech.

Translation of epic formulae

In the Yakut epos studies, an epic formula is referred to as a literary polished tirade, the largest complete semantic and rhythmic group of a poetic text containing a whole descriptive picture and image (Vasil’ev, 1965: 101). It is noted that the major structural core of such formula is short with the so-called main word combination. Epic “formulae are short, the basic idea is concentrated in the main word combination, their meaning is aphoristic, their literary form is poetic” (Илларионов, 2006: 28). Linguistically, epic formulae are based on the major structural law of the Yakut language “the prepositional defining component + the postpositional defined component” where a prepositional component acts as the semantic core (compare, main word / word combination) (Efremov, 2013).

The epic formula of time is represented within the tirade utterance (epic formula) describing the existence of the hero Ala-Bulkun “in the bosom of the ancient times”. It functions as a prepositional construction, parallelism of six components where the main word combination of the first component is the word combination былыргы дьыл ‘ancient time’. This word combination coupled with the syntactic noun мындаатыгар – Былыргы дьыл мындаатыгар has the meaning ‘in great antiquity, in ancient times’ and functions as an introduction formula (GDYL, 2006: 491). The given tirade is translated into Russian with five phrases using the syntactic transformation, dismemberment of the sentence determined by rhythm and intonation as the Olonkho introductive tirade is slowly chanted by the narrator. The introductory epic formula is arranged as a separate incomplete phrase in the form of parallelism of six members. It is separated from the second, relative, phrase by dots marking a certain pause after the phrase meaning epic time. The initial two incomplete phrases, epic time and an epithet, make up a separate paragraph which emphasizes the logical meaning of this segment of the tirade:

(7) Былыргы дьыл мындаатыгар, Урукку дьыл уорҕатыгар, Ааспыт дьыл арҕаатыгар, Эргэ На лоне древних лет, на вершине прошедших времён, за чертой прошедших годов, вблизи старинных времён, в узле оных веков, на

In the bosom of the ancient times, at the top of the old times, behind the boundary of the past years, in the knot of those ages, at the
The analysis of (7) shows that the relative participle construction имеющий своим конем Айаас-Ала ‘having Ayaas-Ala as his steed’ is repeated in the translated text that “slows down the pace of communication significantly” (Cellow, 1997: 76). Such repetition is a linguistic technique to mark the slow rhythm of the tirade. The epithets to the name of the old woman Yčygey Imärikään are given in parentheses as a commentary which can be explained by the scientific character of this translation. The literal translation of the names of the Olonkho characters is given in parentheses: the epic hero Ala-Bulkun (Standing Out Rebel), his horse Ayaas Ala (Forceful Marked), the old woman Yčygey Imärikään (Good Stroker – one that strokes, pats), (who has the following epithet to her name: goat back, hooked claws, flapping wings, waving tail, disturbing fury). He was a great man having a mission from above.’
the Yakut graphic image of the names is also presented so that the reader could apprehend the information as close to the original as possible.

The formula describing the appearance of the epos character is translated in five sentences. The culture-specific vocabulary is also presented in the original form with the corresponding scientific comments (былас, харыс).

There is an addition of a certain image (e.g., the height of the character), omission of naturalistic descriptions, etc. which may be considered as the elements of authorized translation. Compare:

*If look curiously at his appearance, at his strong slender figure, at his reasonable (strong) healthy (blood) disposition and (we will) proportion by (their) close examination, he (his qualities) will be like that (speaking relatively): he is “four bylas” tall (a linear measure, about two arshins [= 0.71 m] around, to say for fun, he is ten arshins tall (added by the translator). Has a neck three “kharys” long (a linear measure – less than a foot, more than half a foot). Has an open white face five “kharys” long, has the crown with a parting like a dark forest with an opening, has shoulder-long curls as if of black silver, has the eyebrows of black silver like two Aldan black sables set opposite each other, two burning cheeks as if made of red silver like two red foxes brought from China put side by side, has a hooked nose as if chiseled of white silver like a vertically put shin of a hot horse, has polished bright teeth as if made of white silver like a row of ten male bullfinches, has a white bulging chest similar to open heavy doors of a rich home. His white smooth nails are like logs cut off the base of a young tree, his two broad stone hands are like two concave deep spades. His mighty, as if chiseled of white silver fingers look like ten wild ermines rushing downwards, he has two active quick thighs like two white horses standing back to back, his smooth white shank is...*
The *epic country* formula is translated in three sentences. The last sentence is of authorized character. The introduction of the construction is represented by a parallelism of four members in the accusative case. It is also translated with a parallelism of four members. The name of the mythological creature *Ala manday balyk* (‘Ala manday fish’) is provided with a scientific comment, like in the previous tirades, as a parenthesis. Compare:

If one gives an attentive look at that good country where this tall man arose – at his native eight-rim, eight-side earth with a changing environment – at the country where he was brought up and he grew up, that was his cradle like the second paradise, at his divine spruce country, always triumphing, nobly brown, where he was created, it was surrounded by rough seas, its base going down into seas always rising in waves, it is embraced by oceans from all sides, it rests upon Ala-Manday fish (the name of the legendary fish that supposedly the earth). It stands on endless water, its bottom is the icy underworld, and only in the middle there is a holy land whose roads are covered with grey silk, that is accompanied by motley life, whose limitless outline drowns in the space of blue fog, its breathing gives abundant fruit, it is framed by fresh trees, it is
Conclusion

The translation of the Olonkho “Ala-Bulkun” has some elements of authorized translation although the translator sought to translate as close to the original as possible, as the analysis of the epic formulae tirades revealed. The tirades are translated using syntactic transformation, dismemberment of the sentence into several phrases or utterances. The analyzed verbs of motion are generally translated by reformulation. Culture-specific words (e.g. proper names of characters, words with quantitative meaning, etc.) are represented in the target language in the phonetic image of the source language provided with parallel literal translation of scientific comments. The translation of the given Olonkho deserves further investigation as one of the first attempts of scientific translation of the Yakut heroic epos into Russian.

References


Особенности перевода олонхо «Ала-Булкун»
Г.В. Баишевым на русский язык
(на примере глаголов движения и эпических формул)

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Аннотация. Целью и задачами статьи служит выявление основных способов перевода на русский текста якутского героического эпоса олонхо «Ала-Булкун», осуществленного якутским лингвистом и писателем Г.В. Баишевым-Алтан-Сарын (1898-1931). В качестве материала исследования были выбраны глаголы движения и некоторые основные эпические формулы, использованные в данном олонхо. Анализ способов перевода на русский язык якутских глаголов движения показывает, что эти глаголы переведены на русский язык способом замены. Подобный факт свидетельствует о том, что переводчик стремился точно передать семантику якутских глагольных форм на русский язык. Это, в свою очередь, обусловлено тем, что глагольные формы как предикативные структуры являются вершинами тех или иных предикативных конструкций – зависимых или независимых. Эпические формулы переведены при помощи синтаксической замены – параллелизмами, а также расчленением предложения на несколько предложений. Кроме того, встречаются лексические и синтаксические повторы для расширения контекста с целью более медленного раскрытия передаваемой информации. Установлено, что в рассмотренном переводном тексте имеют место элементы авторизованного перевода. Изучение особенностей подобных переводов олонхо, ориентированных на воспроизведение стилистических и поэтических особенностей данного жанра якутского фольклора, имеет как практическое, так и теоретическое значение.

Ключевые слова: олонхо, переводческие трансформации, замена, глагол, эпическая формула, параллелизм.

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