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Ways to translate culture-specific elements in a literary text from Chinese into Russian

Abstract

This paper aims to choose the appropriate translation techniques to convey Chinese cultural realia verbalized in one modern novel when translating into Russian as well as to assess the possibility of applying the obtained correspondences to translate texts from other genres in an automatic translation system. 17 chapters of Yan Geling's novel "Thirteen Women of Jinling" were translated using OmegaT automated system. 27 tokens containing ethnographic realia nominations were selected, all of them presenting a translation challenge as far as such realia were missing in the Russian culture. The results obtained while training the automated system showed that transliteration accompanied by translator commentary was used more often than other techniques. The commentary helped understand the realia and its functioning. Description and transformation were applied less frequently but in similar amount. The least frequent were calking and substitution. In many cases, those techniques were accompanied by grammatical transformations. The number of the realia nominations entries in BCC corpus show that most correspondences added to OmegaT Glossary will be even more useful for automatic translation of ancient Chinese texts, modern press and oral speech than of fiction due to their higher frequency in those sub-corpora.

Keywords: translation technique, non-equivalent vocabulary, ethnographic realia, automatic translation system, frequency in corpus

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