

АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

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CULTURAL EXCHANGE: TRANSLATION OF BELARUSIAN BATLEYKA PLAYS INTO ENGLISH AS A WAY OF PROMOTING BELARUSIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Belarus has always been an open country welcoming visitors from around the world. Tourists come for different reasons. While you are in a foreign country, you can't but immerse yourself in its culture. One of the priorities of Belarusian policy today is the promotion of Belarusian culture abroad.

Last year we carried out research and proved that Batleyka had always been a great way of manifesting and reflecting Belarusians' national cultural and historical identity. Bearing in mind the fact that Batleyka helps to better understand our nation, we decided to translate some Belarusian Batleyka plays into English to promote Belarusian culture in the English-speaking world. For this purpose, the translation peculiarities of Batleyka plays into English were studied and analyzed. This point makes up the novelty of the research.

Our hypothesis is as follows "Translation of Batleyka plays into English may be conducive to the promotion of Belarusian cultural heritage as long as they reflect Belarusian cultural identity".

To substantiate this hypothesis, we carried out research. The object of the present research is Belarusian Batleyka and British puppet show scripts. The subject of the research is the translation peculiarities of Batleyka plays into English.

The aim of the work is the translation of some Batleyka plays from Belarusian into English in accordance with the discovered rules of writing scripts for puppet shows in English.

To achieve the aim of the work we studied the structure of puppet show scripts in English and Belarusian, did a comparative analysis of the lingo-cultural peculiarities of the scripts in both languages, singled out the translation peculiarities of Batleyka scripts into English, translated some scripts from Belarusian into English and compiled all the translated Batleyka plays and the results of the research, and uploaded them to our website for others to use (*see Appendix*).

The importance of the puppet theatres researched in the present paper cannot be overestimated. Both theatres have played a vital role in preserving, sharing and visualizing the cultural norms, customs, traditions and social changes that the two countries have been undergoing throughout the centuries. The two nations share some traits. Others are unique and define each nation. These features are found in plots, appearance, character and behavior of the puppets and many other things puppetry-related.

In modern society, the English language is used not only for the transfer of knowledge, but, above all, for communication and, as a result, for familiarization with the national culture of communicants. The interaction between the Belarusian and English cultures has been and is happening in the field of culture, science, tourism, etc. An integral part of this process is familiarity with national folklore and literary works translation of which “is considered creativity on the verge of art and research”.

The English language, despite its relative ease of learning, differs significantly from Belarusian. These differences give rise to many subtleties that accompany the translation of the source text into English.

The most characteristic features of the two languages that can be distinguished are differences at the phonetic level, different syntax, the system of tenses, polysemy of words, phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions.

Any language comprises rich culture-specific vocabulary which expresses the worldview, the mentality and culture of its speakers. Culture-specific vocabulary in Belarusian works of art is non-equivalent vocabulary, names of Belarusian realia, colloquial vocabulary, proverbs and phraseological units with ethno-cultural semantics, dialectisms.

Speaking about the peculiarities of translation from the Belarusian language, it should be noted that, as a rule, literary works are not translated from the original. Belarusian texts fall into foreign literary contexts mainly due to the mediation of the Russian language. “As a result, the national flavor and some nuances of the author’s individual style are lost in translation”. When translating Belarusian texts into English, grammatical, lexical, and stylistic issues should be taken into account.

As mentioned previously, both the Belarusian Batleyka and the British puppet theatre originally staged Nativity scenes, first, then abstracts from the Bible. The main purpose of the play was to preach Christianity to the common folk. The language of these plays was simple. The structure of the Nativity is more or less similar both in English and Belarusian. The characters are also the same *Joseph* ‘Іосіф’, *Mary* ‘Марыя’, *baby Jesus* ‘маленькі Ісус’, *king Herod* ‘цар Ірад’, *wise men* ‘мудрацы’.

When translating Batleyka religious play into English, we studied the Bible and found equivalents in the target language. Thus, we got the adequate translation of place names (*Bethlehem* ‘Віфлеем’), of God’s names (*Jesus Christ* ‘Ісус Хрыстос’), of biblical texts (“*The Gifts of the Wise Men*” ‘Дары мудрацоў’).

The distinct feature of religious plays both in Batleyka and the British puppet theatre is an extensive use of hymns or prayers of praise. In our case, we changed the hymn in Belarusian for the similar hymn in English (*Hymn “Hail Mary!”* ‘Кант «Вітай, Марыя!»’). This way we saved the atmosphere of the source text and recreated the aesthetic appeal to the target audience.

Add to this, Batleyka is not merely a text but also a performance. And like any theatrical performance, Batleyka play must have a script. As V. Sutyryn put in the article “Literature, theater and cinema” (1973), script is “a work of art whose purpose is not only to tell a story, but to show it, to make it visible”.

The scripts of both English and Belarusian Nativity introduce the characters, describe the setting and include instructions. Instructions for the characters in the English text are clear, simple and concise. While translating the Belarusian text we adhered to this simplicity. In most cases we used 'literal translation' (*Enter the girl and her beloved one* 'З'яўляюцца дзяўчына і яе закаханы').

Since the 17th century puppet theatres both in Belarus and Britain have started to perform secular plays alongside religious plays. Their repertoire included local fairy tales, folk tales and legends. Their culture specific vocabulary is an expression of the ethnic heritage of the people and in a certain way reveals the relationship of a person to his environment, living conditions and history, which in turn significantly increases its stylistic load. Such units are usually non-equivalent, and the translator is forced to use different translation methods and techniques of conveying the message utilizing the knowledge of the history, culture, ethnography of the people and its language from which the translation is made. The translator working with them has to take into account the basic principles of fairy tales translation formulated by T. A. Kazakova: "Therefore, when translating folklore, we should keep to some *general principles*: try to make mythical and fairy-tale names comprehensible in their semantic and functional value to the reader of your translation; do not neglect rhyme and rhythmic patterns which you come across in the source text as they may have an important function".

Thus, in the course of work to solve linguistic and cultural problems of translation, we used the following methods of translation of culture specific vocabulary: modulation and expansion (*Kletsakova, belonging to Kletsak, 'Клецаквай'*), equivalence (*Prince 'Пан'*), transliteration and/or descriptive translation (*Klets, a special cage for imprisonment, 'Клец'*), generalization (*My husband 'Мой гаспадар'*).

While translating Belarusian folklore we also adapted them for scripts applying the structure and elements of an English standard script, i.e. a title, the name of the play, a playwright, if applicable, a list of characters or cast of actors, the number of the act/ scene, setting, and stage directions.

In conclusion, it is worth saying that puppetry constitutes an important and integral part of culture. From *vox populi* in the Middle Ages, a source of fun and laughter in the Renaissance, puppet operas in the Seventeenth century, an ideological proclamation during wartime, to a brave critic of the system, puppets still play their part in transmitting values and behavioral norms of each nation. They also visualize the social changes. They bring about the national flavor, colours and music as well as the spirit of the local communities thus manifesting the national identity of the nation.

Keeping this in mind, we presupposed that translating Batleyka plays into English would prove to be a great way of promoting Belarusian cultural heritage. For this reason, we translated some Batleyka religious as well as secular plays into English. While translating we came to the conclusion that though Belarusian and English puppet plays have a similar structure, they possess their own unique features. These features are manifested in cultural and linguistic peculiarities of each nation. They refer to the realm of culture specific vocabulary, grammar, syntax and semantics.

Being aware of these peculiarities is vital for the translation of puppet plays from one language into the other. If a puppet play is translated in a proper way, it enables a foreigner to get acquainted with the traditions, customs and culture of the other nation. Hence, translation of Batleyka plays into English is an excellent way of Belarusian cultural heritage promotion.

The findings of the research prove its practical value and may be utilized in a number of ways. They will definitely help understand the cultural phenomenon of the Belarusian Batleyka. Moreover, they can help better understand the national character of the Belarusians. The translation of our Belarusian legends and fairy tales into English will help promote Belarusian culture abroad.

We can only hope that our findings will inspire more Belarusians to do further research of Batleyka in their local area and to promote our national cultural heritage, revive, visualize and voice the story of our local communities through Batleyka.

Appendix. QR-code link to the web-site “Batleyka. Belarusian cultural heritage”.

