

Idioms in the Kazakh Translation of the Classical Novel “Journey to the West” from the Perspective of Translation and Introduction Studies

Aman Abao

Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Northwest Minzu University, Lanzhou, Gansu, China,
730030

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the translation strategies and skills of idioms in Kazakh translation in Journey to the West, and deeply analyze the cultural transmission and artistic reproduction in the translation process from the perspective of translatology. It is found that the translator makes full use of the theory of translatology in the process of translation, not only pays attention to the transformation at the language level, but also digs deeper into the cultural connotation behind idioms, thus achieving effective cross-cultural communication. By flexibly using various strategies such as literal translation and free translation, cultural substitution and explanatory translation, the translator has successfully translated idioms in Journey to the West into expressions that are faithful to the original and close to the cultural background of Kazakh readers. The application of these strategies not only makes the translation more fluent and natural, but also greatly enriches the literariness and readability of the translation. The translation of idioms in the Kazakh version of Journey to the West is successful, which not only brings rich reading experience to Kazakh readers, but also provides new perspectives and ideas for translation studies.

1. Introduction

The Journey to the West is one of the ancient Four Great Classical Novels in China. Its rich imagination, unique narrative style and profound cultural connotation not only occupy a decisive position in the history of China literature, but also attract readers from all over the world because of its unique charm [1]. Since 1980s, The Journey to the West has been translated into Kazakh, which not only promotes the international spread of Chinese culture, but also enriches the reading experience of Kazakh readers [2]. With the acceleration of globalization, literary works, as an important carrier of cultural exchange, have a direct impact on the depth and breadth of cultural exchange [3]. Therefore, an in-depth study of idioms in Kazakh translation in Journey to the West will not only help to improve the accuracy and artistry of translation, but also further promote the in-depth cultural exchange and understanding between China and Kazakhstan, which has important academic value and practical significance [4].

In recent years, with the deepening of translation studies, translatology, as a new interdisciplinary subject, has gradually become an important perspective for the study of literary translation [5]. However, although Journey to the West's translation studies have made some achievements, the research on his Kazakh translation, especially the translation of idioms, is still insufficient [6]. Most of the existing studies focus on Journey to the West's overall translation strategies and cultural transmission, while the translation studies specifically on idioms, a special language phenomenon, are still weak [7]. Due to the great differences between Kazakh and Chinese in cultural background and language habits, the translation of idioms often becomes a difficult point in translation practice [8]. Therefore, it is of great significance to systematically sort out and summarize the translation strategies and skills of idioms in Kazakh versions in Journey to the West, so as to fill the research gap in this field and promote the development and application of translation theory.

The purpose of this study is to deeply analyze the translation characteristics and rules of idioms in Kazakh versions in Journey to the West from the perspective of translation studies, and to

explore how to maintain the cultural characteristics and language style of the original in the process of translation, while at the same time enabling Kazakh readers to get a reading experience similar to the original. It is expected to provide useful reference for future literary translation practice.

2. Translation theory and translation principles of idioms

2.1. Theoretical basis of translation studies

As an important branch of translation studies, translatology not only pays attention to the language transformation in the process of translation, but also goes deep into multiple dimensions such as culture, history and society to explore the role and influence of translation in cross-cultural communication. Translation studies emphasize that translation is not only a transformation between two languages, but also a dialogue and collision between two cultures [9]. Under this theoretical framework, translation is regarded as a process of cultural re-creation, which requires translators not only to master the source language and the target language, but also to deeply understand the differences between the two cultures and how to skillfully cross these differences in translation. Therefore, in the study of idioms translation in Kazakh versions of *Journey to the West*, the theory of translatology provides us with a macro perspective, which helps us to understand the cultural transmission and deformation in the process of translation, and how to make the translation closer to the cultural background and aesthetic habits of Kazakh readers while maintaining the spirit of the original.

2.2. Definition and classification of idioms

Idioms, as the essence of language, are the crystallization of national culture and wisdom. They usually include proverbs, common sayings, idioms, two-part allegorical sayings and other forms, and convey profound truth or emotion in concise language. Figure 1 lists the main forms and characteristics of some idioms.

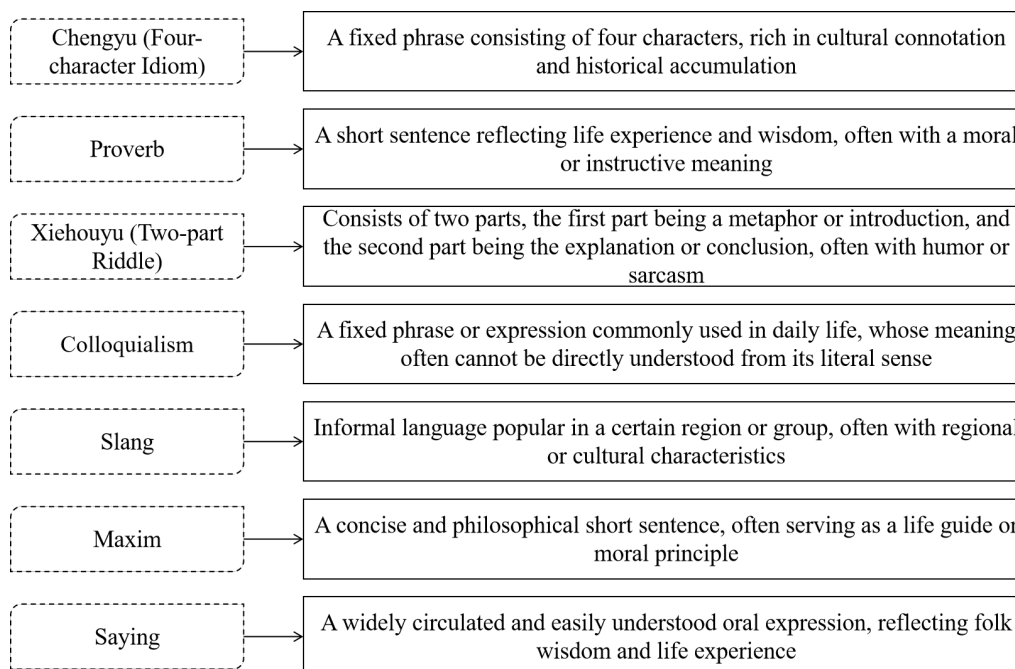


Figure 1 Main forms of idioms

In classical literary works like *Journey to the West*, the use of idioms is particularly frequent. They not only enrich the expression of the text, but also deepen the cultural connotation of the work.

2.3. Basic principles of idiom translation

In the process of translating idioms, translators should follow a series of basic principles to

ensure the accuracy and artistry of translation. The accuracy of meaning transmission is the core of translation, and translators need to accurately understand the specific meaning of idioms in the original text to avoid misunderstanding or ambiguity caused by literal translation. The preservation of cultural characteristics is as important as innovation. Idioms often carry rich cultural connotations. Translators need to find expressions that are compatible with Kazakh culture while maintaining the cultural characteristics of the original, so that the translation can be faithful to the original and arouse the resonance of Kazakh readers. The adaptability of language style can not be ignored, and the language styles of idioms are diverse. Translators should flexibly choose translation strategies according to the context and style of the original text, so as to keep the language style of the translation consistent with the original text and reach the realm of "spirit likeness".

2.4. Translation strategies and skills

In the concrete translation practice of idioms, translators should flexibly use a variety of translation strategies and techniques. The combination of literal translation and free translation is a common strategy. Literal translation can preserve the form and literal meaning of idioms, while free translation pays more attention to conveying the deep meaning and cultural background of idioms. When literal translation is difficult to convey the cultural connotation of idioms, translators can adopt cultural substitution or explanatory translation, and replace idioms in the original text with similar expressions or explanatory sentences in Kazakh to help readers understand them better. Translators should also pay attention to maintaining the fluency and readability of the translation, avoiding translation cavity and blunt expression, so as to make the translation faithful to the original and bring a pleasant reading experience to Kazakh readers.

3. Analysis of idiom translation in the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West*

3.1. Translation of proverbs

In the Kazakh version of *Journey to the West*, the translation of proverbs shows the translator's profound language skills and cultural literacy. Proverbs, as the crystallization of folk wisdom, often contain profound truth and universal life experience. When translating these proverbs, translators not only pay attention to the literal meaning, but also devote themselves to excavating the cultural connotation and philosophy behind them, and strive to find the most appropriate corresponding expression in Kazakh. For example, in the original text, "the grace of a drop of water is rewarded by a gushing spring", and the translator skillfully translated it into a similar proverb in Kazakh to express gratitude, which not only retained the meaning of the original text, but also enabled Kazakh readers to feel the same. This translation strategy not only promotes cultural exchange, but also enhances the literariness and readability of the translation.

3.2. Translation of common sayings

As a colloquial expression in daily life, the translation of idioms places more emphasis on the natural fluency of language and the adaptability of regional culture. In the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West*, the translator carefully handled the translation of common sayings, striving to make the translation conform to the expression habits of the Kazakh language while accurately conveying the emotions and context of the original text. For example, the proverb "monkeys fishing for the moon" in the original text was translated by analogy using similar folk stories in Kazakh language, which not only retained the interest of the original text but also made it easy for Kazakh language readers to understand its meaning. This translation method not only brings readers closer to the text, but also reflects the translator's bridge role in deeply understanding the two cultures.

3.3. Translation of idioms

Idioms, as a unique linguistic phenomenon in Chinese, pose challenges to translation due to their rich cultural connotations and fixed structural forms. In the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West*, the translator adopted diverse strategies for translating idioms, as shown in Figure 2.

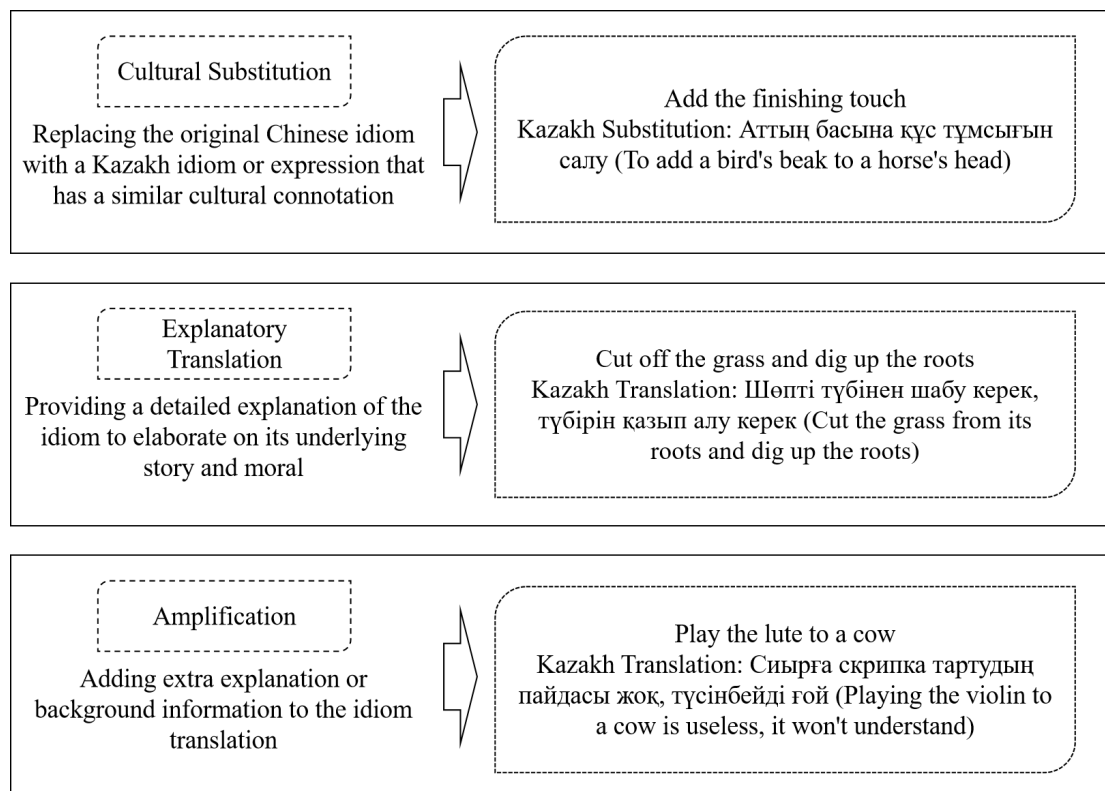


Figure 2 Translation strategies

On the one hand, for those idioms with similar counterparts in Kazakh culture, the translator directly replaces the culture to make the translation closer to the cultural background of Kazakh readers. On the other hand, for those idioms with unique cultural connotations, translators elaborate the stories and meanings behind them in detail through explanatory translation or augmented translation to ensure that readers can fully understand their meanings. This translation strategy not only retains the cultural characteristics of idioms, but also enhances the readability and educational significance of the translation.

3.4. Translation of Xiehouyu

Xiehouyu occupies an important position in *Journey to the West* due to its humorous and unique structural form. However, Xiehouyu's translation is an extremely challenging task. In the Kazakh translation, the translator made innovative attempts to translate Xiehouyu. They not only focus on preserving Xiehouyu's humorous effect, but also strive to integrate it with the cultural background and language habits of the Kazakh language. For example, in the original text, the phrase "Zhu Bajie looks in the mirror - he is not human inside and out" was replaced by a similar humorous expression in Kazakh language, which not only retains the original sense of humor but also allows Kazakh language readers to smile knowingly. This translation strategy not only showcases the translator's linguistic talent, but also promotes humorous communication between the two cultures.

3.5. Comprehensive comparison and assessment

Looking at the translation of idioms in the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West*, it can be found that the translator fully utilized the theories and methods of translation studies in the translation process, and flexibly and diversely handled different types of idioms. They not only focus on conveying the literal meaning, but also devote themselves to exploring the cultural connotations and philosophy behind it; We not only focus on the accuracy and fluency of language, but also pay attention to maintaining the literary and readability of the original text.

By comparing different types of idiomatic translation strategies and techniques, this article finds that translators not only follow the basic principles of translation, but also make innovative attempts based on specific situations during the translation process. These efforts not only make the

translation more closely related to the cultural background and aesthetic habits of Kazakh language readers, but also build a solid bridge for cultural exchanges between China and Kazakhstan. Therefore, it can be said that the idiomatic translation in the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West* is successful. It not only brings rich reading experience to Kazakh readers, but also provides a new perspective for translation research.

4. Practical suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, the following practical suggestions are proposed for reference by translators and researchers in related fields.

(1) When translating idioms, translators should fully understand the cultural background and context of the original text to ensure the accuracy and cultural adaptability of the translation. At the same time, they should flexibly apply various translation strategies and techniques, and choose the most suitable translation method based on different types of idioms and the cultural background of the target readers.

(2) Translators should pay attention to improving their cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication skills in order to better understand and convey the cultural connotations of idioms during the translation process.

(3) For translation agencies and publishing houses, it is needed to strengthen the control of translation quality, establish a strict proofreading system, and ensure the accuracy and readability of the translation. At the same time, modern technological means can also be actively introduced to improve translation efficiency and quality, providing readers with higher quality translation works.

5. Conclusions

Through in-depth analysis of idiomatic translation in the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West*, this study has made a series of important findings. The translator fully demonstrated the application of translation theory in the translation process, not only focusing on language conversion, but also delving deeper into the cultural connotations behind idiomatic expressions, achieving effective cross-cultural communication. Research has found that different types of idioms adopt different strategies in translation: proverb translation focuses on conveying philosophy, proverb translation emphasizes natural and fluent language, idiom translation focuses on preserving and innovating cultural characteristics, while Xiehouyu's translation strives to reproduce humorous effects. The application of these strategies not only makes the translation more closely related to the cultural background of Kazakh language readers, but also greatly enriches the literary and readability of the translation. The study also found that translators flexibly used various techniques such as literal translation and free translation, cultural substitution and explanatory translation in the translation process, reflecting their superb translation art and profound understanding of the two cultures.

This study explores the translation of idiomatic expressions in the Kazakh translation of *Journey to the West*, which not only provides useful references for current translation practices, but also points out the direction for future research. With the continuous development of translation technology, how to use modern technological means such as artificial intelligence to improve the accuracy and efficiency of idiomatic translation is also an important direction for future research.

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