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YAKUT EPIC HERITAGE AND ITS INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATIONS (1970s- beginning of the 21st century)

Abstract. The article is a review of translations of the Yakut heroic epic olonkho into Russian and foreign languages. The review captures a large period, from Soviet times to the present. For the first time, such a study included unknown and little-known translations, as well as reviews on translations. The need to preserve and popularize the Yakut cultural heritage, represented by outstanding works of the Yakut classics, is confirmed by the history of Russia and of all mankind. The relevance of translation projects is due to the fact that in 2005 UNESCO recognized the Yakut heroic epic olonkho as a Masterpiece of the Oral Intangible Heritage of Humanity, which, in turn, caused attention to olonkho in different countries. This fact inspired an interest to Yakut epic worldwide and stimulated translations of it into various languages and the research of these translations that supposed to be a tool for Northern cultural heritage preservation.

The significance of translations of the olonkho epic is determined by the features of the development of traditional communities at the present stage, their cultural heritage, which is in danger of extinction, is of particular concern. Olonkho – the ancient heroic epic of the Yakuts – is one of the brightest examples of the archaic folk epic. The olonkho formed the ideas of the Yakut people about the universe, a system of moral values, traditional beliefs and customs, the originality of language and culture. Particularly relevant is the question of the features of the translation of the Yakut heroic epic olonkho into the world languages. The uniqueness of the artistic world and the language of the epic olonkho determines the extreme complexity of its translation and significantly distinguishes it from all other kinds of literature. At the end of the twentieth century the Yakut heroic epic olonkho spoke not only in Russian, but also in other languages of the world. This paper considers translations of the Yakut epic olonkho into Russian, English, French, Korean, in particular, the full-text English translation of the olonkho *Nurgun Bootur the Swift* by P. A. Oyunsky; translations of olonkho *Eles Bootur* by P. V. Ogotoev and other epic texts. Translators of German, Turkish and Japanese also paid attention to various olonkho texts.

Keywords: Yakut heroic epic, olonkho, cultural heritage, preservation, translation, Oyunsky, Ogotoev, folklore, language, English.

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Якутское эпическое наследие и его международный перевод (1970-е гг. - начало XXI в.)

Аннотация. Статья представляет собой обзор переводов якутского героического эпоса олонхо на русский и иностранные языки. Обзор захватывает большой период, начиная с советских времен по настоящее время. Впервые в подобное исследование включены неизвестные и малоизвестные переводы, а также отзывы на переводы. Необходимость сохранения и популяризации якутского культурного наследия, представленного выдающимися произведениями якутских классиков, подтверждается историей России и всего человечества. Актуальность переводческих проектов вызвана тем, что в 2005 г. ЮНЕСКО признало якутский героический эпос олонхо Шедевром устного нематериального наследия человечества,

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что, в свою очередь, вызвало внимание к олонхо в разных странах, возникла необходимость создания переводов олонхо на другие языки. Значение переводов эпоса олонхо определяется особенностями развития традиционных сообществ на современном этапе, особое опасение вызывает их культурное наследие, находящееся под угрозой исчезновения. Олонхо – древний героический эпос якутов – является одним из ярких образцов архаического народного эпоса. В олонхо сложились представления якутского народа о мироздании, система нравственных ценностей, традиционные верования и обычаи, самобытность языка и культуры. Особенно актуальным представляется вопрос об особенностях перевода якутского героического эпоса олонхо на языки народов мира. Своеобразие художественного мира и языка эпоса олонхо обуславливает чрезвычайную сложность его перевода и существенно отличает его от всех других родов литературы. В конце XX в. якутский героический эпос олонхо заговорил не только на русском, но и на других языках мира. В настоящей работе рассматриваются переводы якутского эпоса олонхо на русский, английский, французский, корейский, в частности, полнотекстовый английский перевод олонхо П. А. Ойунского «Нюргун Боотур Стремительный», переводы олонхо П. В. Оготоева «Элэс Боотур» и др. эпические тексты. Отмечается также внимание к различным текстам олонхо со стороны переводчиков немецкого, турецкого и японского языков.

Ключевые слова: якутский героический эпос, олонхо, культурное наследие, сохранение, перевод, Ойунский, Оготоев, фольклор, язык, английский.

Introduction

Translation into world languages in the post-colonial era allows expanding the horizons of the existing experience and it serves as an instrument of transmitting and conserving the epic and folklore traditions of the ethnic communities under study, just as Latin was once used to transmit and preserve the cultural, scientific and other sources of information heritage of the previous civilizations.

The importance of the presented topic is justified by the special features of traditional societies development in the modern era; the cultural heritage of these societies is under the threat of extinction due to the fact that the modern stage of world civilization development is marked by the globalization process, which is aggressively and massively penetrating various areas of human activity, including the cultural sphere. Meanwhile, global changes are beginning to attain a vivid ethnic, religious and cultural layout and “have a negative effect on the process of shaping and sustaining the national and cultural identity” [1, p. 59]. Cultural heritage is becoming a nationally and multi-nationally discussed topic.

Translation is aimed at identifying and eliminating the problems connected with the inheritance and preservation of the Northern peoples cultural heritage in the process of establishing an intercultural dialog. Translation is also focused on coping with specific linguistic and cultural challenges, which occur in the process of translating complex and unique phenomena in the Yakut epic *olonkho* as well as the cultural epic of the Northern communities leading a traditional way of life. The experience in compiling lexicographic editions will help define the cultural and semantic lacunas and give the possible options in resolving problems with these lacunas. Such approach to the translation and preservation of the Arctic region cultural heritage requires a complex solution of linguistic, translation and cultural tasks. In the process of Yakut-European languages translation such difficulties arise predominantly due to systematic inconsistencies of these languages and large disparities between the cultures of the peoples of the North and other world cultures. In order to define these challenges, it is necessary to apply various translation, lexicographic and internet solutions, each to a moderate extent.

Yakut heroic epic *olonkho*

Olonkho is the largest genre of Yakut folklore, which encompasses all the representations of the Sakha people regarding world creation, the system of moral values, traditional beliefs and customs, their linguistic and cultural abundance. In 2005, UNESCO proclaimed the Yakut epic *olonkho* as the Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, hence, there is a necessity in creating *olonkho* translation into other world languages.

The necessity in preserving and spreading knowledge about the Yakut cultural heritage represented by spectacular literary works of Yakut classical writers is clear judging by the Russian and world history. Such fundamental and prescient literary works as presented to the public by Alexei Kulakovskiy and Platon Oyunsky deserve every right to become a world heritage.

The teaching staff members of the Institute of Modern Languages and International Studies of the North-Eastern Federal University (NEFU)¹ have made an invaluable contribution in promoting knowledge about the Yakut olonkho on a global scale. Owing to their and the translators joint diligent work and efforts, the Yakut epic olonkho was proclaimed by UNESCO as a masterpiece of world culture. Presently, the Institute of Modern Languages and International Studies of NEFU plays a leading role in the State designated Program in Preserving, Developing and Disseminating the Yakut Heroic Epic Olonkho (2006-2015) as the University center of Yakut olonkho translations into world languages.

International olonkho translators

Speaking of international translations of the Yakut epic olonkho in the last three decades of the previous century, we must specifically mention the first records and translations of olonkho into world languages.

Dr. Vasily Illarionov, Honoured Professor of NEFU and an expert in Yakut epic olonkho as well as the folklore texts compiler, wrote the following:

“Recordings and publications of the Sakha people epic heritage began to appear in the first half of the 19th century. The journey to the North and Eastern Siberia in 1842-1845, undertaken by the academic Alexander Theodor von Middendorff, played a significant role in the Yakut folklore study; Middendorff recorded and published samples of ritual songs, myths and legends. He recorded a concise version of the beginning part of olonkho titled “Eriedel Bergen” with a brief summary of the olonkho in Russian [2]. Middendorff passed on the materials he gathered on the Yakut language to academic Otto von Böhtlingk, who was the first scholar to introduce the Yakut terms *olonkho* and *olonkhosut* (olonkho teller) into the sphere of scientific research.

Being the author of the classic work titled *On the Language of the Yakut People*, Böhtlingk issued a German translation of the olonkho titled *Er Sogotokh*, which was recorded by the Yakutia-born Russian citizen, A. Y. Uvarovsky, who was very knowledgeable in the Yakut language and folklore” [3, p. 7].

A century later, the olonkho *Er Sogotokh* was translated into English from the German translation created by Otto Böhtlingk by an American enthusiast, Douglas Lindsay, Associate Professor of the University of Arizona, who retold this epic in the form of prose – Douglas Lindsey. *Er Sogotokh: The Lone Stranger* [4]. The same text was translated into Turkish by Yury Vasiliev-Jargistay.

Some of these translators used lineal translation or another translation. For instance, Milos Krno made a Slovak translation of the olonkho by P. A. Oyunsky titled *Nurgun Bootur, the Swift* based on the Russian translation by V. V. Derzhavin. Krno’s translation was issued in 1984 by the *Tatran* publishing house in Bratislava, Former Republic of Yugoslavia. The Russian translation by Derzhavin was also used as the basis for the Kyrgyz translation of the olonkho by P. A. Oyunsky. The translation was made by a national poet of Kyrgyzstan, Beksultan Zhakiev. This translation was issued in 2014 [5].

Yankel (Jacques) Karro, the employee of the Paris National Library, made his contribution by making the French translation of the Yakut epic heritage; he was the first to unfold the magical world of ancient Yakut epic to the European readers. Yankel Karro created a French translation of the olonkho titled *Dzhuluruyar Nurgun Bootur* (or *Nurgun Bootur, the Swift*) by Konstantin Orosin. The translation was published in 1994 under the title *Niourgoun le Yakoute, guerrier céleste. Les guerriers célestes du pays yakoute-saxa* at the Éditions Gallimard publishing house (Paris, France) [6].

However, unlike the other translators mentioned above, Karro worked in together with a Yakut language native speaker, a staff member of the Department of French Studies, Lina Sabaraikina. In 2010, a Turkish translation of the olonkho by Konstantin Orosin was presented by Murat Erzos [7].

The unique features, phenomenal scope of imagery and the beauty of the olonkho in the Yakut language still attracts the attention of international researchers; these findings are overviewed by Yakut scholars [8].

In 2001, a Yakut and Russian languages translator, and an adjunct professor of the University of Wako, Yamashita Munehisa translated the first half of olonkho titled *Buduruibet Nuher Bogho*. In 2001, this translation was published in Japan in a collection of articles and epic translations devoted to the *Interdisciplinary Epic Studies*.

¹ Here and onwards referred to as IML&IS NEFU

In July 1999, professor Vasily Illarionov and Elena Leontieva, who were in the Gorny district of Yakutia at that time, gave the translator an opportunity to get acquainted with the olonkhosut Nikolai Tarasov and to see and hear the full version of his olonkho *Buduruibet Nuher Bogho*. He performed olonkho for two hours and ten minutes. The translator then read the text decoded by Elena Leontieva and translated its first half.

The collection, in which this version of olonkho was published, was primarily intended for folklorists, therefore, the left-hand side of each page contained the original olonkho text in Yakut language and Japanese translation on the right-hand side of the page. Quoting Yamashita-san, "He was attracted to olonkho because of its wide range of linguistic imagery and its similarity with the Japanese mythology. More specifically, the olonkho *Buduruibet Nuher Bogho* attracted his attention also because it was published and existed in only the live version of the story-telling. Alliterations are frequently incorporated in the olonkho, unfortunately, it is practically impossible to sustain them in the Japanese translation. It was challenging to translate metaphorical expressions" [9].

He claims that he used the linear translation technique and translated from the Yakut language. Interestingly, during the 1993-1997 period, Yamashita Munehisa worked as a teacher of Japanese language at the Department of Translation of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the Yakutsk State University (now IML&IS NEFU, Yakutsk).

In their articles, the translators of olonkho into Japanese – Dr. Nadezhda Popova and Leo Tadagawa – talk about their Japanese translations of an extract of olonkho by Daria Tomskaya – Chaika titled *Saryn Nurgustay* and an extract of olonkho by Afanasy Soloviev titled *Uolan Dokhsun*, performed at the Tokyo Summer Festival in 1997. The olonkho translation [by Daria Tomskaya] was made based on the Yakut language recording which was created upon listening to Vera Nikiforova, a folklore teller and music expert, a Candidate of Art Studies, and A. I. Innokentyeva. The extract performed in Japan is the initial part of olonkho *Saryn Nurgustay*, which consists of 734 lines and includes 7 heroic songs and was to be performed for 45 minutes. The olonkho selected for translation represent various epic traditions: the Verkhoyansk region (a female version of olonkho) and Central Yakutia (a male version of olonkho). In their articles, the scholars were among the first to give a translation analysis of the challenges in translating an epic text from Yakut to Japanese; the researchers showed an interesting approach to resolving difficult linguo-cultural tasks [10, 11].

International translations of olonkho created by Russian translators

The attempts to translate olonkho into world languages in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) were made a long time ago. I have been informed from unconfirmed sources that an English translation of the first song of the olonkho *Nurgun Bootur; the Swift* has been made from V. V. Derzhavin's Russian adaptation by a senior lecturer of the former Faculty of Foreign Languages of the Yakutsk State University (now IML&IS NEFU), Elena Mushnikova. This translation was never published.

In 1992, the Committee for UNESCO Affairs of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) announced a contest on the best English translation of the first song of the olonkho *Dzhuluruyar Nurgun Bootur* by Platon Oyunsky. Three professional groups took part in the contest with Albina Skryabina (A. Scryabina), Innokentiy Novgorodov and Ruslan Skrybykin as the group leaders. Skrybykin won the contest and his group's translation was published in the *Newsletter of the Republic College* journal in 1995. The translator states that "olonkho contains a large scope of outdated words which are no longer used in the language and nowadays their meaning can only be retrieved in dictionaries or from the elderly generation of native speakers. Moreover, there are many untranslatable words; they only have a connotative meaning, but no 'practical meaning'" [12, p. 4].

In 2003, Director of the Mirny Polytechnic Institute, a branch of North-Eastern Federal University and the founder of the Department of Translation of former YSU (present-day NEFU), Dr. Albina Goldman created a Yakut-English translation of some extracts of the olonkho *Nurgun Bootur the Swift* by P. A. Oyunsky; her translations had the following titles: "The Rescuing of the Hero Khaan Djargystay", "The Stealing of the Tuyarima Kuo", "The Test of the Magic Lasso Khalbas Khara". They were published in the Literature and Arts Almanac *Prima Aurora*, devoted to the 10-year anniversary of the Department of Translation [13].

At the beginning of the 21st century, there was another multilingual translation project that included the Russian translation by M. Alekseeva; English translation of the olonkho *Eles Bootur* originally

performed and written by Petr Ogotoev and translated by Albina Scryabina (2002); the project also included a French translation of olonkho created by Valentina Shaposhnikova (2013) and a Korean translation of the olonkho mentioned above completed by Honoured Professor of the North-Eastern Federal University, Dr. Kang Duck Soo (2005) [14-18].

Presently, the olonkho translations into Russian and other world languages has excelled to a completely new level in terms of quality; there are new translations of the Yakut heroic epic olonkho.

In 2003, I came up with an ambitious large-scale project on the English translation of the most widely-known and popular Yakut epic olonkho *Dzhuluruyar Nurgun Bootur* by P. A. Oyunsky, which had practically never been fully translated, not taking into account the Russian translation by Vladimir Derzhavin, which was published in 1975 under the title *Nurgun Bootur Stremitelniy* (Eng.: *Swift*).

Furthermore, unlike the Kyrgyz and Slovak translations based on the Russian adaptations, the translation of this epic created by P. A. Oyunsky was initially translated directly from the source language (Yakut language). It took Derzhavin 10 years to complete his translation with the assistance of the Yakut Soviet political, academic and cultural members of the society. I, on the other hand, had to start from scratch. Meanwhile, my teammates and I had my other duties to fulfil and no one was going to dismiss us from performing them. First of all, I developed a concept of translation, taking into account the imperfections, mistakes and flaws that I detected in the previous translations. Next, I selected a competent range of team members comprising of expert translators with a decent knowledge of the Yakut and English languages, the theory of translation, and decent skills of applied translation.

The translation team also included the teaching staff members and students of the Department of Translation, namely: Member of the Union of Translators of Russia Sofia Kholmogorova, Varvara (Alekseeva) Neustroeva, Zoya Tarasova, Ludmila Shadrina, and Svetlana Yegorova-Johnston, who joined the team at the final stage of translation. Additionally, I made the decision to incorporate the translation of the first song completed earlier in 1992 (however, it had not been published at that time) as part of the project of the Committee for UNESCO Affairs of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) by Albina Scryabina on her consent.

Using our personal funds, we purchased the Yakut olonkho text by P. A. Oyunsky, then we purchased *A Dictionary of the Yakut Language* by E. K. Pekarsky from Yakut language translator Egor Sidorov and separate volumes of the *Yakut Language Dictionary*. Meanwhile, I began compiling various editions and translations of olonkho at the Department of Translation.

In 2007, I organized a series of seminars and lectures for the translation team; these seminars were held by renowned experts in Yakut epic, namely: Professor, Dr. Vasily Illarionov; Senior Researcher of the Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North (Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences)¹, Dr. Svetlana Mukhopleva; NEFU Associate Professor Vasily Vinokurov; experts in philology, Professor, Dr. Luiza Gabysheva, Professor, Dr. Nadezhda Pokatilova, and the Head of the Subdivision of the IHRISN (SB RAS), Dr. Ekaterina Romanova. Generally, a creative team of translators was created, consisting of teaching staff members and students of the IML&IS, consultants and experts in epics and the Yakut language and culture of the Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the North-East of Russia, NEFU, these include, first of all, Professor Vasily Illarionov as well as Yakut language translators – Dr. Tamara Petrova, Associate Professor of the ILCPE, NEFU – among them.

At the pre-production stage, there was a scrupulous scientific research work as well as preliminary translation work; students were completing their final and term paper research projects on the topic of olonkho translation; they also worked on the translation of several separate songs of olonkho during their translation internship. These translations were not included into the final version of the translation, with the exception of extracts completed by Agrafena Ivanova, Zoya Kholmogorova and Irina Popova.

Despite the fact that the preliminary works have been carried out a long time ago, I got accustomed to the thought that it was after these seminars and lectures that served as the starting point for this scrupulous, large-scale project on the Yakut-English translation of a fundamental work by P. A. Oyunsky at the Department of Translation of the IML&IS NEFU.

Pavel Chernykh, the translator of the poem *The Red Shaman* by P. A. Oyunsky into Russian, writes the following about olonkho: “The language of the original text is incredibly beautiful. Unfortunately,

¹ Here and onwards referred to as IHRISN (SB RAS)

this beauty is lost in the translation”, because “Yakut poetry is based on the use of alliterations and untranslatable play of words” [19]. The NEFU team of translators encountered the same challenge. We had to justify our own point of view in scientific article publications and scientific conference reports; using the translation as the practical research material, my postgraduate student, Zoya Tarasova successfully defended her Candidate (PhD) Degree Thesis.

However, the most prominent project was our own translation – a full-text English translation of the olonkho by P. A. Oyunsky titled *Nurgun Bootur, the Swift*, published in 2013 (according to some technical issues the year of publication is 2014 in the book) by the *Renaissance Books* Publishing House in Folkestone, United Kingdom [20].

To some extent, this project filled in the lacuna in the Yakut theoretical and applied translation into the world language owing to the principles of translation, which I developed.

Presently, translators into English and other languages following the suggested guidelines in the process of creating new translations; for instance, the series of olonkho created by regional olonkho tellers, published and edited by Dr. Vasily Illarionov: Daria Tomskaya – Chaika and her olonkho *Kyys Kylaabynai the Warrior* (Yak.: *Kyys Kylaabynai Buhatyryr*; Rus.: *Bogatyрка Kyys Kylaabynai*) performed following the folklore storytelling traditions of the Verkhoyansk region [21]; Vasily Karataev performed following the Viluy tradition of folklore storytelling and his olonkho *Ogo Tulaaikh Warrior* (Yak.: *Ogo Tulaaikh Buhatyryr*; Rus.: *Ogo Tulaaikh Bogatyr*) [22]; or the olonkho for children by Semyon Chernogradsky *Khaptaljin Baatyr Who Has Khopto Buurai Horse* (Yak.: *Khopto Buurai attakh Khaptaljin Baatyr*) [23]. All these texts mentioned above were translated by Varvara (Alekseeva) Neustroeva, who was the member of the olonkho translation team headed by Alina Nakhodkina.

Referring back to the full-text English translation of the olonkho by P. A. Oyunsky, it is worth quoting Shirin Akiner, Professor of the University of Cambridge, below there is the original version of Dr. Shirin Akiner’s review of the translation [24]:

Personal Reflections on

Olonkho: Nurgun Botur the Swift

(English translation of ancient Yakut epic), Renaissance Books, Folkestone UK, 2014

By (Dr) Shirin Akiner, London, April 2014

The publication of the English translation of the Olonkho epic is a truly landmark event. First and foremost, it is a treasure trove of Yakut history, wisdom, folk traditions and beliefs, dating back over centuries, if not indeed millennia. It is full of extraordinary imagery, kinetic energy and a host of superhuman heroes and heroines, demons, witches, warriors and wizards. The realms of humans, animals and spirits are blurred, creating a mystical unity that cuts across conventional boundaries. Similes and metaphors forge unexpected associations, mapping out a strangely exotic world. A young girl, for example, is as ‘beautiful as an ermine, her lips sparkled like red fox fur, she had her eyebrows pencilled like a Kamchatka sea otter ... her shining face glistening like the shine of my nine-beamed whole, white sun...’; a hero ‘rides a fleet of foot black horse, born standing on the border of the clear white sky ...’; a warrior rages ‘the sound of a saw cried with feeling, the sound of pincers clanged with fierceness, dust flew, mist arose, as if a snowstorm blew or a whirlwind twisted, a tree was cut a magical wind was drawn ...’. It is impossible to do justice to this great work by citing a few phrases, but even these brief snatches may perhaps give some idea of the incantatory momentum of the poetry.

Another reason why this publication is so important is that it commemorates the life and work of an outstanding Yakut scholar, poet and inspirational national leader: Platon Alekseevich Oyunsky (1893-1939). His love of Yakut epics was rooted in a deep understanding of, and respect for, his native culture. He devoted much of his life to collecting and transcribing the epics, which are known collectively as ‘Olonkho’. Some of the individual tales run to thousands of lines; the one that forms the basis of the present publication consists of more than 36,000 lines. It is a tribute to Platon Oyunsky that a younger generation of scholars is now carrying forward his work and making it accessible to new audiences at home and abroad. It is fitting that ‘Olonkho’ should have been recognised by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Today, the Yakut tradition is taking its rightful place in comparative studies of the oral epic tradition around the world.

Finally, the English translation of this work is itself something of a masterpiece. The rhymes and rhythms of the original are conveyed with a colour and verve that makes the text bounce off the page to captivate the reader with a riot of sounds, smells and visual imagery. It is a delight to have access to this wonderful tale. It is of

course best to hear it recited by a professional Yakut story-teller, replete with extravagant grimaces, grunts, and gestures, not to mention clickings and clackings – but even to read the text to oneself is to embark on a marvellous adventure.

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In his letter to me, Honoured Professor of NEFU, Assistant Director of Research at the Scott Polar Research Institute (Cambridge University, England, UK), Dr. Piers Vitebsky gave his personal reflections on the English translation of the olonkho originally written by P. A. Oyunsky: “It is a truly great achievement, and clearly the outcome of a great deal of work!” [25].

This project devoted to olonkho translation allowed holding scientific research based on experimental and published materials with the goal of unifying dispersed facts on the comparative and contrastive research in the field of Yakut language translation; all this was fulfilled with the aim of providing a greater understanding of and a deeper analysis of the Yakut heroic epic poetic structure, the typology of translation peculiarities and methods implemented to reach linguistic and semantic adequacy of the translated text.

Conclusion

The importance and necessity for holding such projects was governed by the practical absence of theoretical grounds for such a translation and such a translating tradition in general. The linguistic asymmetry occurring in the process of decoding within such diverse language systems is of a special interest. The research results which were deduced with the project framework are constantly presented and confirmed at scientific conferences devoted to the problems of olonkho translation. The work which was completed with the project framework is not only of a cultural and scientific but also of an educational value; the educational aspect of the project is as equally important as the previous ones; it is aimed at engaging the young student population in learning about the Yakut culture heritage and in holding scientific research and completing translation projects based on the olonkho materials. In the course of several years, the IML&IS has been holding research on the translation to/from non-related languages.

This interest does not limit itself in the scope of linguistics; there are also inter-disciplinary researches in the field of literature, culture studies, history, semiotics, etc. Undergraduate and postgraduate students testify their research results at various scientific conferences, participate in scholarship programs, continue doing research on their research topics in the postgraduate studies program and defend their Candidate Degree theses. There is a visible interest in the Yakut epic heritage and comparative studies devoted to this folklore material. Thus, the heroic epic olonkho first attracted close attention in the middle of the 19th century and continues to do so in the present time-period. In the modern-day world, the translation of olonkho stepped out of the boundaries of Yakutia and Russia. Owing to the translations, readers worldwide are given the opportunity to get acquainted with the culture, history, and art of the Yakut people, previously unknown to them. IML&IS NEFU is holding a large series of research and activities on helping the Republic integrate into the world society and to promote the scientific and cultural achievements of the Yakut people, and by doing so, to help preserve the Yakut cultural heritage and create a positive image of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) on a global scale.

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