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## **SPATIAL AND CULTURAL DISLOCATION OF EPIC NAMES AND WAYS TO OVERCOME IT IN TRANSLATION**

*Abstract.* The research objective is to consider various aspects of the translation of the Yakut epic tradition: linguoculturological, lexical, stylistic and phonetic, including spatial and cultural dislocation of epic proper names (PN), the transfer of which into another language causes particular difficulties. The concept of PN includes proper names and vocabulary specific to a particular culture. The relevance of this work is due to the lack of theoretical and methodological work on the principles of the translation of Yakut epic texts, as well as the need to create adequate translations of Yakut texts in other languages. The main research methods are the comparative method and methods of phonological analysis. The methodological basis was the works of foreign and Russian researchers on phonology: L. V. Shcherba, L. R. Zinder, V. N. Vitomskaya; on the theory and practice of translation: A. V. Superanskaya, T. A. Kazakova, J. Catford; the works of researchers on the theory of the Yakut language and linguistic problems of the study of Yakut olonkho: O. N. Betlingk, N. D. Dyachkovsky, E. I. Korkina, I. V. Pukhov; on the translation of the Olonkho epic into Russian: T. I. Petrova, et al. The study analyzes examples from various epic texts taken from previously published sources and manuscripts, as well as from the first full-text English translation of the Yakut heroic epic Olonkho *Nurgun Botur the Swift* by P. A. Oyunsky, 2014. The article presents widely the ways of overcoming the cultural incompatibility of PN and other diverse cultural-specific components when translating them from Yakut into Russian and English. As the results of the research, such translation techniques as transcription in combination with transliteration are proposed, for which a table of practical transcription of Yakut phonemes into Russian and English has been developed; translation using an analogue; approximate translation; simplification of the sound and graphic forms of the word in translation, etc. At the same time, the author separately mentions the undesirability of cultural substitution of concepts.

*Keywords:* epic; Olonkho; translation; translation technique; proper name (PN); dislocation; cultural-specific component; Yakut; Russian; English.

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## **Пространственная и культурная дислокация эпических имён собственных и способы её преодоления в переводе**

*Аннотация.* Целью настоящего исследования является рассмотрение различных аспектов перевода текстов якутской эпической традиции: лингвокультурологических, лексических, стилистических и фонетических, включая пространственную и культурную дислокацию эпических имён собственных (ИС), передача которых на другой язык вызывает особые трудности. Понятие ИС включает в себя имена

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собственные и лексику, специфичную для конкретной культуры. Актуальность данной работы обусловлена отсутствием теоретических и методологических работ по принципам и особенностям перевода якутских эпических текстов, а также необходимостью создания адекватных переводов якутских текстов на других языках. Основными методами исследования являются сопоставительный метод и методы фонологического анализа. Методологической основой послужили труды зарубежных и отечественных исследователей по фонологии: Л. В. Щербы, Л. Р. Зиндер, В. Н. Витомской; по теории и практике перевода: А. В. Суперапанской, Т. А. Казаковой, Дж. Кэтфорда; труды исследователей по теории якутского языка и лингвистическим проблемам изучения якутского олонхо: О. Н. Бетлингга, Н. Д. Дьячковского, Е. И. Коркиной, И. В. Пухова; по переводу эпоса олонхо на русский язык: Т. И. Петровой и др. В исследовании анализируются примеры из разных эпических текстов, взятых из ранее опубликованных источников и рукописей, а также из первого полнотекстового английского перевода якутского героического эпоса олонхо «Нюргун Боотур Стремительный» П. А. Ойунского, опубликованного в 2014 г. В статье широко представлены способы преодоления культурной несовместимости ИС и других разнообразных культурно-специфических компонентов при переводе их с якутского языка на русский и английский. В качестве результатов исследования предлагаются такие переводческие техники как транскрипция в объединении с транслитерацией, для чего разработана таблица практической транскрипции якутских фонем на русский и английский языки; перевод с помощью аналога; приблизительный перевод; упрощение звуковой и графической формы слова в переводе и др. При этом автор отдельно упоминает о нежелательности культурной подмены понятий.

**Ключевые слова:** эпос; Олонхо; перевод; техника перевода; имя собственное (ИС); дислокация; культурно-специфический компонент; якутский; русский; английский.

## Introduction

The modern translation theory emphasizes the need to preserve the ethnic and cultural specifics of the original. This becomes especially relevant when considering translation from the cultural point of view. Recently, a great attention has been paid to the cultural approach; there has been an increased interest in studying the cultures of different peoples. There is an assumption that Translation Studies occupies a bordering position between Linguistics and Cultural Studies, since translation contributes to the dialogue of cultures.

One of the reasons why the reflection of culture in a language is of interest for linguists is that linguistic means of ethnic-cultural semantics impede intercultural communication. This fact makes their comprehensive study necessary. The article examines the multidimensional issues of translating the Yakut heroic epic Olonkho into the Russian and English languages.

## Brief overview of the Yakut epic tradition

Olonkho, the ancient heroic epic of Yakut people, is one of the striking examples of the archaic epic. It reflects the identity of the language and culture. The Olonkho epic consists of numerous separate legends and poems. Olonkho performers are called *olonkhosuts*. Each Olonkho is named after the main character: *Er Sogotokh*, *Nurgun Botur*, *Eles Botur*, *Kulun Kulustuur*; etc. It is hardly possible to tell the number of works of Olonkho and give a list of their names since a significant part of those existed earlier in the oral form were not recorded. Moreover, most of Olonkhos, reproduced before the Great October Socialist Revolution (1917), were destroyed or subjected to severe distortion.

The Olonkho presents all the richness of the ancient Yakut mythology. In myths, people embodied their ideas in images, using personification of phenomena and objects of reality. According to the Olonkho mythology, the Universe consists of three worlds: Upper (sky), Middle (earth) and Under (what Christians call hell).

The main idea of the Olonkho is the safeguarding and defense of the peaceful life of the human race on earth, eradication of evil and the establishment of happiness for their compatriots. To analyze the alleged cultural incompatibility with the language and culture of translation, and spatial dislocation or divergence of Yakut epic PN from the target language (TL), we turned to the “Дьүлүруйар Ньургун Боотур” Olonkho by Platon Oyunsky, an outstanding Yakut public figure, writer and olonkhosut; its translation into Russian by Vladimir Derzhavin (1975), the English translation of Song 1 by Ruslan

Skrybykin *Njurgun Bootur the Impetuous* by P. A. Oiuunuskay (1995), and the full-text English translation of the *Olonkho Nurgun Botur the Swift* by Platon Oyunsky. *The original translation from the Sakha language supervised by Alina Nakhodkina* (2014); as well as *Eles Bootur*, an *Olonkho* by Petr Ogotoev, one of the outstanding Yakut *olonkhosuts*, its English translation by Albina Scryabina (2002) and the Russian translation by Maria Alekseeva (2002).

### **Translation techniques used to overcome spatial and cultural dislocation of Yakut PN**

In her fundamental work “The structure of the proper names”, A. V. Superanskaya, a Russian researcher in the field of Onomastics, defines PN as nouns that serve as names for individual objects distinguished from a number of homogeneous ones [1, p. 29]. Thus, PN fulfill the function of individualizing nomination [2, p. 9].

There are different opinions about what translation techniques should be used when translating PN from one language to another. A. V. Superanskaya proposes to transmit them using the following means: translation, transcription and transliteration [1, p. 29]. L. V. Shcherba stated: “The most general question can be formulated as follows: whether to take spelling or pronunciation from foreigners. <...> If you ask me, life has irrevocably decided this issue in favor of pronunciation, although <...> not without occasional curtsy to the letter” [3, p. 191]. Modern theorists of translation T. Savory, A. Schweitzer, A. Neubert, O. Kade, and G. Eger [2] also suggest such translation techniques as explication, translation by analogue and mixed translation.

In the translations of Yakut epic tradition, done by Vladimir Derzhavin, Maria Alekseeva (Rus.); Albina Scryabina, Ruslan Skrybykin (Eng.); Jacque Carro (Fr.), most of the PN are translated by transcription, with the obvious position of the translators to preserve the national coloring of PN. Anthroponyms, toponyms, ergonyms, etc., are traditionally translated into another language using the translation techniques indicated by Superanskaya. When translating PN with a certain semantic content, translator must render the semantic and emotional information contained in such names.

In order to achieve maximum equivalence when rendering PN into a foreign language, besides transcription, transliteration, and translation (or calque, in other words), translator can also make use of such techniques as the translation with a traditional equivalent, translation with analogue or approximate translation, occasional renaming, contextual substitution, explication, or explanatory translation. It all depends on translators, their skills, imagination, level of background knowledge, etc.

When translating *Olonkho* PN as part of non-equivalent vocabulary, translator faces difficulties in conveying the missing letters and sounds, as well as culture-specific words and linguistic lacunas or lexical gaps. Let us consider an example of the Yakut word *удаҕан*: (Rus.) *удалан*, (Eng.) *udagan*. When translating the Yakut word *удаҕан*, meaning “a woman-shaman”, the translators used transcription. It should be borne in mind here that transcription renders the sound of an original PN. Russian-speaking and English-speaking readers cannot relate to these names due to the lack of background knowledge. That is why it is important to preserve the semantic component of the name or a culture-specific word wherever it is possible. In this example, translator can use analogs: (Rus.) ‘колдунья’ (witch), ‘ведунья’ (witch), ‘ведьма’ (witch), ‘шаманка’ (shaman-woman) and (Eng.) ‘sorceress’, ‘witch’, ‘enchantress’. This technique of conveying the meaning of the name creates a clearer picture of the character in the recipient speaking the TL, however, confronting the established tradition of rendering Yakut names into the Russian language.

In the Yakut-Russian translation, it is quite common that epithets accompanying PN (epithet names, nicknames – a term by Mayer-Meletinsky) [4, p. 45], are rendered by transcription and/or transliteration, which results in a “meaningless set of sounds” [5, p. 247]. This is what is seen in the translations of Petr Ogotoev’s *Eles Bootur* [6; 7; 8]: transcription along with transliteration are used to render epithets, for example, epithets defining Jigistey, the demon-*abaahy* of the Under World, which greatly diminishes the expressiveness and originality of this vivid image. This translation ignores the established tradition of rendering set epithets in the Russian-English translation, for example: Иван Грозный – Ivan the Terrible.

(Yakut) Уос Тардар, Өхөх Хабар, Ус Күлүк, Түгнэри Холорук, Тимир Дьигистэй обургун [6, p. 68].

Literally: cutting the vein (referring to the method of slaughtering livestock, traditional for the Yakuts in the past, i. e. killing within an instant); bloodthirsty; having three shadows; a tornado destroying and turning everything upside down on its way; made from iron (i. e. belonging to the Under World), relentless, cruel and daring Jigistei.

(Rus.) По названию Юес Тардар, Есех Хабар, Юс Кюлюк, Тюгнэри Холорук, Тимир Дьигистэй, черной кровью питающийся, имеющий три тени, черным вихрем прикрывающийся [7, p. 65];

(Eng.) I am notorious three-shadower, Reverse Whirlwind Timir Djigistei the Great [8, p. 46].

The name and accompanying epithets of the demon-warrior of the Under World in Petr Ogotoev's *Eles Bootur* Olonkho were translated into Russian sequentially: by transcription and calque. I assume the translator applied such a complex technique striving to preserve ethnic identity and convey the meaning of the name. Thus, the reasons for using this approach to translation are clear, but unwittingly this makes the text cumbersome. In addition to translation errors, there are a number of semantic ones in the Russian and English translations, for example, “черным вихрем прикрывающийся” and “Reverse Whirlwind”. Both examples demonstrate the misunderstood semantics of the Yakut expression “Түгнэри Холорук” where the tornado is not turned-over, but is turning-over (everything on its way). Such errors are directly related to the level of the language competence. The semantics of this PN is not fully revealed: the ominous nickname of this demon Esekh Khabar (Drinking Blood Clots) remains only an exotic phrase, though the meaning of Yuos Tardar (tearing a jugular vein) is revealed, which is why the translator describes the character as “... eating black blood ...”: the demon drinks dark venous blood. A polysemous word ‘*тимир*’ means both iron as a noun and an adjective, and cruelty/cruel. The demons of the Under World *abaahy* or *ajarai*, according to Yakut beliefs, were made of iron. “Timir” is a PN, commonly used in the current Yakut life, but with a different connotation: “persistent”, “strong”, “robust”. Cf. the translation of the same character's name in Platon Oyunsky's “Дьулуруйар Ньургун Боотур” (*Nurgun Botur the Swift*) Olonkho into Russian and English: the previous translations of *Eles Bootur* influenced the choice of the epic translation strategy:

(Yakut) Өхөх Харбыыр, Ус Күлүк, Түүн сырыылаах Түгнэри Холорук, Тимир Дьигистэй бухатыыр обургун [9, p. 127];

(Rus.) Пьющий кровь сгустками, Имеющий три тени, В ночи крадущийся, Разрушительный смерч, Тимир (железный) Джигистей [my translation – A. N.];

(Eng.) Ekehkh Kharbir, Three Shadows, The night stalker, The deceiving twister, Whose whirlwind turns everything upside down Mighty Timir Jigistei [10, p. 110].

### **Spatial phonetic dislocation of Yakut PN and translation techniques to overcome it**

Speaking about the peculiarities of translating from the Yakut language, one can base on the statement by T. I. Petrova, a modern researcher of the Yakut-Russian translation that “a really insuperable difficulty is the transmission of the phonetic arrangement of the text built in accordance with the laws of vowel harmony in the Yakut language” [11, p. 7]. Thus, when we talk about the phonetic presentation of the Yakut PN when translating into Russian and English, it should be recognized that this question is of particular importance for the translator.

**Diphthongs.** The greatest difficulty in translating from the Yakut language into other languages, especially non-cognate and multi-structural (Russian, English), is caused by the Yakut diphthongs. This is primarily due to their structural features (Yakut diphthongs are false and rising), the absence of diphthongs in the Russian phonetic system and the presence of qualitatively different two-word ones (false and falling) in English. In the Yakut language, there are only 4 diphthongs *yo* [uo], *uэ* [ie], *ыа* [iэ], *yө* [yε]; yet, diphthongs in the Yakut language are as common as monophthongs. From the phonological point of view, Yakut diphthongs (*yo* [uo], *uэ* [ie], *ыа* [iэ], *yө* [yε]) are individual phonemes, which is one of the features of the Yakut language. In the system of vowels, they are opposed

to both short and long vowels. They are opposed to the short vowels qualitatively and quantitatively, and to the long ones – mainly qualitatively. The presentation of diphthongs by two letters, adopted in the Yakut graphics, reflects their actual composition quite nominally [12, p. 88].

In all languages, the universal feature is that a diphthong is presented by a combination of two vowels forming one syllable [13, p. 209]. Usually, this is the feature present in definitions of the diphthong.

The Yakut diphthongs were first described by Otto von Böhlingk in his fundamental work “Über die Sprache der Jakuten” (“On the language of the Yakuts”). He writes that the Yakut language has four diphthongs “with a heavy ending”, consisting of a combination of a “light” vowel with a “heavy” one: *ыа, иэ, уо, үө*. Subsequently, Böhlingk clarifies that “the first diphthong is dominated by the light, standing in front vowel (ы), but the other three – by the subsequent heavy ones (э, о, ө), sometimes so strong that they are taken for long vowels” [14, p. 133].

Some English phoneticists refer to the strongest element of a diphthong as a ‘nucleus’, and the part pronounced with a gliding articulation as a ‘glide’ (gliding sound) [15, p. 24]. In the present work, these terms are used to denote the dominant and subordinate elements of diphthongs. In the pronunciation of Yakut diphthongs, the final element, the nucleus, prevails over the initial, the glide.

In general, the Yakut language has strict limitations regarding the usage of vowels in adjoining syllables or within a word on the basis of their palatability and labiality. These restrictions are consistent in nature and represent a phonetic law called ‘synharmonism’ or ‘vowel harmony’, which is a complete progressive assimilation of vowels within a word [16, pp. 48–50].

As mentioned above, the Yakut Olonkho characters often have two or even more names: the main and accompanying epithets, appearing along with the first one in certain situations only (when first introduced to the reader, extraordinary plot circumstances, etc.). For instance, in the *Eles Bootur Olonkho*, present in the name of the Lord of the Under World: (Yakut) Арсан Дуолай, Луоҕайар Луо Хаан; (Rus.) Луюгайар Луо Хаан ... по имени Арсан Дуолай; (Eng.) Arsan Duolay, Luokhaiar Luo Khaan; the Yakut diphthong *уо* [uo] was transmitted to Russian and English with the use of translation transcription and transliteration and, therefore, did not undergo significant material changes. As suggested above, the translators chose this translation technique in order to preserve the ethnic identity of a PN, despite the fact that this technique makes it cumbersome, complicated and difficult to understand. Cf. the translation of the above-mentioned PN in the *Nurgun Botur the Swift Olonkho*: Arsan Dolai Logayar Luo Khan (my translation – A. N.), in this example, the Yakut letter and sound combination *уо* [uo] is transmitted in Russian and English, respectively, as *о* [o] – *o* [o] in polysyllabic words. Here, the original sounding of the word almost does not change, it adapts to the phonetic requirements and norms of the TL, thus facilitating its perception by a foreign reader, for example, *Суодалба* – Sodalba. However, this technique of transferring Yakut diphthongs is not universal. The *Nurgun Botur the Swift Olonkho* contains a large number of PN with monosyllabic components with the diphthong *уо* [uo] in the initial or final positions. For example, *Күо, Vom, Уол, Луо*, and others. In this case, the phoneme-by-phoneme re-creation of the diphthong *уо* [uo] does not make it difficult for a foreign language reader to perceive the Yakut PN; moreover, it contributes to the introduction of the “local flavor” into the TL text [17, p. 91]. In some cases, for the preservation and rendering of semantics, monosyllabic epithet names are translated into English with a help of a calque, for example, *Уом* – Fire/Fiery; *күо* – красавица, a beauty; *уол* – парень, сын, boy, son. The Yakut Olonkho does not demonstrate the use of the three other Yakut diphthongs *иэ* [ie], *ыа* [ɪ̯a], *үө* [y̯e], equally difficult to read, in similar positions in PN.

When transferring the next Yakut diphthong *үө* [y̯e] in the name of *Күөгэлдьин* in Petr Ogotoev’s *Eles Bootur Olonkho* into Russian, I also leave only a compensation, an approximate translation of its nucleus *ө* [yo], cf. the Yakut vowel of the back *э* [e] is replaced by the Russian front vowel *е* [e], with its English analogue *e* [e]; the Yakut consonant sound *дь* [dʒ] is transmitted by the Russian letter combination *дж*, not *дь*, cf. English *j* [j]. Thus, instead of the cumbersome Russian *Кюэгэлдьин*



[8, p. 110] (there is no English equivalent of this PN in this translation), I suggested the following variants of transferring the PN:

(Rus.) Кёгелджин;

(Eng.) The daughter of Kun Toyon Kegeljin *udagan* the sorceress [10, p. 289];

Cf. (Yakut) Түөнэ Моҕол оҕонньор [6, p. 100];

(Rus.) Тюенэ Могол старый, Дух жилища родного [7, p. 95];

(Eng.) The Spirit of my house Grandfather Mokhol [8, p. 61],

note that Түөнэ name is omitted in the English translation. See my variants of translation:

(Rus.) Тёне Могол, старенький дух родного очага;

(Eng.) Toneh Mogol.

In this example, the Yakut diphthong *yö* [yɛ] is transmitted into Russian with the use of the translation transcription by the phoneme *ё* [йо], despite the fact that the alternation of yotized vowels in Russian, as a rule, makes it difficult to pronounce and read words. Proceeding from this, the Yakut diphthong *yö* [yɛ], in the presence of a yotized vowel sound in a Russian word, should be replaced at translation into Russian by the phoneme *е* [е], cf. Eng. *o* [o]. In my opinion, this solution allows reaching a certain phonetic compromise.

The Yakut diphthong *uэ* [ie], as well as diphthongs *yö* [uo] и *yө* [yɛ], consists of a glide and a nucleus in the final position; therefore, it is proposed to leave only the syllable-building component of the diphthong when translating PN into Russian: phoneme <e>, cf. Eng. *e* [e]. To make reading and pronunciation of the name easier for a Russian-speaking reader, one should replace the Yakut sound of the back э [e] in the second and third syllables of the word with the Russian sound of the front е [e], cf. Eng. *e* [e]. Before the English translation of the *Nurgun Botur the Swift* Olonkho saw the light in 2014, translations of the Yakut epics have the following versions of transferring PN with the diphthong *uэ* [ie], e. g. the name *Иэргэҕэй*: (Rus.) *Иэргээй*, the English version is missing. Zoya Tarasova offers her translation variants: (Rus.) *Еперей*, (Eng.) *Eregei* [18, p. 160]. Similar simplifications are used in the transfer of such complex Yakut PN as the name of the female fertility goddess *Иэйэхсум*, “the patron goddess and protector of the human race, horse, cattle and dog guardian” [19, p. 423]:

(Yakut) Иэйэхситтээх илин кырыыта [6, p. 59];

(Rus.) где обитель милостивой Богини Иэйиэхсит [7, p. 57];

(Eng.) there is no equivalent in the English translation of the PN in Petr Ogotoev’s Olonkho [8].

My variants of translation:

(Rus.) Богиня Иэхсит;

(Eng.) Ekhsit, Mother-Goddess [10, p. 45].

A number of PN in the studied translations are rendered into Russian in their original spelling, or not translated at all, which is typical of the English translation:

(Yakut) Доргуйа баай тойон [6];

(Rus.) Доргуйа бай-тойон [7, p. 35];

(Eng.) courageous hero [8, p. 26].

My variant:

(Rus.) богатый хан Доргуйа;

(Eng.) rich Dorgu-Khan [20, p. 71].

As a bold assumption, I used a short form of the PN in the English translation by analogy with the PN “Kubla-Khan” [21, p. 282], derived from the name and title of the Mongol Khubilai Khan, or another PN “Batu-Khan” derived from the abbreviated form of the name “Khan Batyi”, the grandson of Genghis Khan, likewise. It was also suggested to replace the word of Mongolian origin *тойон* [toyon] with the word “хан/khan”, borrowed from the Turkic language and known to Russian and English readers [20, p. 71]. Eventually, I abandoned such an alternative experimental approach using analogs in translation of non-equivalent national-specific vocabulary. This idea was not reflected in the full-text English translation of Oyunsky’s Olonkho because of the concerns of substituting cultural

concepts. Still the letter combination ‘*йа*’ is transmitted by the Russian equivalent ‘*я*’, because, as the modern Russian linguist Tamara Kazakova rightly notes, “in many cases <...> a meticulous re-creation of phonetic features can be simplified” [22, p. 64].

Fourth, the last diphthong of the Yakut language – *ыа* [iɜ]: (Yakut) *ыһыах*, (Rus.) *ысыах*, (Eng.) *yɜyakh* (summer solstice feast). This PN was also translated by transliteration in an attempt to preserve the national colour, while translators ignore the fact that thus Yakut sounds and words are significantly distorted, which, ironically, is opposite to their intentions, causing damage to the original sound form of the word, and, therefore, to the ethnic identity of the source language (SL). Thus, the Yakut and Russian initial sounds *ы* [i:] and *ы* [ы] are replaced by the English letter “y”, which “clutters up” the SL in translation. In the English translation of the Yakut epic *Nurgun Botur the Swift* by P. A. Oyunsky I suggested to use a “lighter” front sound *e* [e]. When translating this diphthong *ыа* [iɜ] into Russian and English, only its nucleus should be left and translated with the Russian sound *э* [э] and English sound *e* [e]:

(Rus.) *ысэх*;

(Eng.) *Esekh* [20, p. 70].

The translation of the Yakut diphthongs *yo*, *yø*, *uə* and *ыа* into Russian and English using the translation technique of compensation, or approximate translation, takes into account the features of phonetic tactics of the TL; it also simplifies much the sound and spelling of the Yakut PN.

When transcribing Yakut diphthongs (*yo* [uo], *uə* [ie], *ыа* [iɜ], *yø* [yɛ]) into the Russian and English languages, one should consider their positions in the word, phonemic environment, as well as principles of phonetic harmony, convenience of perception and the ethnic-linguistic identity of foreign PN. The following table provides a clearer demonstration of preferable Russian and English variants of the translation transcription of the Yakut diphthongs:

Table 1

Yakut diphthongs	Russian transcription	English transcription
<i>yo</i> [uo]	<i>o</i> [o]/ in the beginning and end positions of one-syllable words – <i>yo</i>	<i>o</i> [o]/ in the beginning and end positions of one-syllable words – <i>uo</i>
<i>yø</i> [yɛ]	<i>ě</i> [jɐ]/ in the words with yotized vowels ( <i>э</i> , <i>ё</i> , <i>ю</i> ) – <i>e</i> [e]	<i>e</i> [e], <i>o</i> [o]
<i>uə</i> [ie]	<i>e</i> [e], <i>uə</i>	<i>e</i> [e]
<i>ыа</i> [iɜ]	<i>э</i> [э]	<i>e</i> [e]

It should be noted that there is still no standard practical transcription for rendering Yakut words into modern languages. This table will hopefully overcome this void.

Unlike in the English phonetic system, where the same letter can represent several sounds, in the Yakut one, each sound has a separate graphic design except for the nasal yota *ӱ* [j], which does not have a special character in the alphabet and is denoted, along with the sonorous consonant sound *ӱ* [j], by the letter “й”.

The translation transcription of Yakut sounds in other languages is not limited only with their articulatory-acoustic features and mechanical transfer to the TL but requires a deeper comparative study of the phonetic systems of the source language and the target language, the historical evolution of sounds, their compatibility, positional and dialectal vibrations, a search for one-to-one equivalents and the most reasonable and adequate replacement of the SL units by the TL ones.

**Monophthongs.** The alphabet of the Yakut language contains the entire Russian alphabet with the addition of a number of letters and combinations characteristic of Yakut sounds. This group includes the letters *ҕ*, *о*, *һ*, *дь*, *һб*, *һг*, *һ*.

Both Russian and English lack any equivalents of the Yakut  $\gamma$  vowel. However, in the practice of translating from the Yakut language into Russian, it is usually translated by the Russian labial vowel of the front  $\gamma$  [йу], less often by  $y$  [y], which are traditionally transferred into English as -*yu*/-*ju*- and the sound *u* [u]:

(Yakut) *myhulga*;

(Rus.) *тюсюльгэ*;

(Eng.) *tjuhjulge*.

It is obvious here that the Yakut culture-specific word *myhulga*, meaning the place for holding the Yakut *kumis* (fermented mare's milk) sprinkling festival *Esekh* was translated into Russian using the translation transcription, into English – using translation transliteration. In the English translation of the PN, the translator replaced the Yakut  $\gamma$  with an unreadable combination *ju* (cf. Rus. *ю*). Indeed, the Yakut pharyngeal *h* [h] in the intervocal position is much louder than the English glottal consonant sound *h* [h]; however, in this case, this variant is most applicable. In the English translation of the olonkho *Nurgun Botur the Swift* I offered a translation option: (Eng.) **tuhulgeh**. I also added the final consonant phoneme [h] to show the change in the length of the preceding phoneme or its changed pronunciation, cf. “*илгэ*” – “*ilgeh*”, “*сэргэ*” – “*sergeh*”, “*Түөнэ*” – “*Toneh*”:

A wide and vast **tuhulgeh** was set up, Rich in assorted food, The *Esekh* was held As lavishly as a royal feast... [10, p. 262].

The Yakut language has minor dialectal fluctuations in the use of narrow and wide vowels *u* [i] – *э* [д], *y* [я] – *ө* [һ], *ы* [ү] – *а* [а], *y* [у] – *о* [о]. When translating Yakut words with dialect fluctuations, it is necessary to preserve their original sound and spelling, since such details often contain significantly important information regarding the text as a whole and the general author's intention.

The sound **ө** [һ] is a front mid vowel, labialized [16, p. 42]. Just like the previous Yakut sound  $\gamma$  [я], **ө** [һ] has no equivalents in both Russian and English. In Russian, it is customary to transmit it with the vowel sound of the front *ё* [yo], which, in turn, is usually transcribed into English as *e* [e], and less often – with the letter and sound combination *yo*-. For example, the Yakut PN of the abyss serving the entrance to the Under World, *Чөркөчүөх*, (Rus.) *Чёркёчүёх*, (Eng.) *Cherkechekh*, contains typical variants of assonance for the Yakut verse, repetition of the labialized front vowels **ө** – **ө** – *yө*; and consonance, repetition of the noise consonants *ч* – *ч*, *к* – *х*.

The PN is translated into Russian and English by transcription. The Yakut monophthong **ө** [һ] and the diphthong *yө* [ye] are rendered by the same sound: in the Russian translation, both sounds are replaced by sound *ё* [йо], in English – by the back vowel *o* [o].

The triple use of the high yotized vowel *ё* [yo] in the Russian translation of the PN makes it difficult to pronounce. The sound **ө** [һ] in the first two syllables of the word should be rendered by the Russian mid vowel *e* [e], leaving the translation of the diphthong *yө* [ye] by the sound *ё* [yo], based on the approximate translation principle. It is proposed to replace the Yakut **ө** [һ] with the English front sound *e* [e], since this sound is closer articulatory and acoustically to the original one than the back *o* [o]. The diphthong *yө* [ye] is also transmitted by the sound *e* [e], and the consonant *x* [x] is replaced by a combination *kh* [k], which is acceptable with the end position of the sound: (Rus.) *Черкечёх*, (Eng.) *Cherkechekh*:

They swung the cord And sent themselves to the bottom Of the malign Eluu **Cherkechekh**... [10, p. 145].

Thus, taking into account the Law of Harmony of the Yakut Vowels, according to which the front labialized sounds **ө** [һ] and **өө** [һ:] should be followed by only front labialized **ө** [һ], **өө** [һ:] and *yө* [ye] (for example, *өрөгөй* – luck, success; *өрөбүл* – a day off; *өлгөм* – abundance, generosity; *өһүөн* – vindictiveness, nastiness, etc.), **ө** [һ] and **өө** [һ:] should be transferred to Russian not by the high vowel *ё* [yo], but by the sounds *э* [э] in the beginning and *e* [e] in all other positions. Such a translation corresponds to the principle of the word euphony of the Yakut PN in foreign language translations.

The Yakut voiced uvular consonant sound **ҕ** [g] has no direct analogs in Russian and English. Skrybykin, who translated Song 1 of P. A. Oyunsky's “Дьулуруйар Ньургун Боотур” (“Djuluruyar



Nyurgun Bootur”) into English, rendered *ɣ* [g] with an unvoiced guttural aspirated combination *kh*. However, since consonant sounds become voiced in the intervocalic position, it is preferable to transmit this sound by the more similar English sound *g* [g]: (Eng.) Logayar. As for the Russian language, the closest sound is the voiced guttural consonant *ɣ* [r], cf. (Eng.) *g* [g], e. g., (Yakut) *Бохсоҕоллойдой*, (Rus.) *Бохсоҕоллойдой*, (Eng.) *Bohsogolloi*. This PN is transliterated into Russian and transcribed into English: the voiced uvular consonant *ɣ* [g] is replaced by the close Russian sound [r], with its English analogue being the sound [g]. In addition, in the English translation, there was a replacement of the Yakut and Russian unvoiced uvular *x* [x] with the English unvoiced velar *k* [k] (not *kh*), which greatly simplifies the perception of the PN without distorting its original sound: *оҕо* [o’go] – *ogo* [o’go], *удаҕан* [uda’gan] – *udagan* [uda’gan].

This translation variant is aimed at the convenient perception and pronunciation of the PN by the TL recipients, at the same time adhering to the principles of euphony and ethnic-linguistic coloring [2, pp. 21, 25].

Dialectal vibrations are rather typical of consonant sounds than vowels in the Yakut language. These variations form the following oppositions: voiced – unvoiced, front – mid, guttural – uvular, etc., and they are mainly caused by assimilative processes within the word. When translating Yakut words with a dialectal variation of sounds, one should be guided not by regulatory requirements (if any) or personal preferences, but by the authentic sound and spelling of the original word. For example, in the Yakut writing and speaking, the back sonant *h* [ɣ] often replaces the voiced uvular *ɣ* [g].

The Yakut sound *ɔ̆* [dʒ] often remains the same in the Russian translation, being rendered with the letter combination *ɔ̆*. This approach is not quite adequate, as the Yakut mid affricate *ɔ̆* [dʒ] is much more voiced and harder than the Russian soft front *ɔ̆* [dʲ]. Given this, one can assume that the Russian combination *ɔ̆ж* is more suitable for replacing the Yakut *ɔ̆* [dʒ] than *ɔ̆*. In English, this sound can be rendered by *j* [dʒ]:

(Yakut) *Ала Дьаргыстай*;

(Rus.) *Ала Дьаргыстай*;

(Eng.) *Ала Djargystai*.

I suggest the following translation variants: (Rus.) *Ала Джаргыстай*, (Eng.) *Ала Jargystai*:

He had the name of *Ала Jargystai* [10, p. 60].

Just as like *ɔ̆* [dʒ], the Yakut sound *h̆* [ɲ], with no Russian or English equivalents, is often remains the same in the Russian translation (cf. popular Yakut PN *Ньургун*, *Ньургуйана*, *Ньургустан(а)*, etc., moving from the oral epic tradition into the modern Yakut speech). The Yakut sound [ɲ] can be translated into English by the letter and sound combination *nj*:

(Yakut) *Ньургун Боотур*;

(Rus.) *Ньургун Боотур*;

(Eng) *Njurgun Bootur*.

It should be noted that in the V. V. Derzhavin’s Russian translation of the Olonkho, the mid soft *h̆* [ɲ] is reasonably conveyed by the Russian front sound *h* [ɲ], which, like other consonants of the Russian language, softens and, consequently, moves forward when positioned in front of the yotized vowels (*ѣ*, *ю*, *я*) and the front vowels *e* – *и*. Thus, when replacing the Yakut sound *y* [ɲ] in the combination – *Ньы* – by the Russian *ю* [jy] in – *Ню* – the original reading and sound of the PN is preserved [18, pp. 173–174].

The English version of the PN *Njurgun Bootur* [23, p. 3] contradicts the principles of harmony and convenience of perception and pronunciation of foreign PN. Therefore, I proposed to simplify and translate it as *Nurgun*, since the English vowel sound *u* [u] is pronounced as [ɛ] in the position before the consonant sound *r* [r]. The English form *Bootur*, in my opinion, brings an unnecessary association with the English word “boot” [bu:t]; hence, there appeared my translation variant of this PN – *Nurgun Botur*:

The warrior **Nurgun Botur** the Swift, With the fleet of foot black horse, Born standing on the border Of the clear, white sky... [10, p. 42].

The consonant *h* [ɲ] has no analogue in Russian; and there is a partial English equivalent sound *ng* [ŋ]. Nevertheless, the Russian texts often have the combination *hɛ* for the Yakut sound *h* [ɲ]: (Yakut) *Кыыс Ханҕыл*; (Rus.) *Кыыс Хангыл*; (Eng.) *Kyys Khanyl*. However, as stated before, the excessive phonetization when translating foreign PN often makes them bulky, ponderous and cumbersome and difficult to understand. The Yakut consonant *h* [ɲ] should be replaced by Russian *h* [h]: *Кыыс Ханыл*. Yet there are some exceptions: for example, for the sake of euphony and to avoid unnecessary associations in the *aranas* variant, the Yakut word *араҥас* was translated into English with the letter combination *ng* – *arangas*:

Buhra Dokhsun oburgu, Who has never been tamed, Got out Of his eighty-eight-legged Copper *arangas*, Caught hold of the black cloud Flying high At the top of the sky Above the Middle World, Sent four rolling thunderbolts, And bright flashes of lightning. He flew up swiftly, Shouting and roaring... [10, p. 301].

**Long vowels.** Long vowels, along with diphthongs, constitute one of the features of the Yakut language. In writing, the duration of a vowel in the Yakut language is indicated by its double graphic form. It is known that this phenomenon is typical of the languages that are at an early stage of their development and, as a rule, are characterized by simpler writing.

In the Yakut language, unlike Russian and English, there is no interrelation between the vowel length and the stress in the word: in a Yakut word, a long vowel can be in any position, and the stress falls on the last syllable. The stress in this language is based on force, and the duration on the length of the vowel pronunciation.

In some cases, as a phenomenon foreign to the target languages (English, Russian, French), the literal transmission of the vowel sound duration is not necessary, e. g. the Yakut PN of *Туйаарыма Куо* is transmitted to other languages with little or no change: (Rus.) *Туйаарыма Куо*, (Eng.) *Tuyaarima Kuo*.

Such a translation does not take into account the phonological features of the TL, since the identification of long vowels by doubling the corresponding letters is not typical of either Russian or English. In addition, the length of the vowel in the Yakut language does not affect the stress in the word. Therefore, the double Yakut vowels *aa* [a:] in the PN can be rendered to the TL as single *a* [a]: (Rus.) *Туйарыма*, (Eng.) *Tuyarima Kuo*.

It is important to note that the reproduction of double vowels during the transfer of Yakut PN to Russian and English often makes them unwieldy and hard to perceive: (Yakut) *Уот Чоохурумта*, (Rus.) *Уот Чоохурумта*, (Eng.) *Uot Chookhurutta* [18, p. 145]. Therefore, taking into account these fluctuations in the standards of using long vowel phonemes and the lack of interrelation of vowel length and word stress in the Yakut language, as well as rules of the TL, which do not denote the duration of vowels in writing, the letter-by-letter rendition of long vowels in polysyllabic words should be avoided when translating from the Yakut language into Russian and English. However, short monosyllabic words in the full-text English translation of the Yakut heroic epic P. A. Oyunsky's *Nurgun Botur the Swift* preserves the traditional spelling of PN with double vowels: Urung **Aar** Toyon (The Great White Lord) [10, p. xvii], **Aar**-Luuk-Mas (World Tree) [10, p. xxix], Aiy**y** (deities) and Aba**ahy** (demons) [10, p. xxviii], cf. also:

Baai Barilakh, Extremely generous, Nicknamed Baai Bayanai [10, p. 16].

Sometimes this is done for reasons of euphony to preserve the rhythmic organization of the oral epic tradition, or, as in the case of **Aan**-Alakhchyn to avoid a formal similarity with the English indefinite article “an”:

A noble woman, Khotun **Aan**-Alakhchyn – White Mankhalyn was her name... [10, p. 17].

### Conclusion

Thus, the article presents a discussion about the transfer of Yakut epic proper names and other culture-specific components on a wide practical material. The ways of overcoming the cultural incompatibility of these phenomena are considered. The analysis of existing traditional and

recommended translation techniques for the transfer of culture-specific components at the lexical, culturological and phonetic levels is given. Excessive phonetization and such translation techniques as transliteration, letter-by-letter, of Yakut PN into Russian and English are undesirable in the literary translation; instead, transcription or its combination with transliteration should be preferred. However, the transcription from the Yakut language into Russian and English can also lead to some distortions, so the double designation of long vowels is sometimes ignored for two reasons: firstly, this phenomenon is not typical of the target languages (English and Russian), therefore, its reproduction contradicts the principles of harmony, convenient perception and pronunciation of foreign words; secondly, in the Yakut language, there is no relationship between the duration of a vowel and word stress.

The considered issues of transferring Yakut PN to modern languages are designed to preserve their original sound and euphony, which will facilitate the pronunciation of unknown names and titles for Russian- and English-speaking readers. The absence of direct equivalents to certain groups of lexical units in the vocabulary of another language does not at all mean their “untranslatability” into this language. As has been shown, a translator has a number of means enabling the transfer of the original vocabulary unit meaning in speech and in a specific text.

The existing translations of PN into Russian and English are sometimes done without taking into account the phonetic, grammar and lexical norms of these languages. Sometimes this makes the texts of the Yakut epics Olonkho obscure and inconvenient for a foreign reader and, thus, prevents them from being introduced to the culture of the Yakut people. Due to the absence or poorly developed techniques, language, cultural and translation competencies that allow transferring PN and culture-specific components of the SL to the TL in such a specific genre as epic, errors can occur at any of three stages: the analysis of the meaning of a culture-specific unit, clarification of the author’s intention, and transfer of the unit to the TL. They are most often associated with the inability of translators to preserve the ethnic-specific component in the structure of magical images, which often turn out to be the bearers of philosophical, ethical and poetic content of the Yakut heroic epic.

Obviously, when translating PN, it is necessary to define a system of reference points for the sequential reproduction of the phonetic, phonemic or graphic forms of the PN in the target language. The translator must take into account the principle of the ethnic-linguistic affiliation of words so that the PN preserves its ethnic identity. At the same time, a foreign language PN must correspond to the norm and standards of the target language.

The proposed ways of overcoming the spatial and cultural dislocation of epic proper names at different hierarchical levels of the language should probably contribute as much as possible to improving the quality of translation and bringing together the cultural traditions of different peoples.

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