

RESEARCH ON OPERATING NORMS OF
IDIOMATIZATION-DEIDIOMATIZATION GOVERNING
TRANSLATION ON THE BASIS OF RUSSIAN-CHINESE
CORPORA – WITH A CASE OF ЧТОБЫ CLAUSES
IN RUSSIAN¹

Abstract. On the basis of Russian-Chinese corpus, this paper explores operational norms of idiomatization governing translation of *чтобы* clauses. It concludes that: due to the unique structural features of Russian language, idiomatization norms are more obvious than deidiomatization norms in the translation of *чтобы* clauses into Chinese.

Key words. Russian-Chinese corpus; *чтобы* clauses; translation; operational norms in translation; idiomatization-deidiomatization norms.

1. Introduction

Чтобы is one of the most powerful conjunctions in Russian for it can introduce a variety of clauses that may express purposes and denote reasons, manner, or degree etc.

Translation norm is «a kind of consensus of opinion about what [translation] should be like, how it should be done» [Ches-terman, 1997:3]; it focuses its attention on «regularities in the behavior of translators, in the product of such behavior... (it is) social notion of correctness or appropriateness...» [Palumbo, 2009:79]. Translation norm can be categorized as expectation norm and operational norm with the former governing such macro factors as the choice of original texts and what features the translation version would have, while, the latter governing the choices in terms of lexical, syntactical and discursive domains.

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2. Literature Review

Gideon Toury was the first to put forward the concept of translation norm [1980]. Hermans's research on translation norms dwelled much on translators' choices and summarized the general translation norms and conventions in their translation practice (1999:81). Baker hypothesized that social and cultural factors would affect translation norms and proved the hypothesis on the basis of English translation corpus after she compared loan-words translation «in a limited corpus of translations of modern, non-literary English texts in a variety of languages» [1993:247] such as French, Arabic and Japanese.

In China, translation norm research has developed by great leaps and bound, for example Hu Xian-yao [2006, 2008], Hu-Kaibao and Tao Qing [2012], etc.

Literature review also helps us find that relevant studies, if any, focus overwhelmingly on English to Chinese translation (interpreting), or to French, Arabic and Japanese. No research has covered the corpus-based translation norms of Russian language. Consequently, this paper will take, as an example, *чтобы*-introduced clauses in terms of idiomatization and deidiomatization because of limited space of the paper, to answer the following questions:

Is there idiomatization or deidiomatization in the translation of *чтобы*-introduced clauses from Russian into Chinese? If any, what are the underlying reasons?

3. Methodology

3.1. *Self-compiled Russian-Chinese Parallel Corpus*

This research is based on the Russian-Chinese Parallel Corpus (RCPC) with a focus on academic texts of social sciences and humanity arts. The corpus consists of two parts: the Russian-Chinese Parallel Corpus and the Non-translational corpus of Chinese Academic Texts. The former includes four sub-corpuses. The research

team has now annotated the bilingual texts from the perspective of meta-text and lexis.

The current research is based on two sub-corpora: Politics and International Relationships Corpus and Linguistics Corpus, whose detailed information is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Two Sub-corpora

	Parallel corpus			Non-translational corpus	
	Russian words	Chinese words	Samples	Chinese words	Samples
Politics and International Relationships Corpus(PIRC)	418,100	710,856	4	657,718	4
Linguistics Corpus(LC)	568,738	855,326	3	795,546	4
Total Tokens(TT)	986,838	1,566,182	7	1,453,264	4

3.2. Procedure

We'd like to dwell more on the definition of idiomatization. In this study, it refers mainly to the norm that a translator may follow in translation: as for the fixed structures (they are not necessarily the idioms or set phrases) in source texts, a translator may adopt free-style translation; however, s/he still tries to translate them with the corresponding fixed structures in the target texts. Consequently, the translated version will definitely be influenced by the source texts in terms of structure. Therefore, idiomatization, in this study, is a norm for a translator to follow when converting the given fixed structure in the STs with a corresponding fixed structure in the TTs. On the contrary, de-idiomatization is a norm for a translator to follow when conveying a fixed structure in the STs in a free style rather than with set phrases or fixed structures

from the TTs, i.e., with structurally-loosely-knit words, phrases or sentences.

After building up the operational norms hypotheses, we embark on data elicitation with such tools as ParaConc, WordSmith Version 6 in the hope of finding that translators, in their translation adopted: the idiomatization-deidiomatization norms by way of calculating the TT free translation examples of *чтобы*-introduced idiomatic expressions in the source texts.

4. Results and discussion

In Russian, *чтобы* is often collocated with given words, which result in such formulaic expressions, as *достаточно (довольно)...чтобы...; слишком...чтобы...; недостаточно...чтобы...; состоит... чтобы...; не проходит (проходило)... чтобы...; стоит (стоило) ..., чтобы...etc.* Although they are not elastic, flexible any more in terms of structure because the base of such expressions is fixed, idiomatic and non-reversible, thereby featuring structural unity, they are still one of the main-clause-subordinate-clause relationships [Поспелов, 1961:10, cited in Lin, 1963].

Because of the limited space of this paper and taking into consideration their frequency in the corpus, we choose four *чтобы*-introduced clauses of fixed structures and list the equivalence distribution of *чтобы*-based idiomatic expressions translation in Table 2.

Table 2. The equivalence distribution of *чтобы*-based idiomatic structures translation

Fixed structures in Russian(ST corpus)	Number	The equivalent structures in Chinese(TT corpus)	The number of idiomatization	idiomatization ratio
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достаточно..чтобы..	35	很……足 以……；相 當……能 夠……	24	68.6%
слишком...чтобы...	28	太(很)……， 不能……； 太 (很) …… 一定(不能 不) ……	18	64.3%
недостаточно...чтобы...	20	不很…… (所以)不 能……；不 足以	13	65%
состоит...чтобы...	41	在於……	30	73.2%
Total (Average)	124		85	68.5%

As we mentioned, translators may translate the fixed structures of *чтобы*-based clauses in the STs (Russian) with free-style counter parts from the TTs; however, they have chosen the set or fixed expressions as shown in the TTs (Chinese). In our opinion, translators have followed the norm of idiomatization. Some translation examples from the parallel corpus have also proved that some fixed structures in the target texts have just been translated literally from those in the source texts:

Наши вооруженные силы должны быть достаточными для того, чтобы отвадить потенциальных противников от наращивания военной мощи в надежде обойти или догнать Соединенные Штаты. (我國的軍事力量必須強大到足以使潛在的敵人不再奢望其實力能夠趕上或超過美國。

... что современных знаний о функционировании социальных и политических систем недостаточно для того, чтобы создавать модели, пригодные для практического применения.

(.....對社會政治體系作用的現代知識不足以建立適合實際運用的模型。

③ Война слишком серьезная вещь, чтобы доверять ее генералам. (戰爭太過殘酷，將軍不能相托)

In examples ①-③, three Russian fixed structures *достаточно... чтобы...*, *слишком...чтобы...*, *состоит... чтобы...* were translated into Chinese fixed expressions respectively, i.e., 足以.....能夠....., 不足以....., and 太.....不能..... which are all frequent fixed sentence patterns in Chinese.

Idiomatization is one important feature of Russian conjunctions and much research has been done [Rong & Zhao, 1996]. Fixed structures help make Russian complex sentences more well-organized syntactically, more compact structurally and more rhythmical [Liu Xin-chang, 1988].

In examples ①-③, *чтобы*-based idiomatic structures are converted as corresponding fixed structures in Chinese as a result of translators' adaptation practice to the source texts; Therefore, their choices of fixed TT structures are inevitably influenced by language features in the STs. However, some choice is not the most suitable as the result of adaptation. For instance, in example ① the fixed structure of «足以.....，能夠.....» is a clear indicator of idiomatization norm but deviates from the language norms of the target language (here Chinese). In order to be free from the limitation of «足以.....，能夠.....» structure to make the version readable in Chinese, we revise the version as:

使得潛在的敵人不再奢望其實力能夠趕上或超過美國，這是充實我國軍事力量的目標。

The fact that *чтобы*-based fixed structures are translated as formulaic or quasi-formulaic structures in Chinese has made the version somewhat foreignized, but tested the idiomatization hypothesis of translation norms. Meanwhile, there exist deidiomatization norms, as Table 2 shows: it is possible for each fixed structure in the ST to be translated freely (For example, there are 35 *достаточно...чтобы...* structures in the ST corpus, among which 24

were translated into fixed structures in Chinese, with 11 being translated freely, i.e., de-idiomatization norms exist).

However, compared with deidiomatization norms, it is more obvious that in the TT, there are more fixed structures as the result of influence of language features in ST, which also re-tests the idiomatization hypothesis. The idiomatization tendency imbues the versions of such fixed structures with stylistic features that are typical of translation version.

5. Conclusion

According to previous research on translation norms, this paper has built up idiomatization-deidiomatization hypothesis first and by means of comparison of *чтобы*-based fixed structures with their Chinese counterparts as well as the detailed analyses of four examples, we tested the idiomatization norms.

At the macro level, this norm exists in the translation of *чтобы*-introduced/based structures. However, there exist also nuanced disparities among norms themselves and even in each norm itself at the micro level: idiomatization-deidiomatization norms have shown us mainly the inter-lingual disparities.

Чтобы-introduced/based structures are representative in Russian complex sentences and the research on their translation norms will provide some feasible research mode for the future translation norms research on individualized complex sentence in given language with the help of corpus-based Russian-Chinese complex sentence translation research.

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