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ON THE CHALLENGES OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION THROUGH THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL PRISM OF KOREAN AND RUSSIAN

Hye Ran Kim[1*]

[1]School of Oriental Studies, Faculty of World Economy and World Politics, University Higher School of Economics (HSE), Institute of Linguistics, Department of Oriental Languages, Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia, Email: kimconthe@gmail/krkim@hse.ru

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Corresponding Author: Hye Ran Kim (kimconthe@gmail/krkim@hse.ru)

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on unique linguistic expressions reflecting the cultural characteristics of countries learning Korean (as a foreign language), as well as the difficulties arising in Korean-Russian text translation—that is, the challenges of cultural translation. The author views language as a comprehensive embodiment of culture and argues that language education and cultural education cannot be separated. By attempting to approach through Korean cultural concepts how culture can be integrated into language learning from an areal linguistic perspective and how students can encounter a new linguistic culture, this study provides guidelines for enhancing learners' translation and communication abilities. Furthermore, the study aimed to present Korean cultural codes to learners by analyzing the meanings embedded in North and South Korean idioms featuring "ttok" (Korean rice cake), a quintessential element of Korean culture.

KEYWORDS: Idioms, Cultural Elements, Regional Linguistics, Cultural Translation, Back Translation, Communicative Competence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Teaching Context and Motivation

In Russia, in the 1970s, the concept of regional linguistics (Лингвострановедение) was introduced by Russian linguists V. G. Kostomarov and E. M. Vereshchagin. This concept was specially developed for foreign learners and has been actively applied to the study of foreign languages. Regional linguistics, derived from the Latinlinguameaning "language" and "regional studies," is a branch of Russian research that includes language education as well as cultural education. Its goal is to provide essential information about the country and culture of the target language for effective communication. In other words, it aims to secure linguistic competence through a thorough understanding of the culture of the conversation partner and the original text. Furthermore, language educator A. N. Shukin [2003] defined regional linguistics as a regionally oriented linguistics that studies a foreign language in comparison to the native language, stating that the research subject is the culture embedded in the target language itself.

According to V. G. Kostomarov and E. M. Vereshchagin [1971], the scope of regional linguistics divides into two types: linguistic issues and methodological issues. Linguistic issues aim to analyze language units to grasp the ethnic and cultural meanings embedded within them. This includes non-equivalent vocabulary, non-verbal means of communication (actions conveyed through facial expressions and gestures that hold meanings and usage domains different from those in the native language), the characteristic background knowledge of Russian speakers that enables linguistic communication, and linguistic proverbs and idioms viewed from the perspective reflecting the culture and ethnic traits of the target language users. Methodological issues relate to the introduction of unique ethnocultural content units extracted from the research texts, as well as the techniques for enhancing and activating these units[1].

According to this passage, the author applied the linguistic types of regional linguistics to grasp the ethnic and cultural meanings within language units in both Korean and Russian. Methodologically, they activated and enriched unique ethnocultural content units extracted from Korean texts by converting them into Russian texts. Korean texts were translated into Russian and prepared as material for Russian-Korean translation lessons.

In this study, the primary linguistic and historical sources related to *ttok* included the Korea History & Culture portal on Naver Knowledge Encyclopedia, classical texts, the National Institute of Korean Language's dictionary data, the Seonggu Dictionary of Proverbs *Seonggu Sajeon*(published in Pyongyang in 1965), and the Dictionary of Classical Idioms *Gosasang-eo Sajeon*(published in Seoul).

When selecting Russian equivalents, the analysis comprehensively considered semantic similarity, cultural context, and the actual communicative function of the expressions. Specifically, semantic similarity focused on determining conceptual equivalence, while cultural context reflected sociocultural differences between speakers of the two languages. Regarding communicative function, the pragmatic purpose of the expression and its function in real usage scenarios were analyzed. This multidimensional approach aims to provide a more accurate and nuanced interpretation of cross-lingual semantic correspondences. Furthermore, this methodological framework maintains a balance between semantic fidelity and communicative equivalence by relying primarily on Mokienko and Teliya's phraseological dictionaries and the Russian National Corpus as key sources.

2. CONTEXTS

2.1. Culture And Language

Sapir-Whorf [1929] described language as a cultural reality that governs and influences thought, constituting an imaginative cultural system. Olsen [1977] defined language as a total culture that constructs culture, a cognitive, social, and cultural system of knowledge acquired through processes, reflecting the community's way of life, religion, politics, worldview, and values. Kim Hyo-jung [2004:72] stated that cultural elements are not only linguistic factors understood in specific contexts but also non-linguistic phenomena and systems that appear in the native culture system but are unknown or differently defined in the target culture system. According to this definition, the unique culture and spirit expressed in the Korean language serve as a whole cultural system within Korean, and this study looks closely at examples of cultural elements embedded examining language correspondence and contrasts.

[1] V. G. Kostomarov and E. M. Vereshchagin (1971) summarized the essence of their workLanguage and Cultureas follows.

2.2. Vocabulary And Idiomatic Expressions Related to the Korean Cultural Element "Ttok"

From the linguistic perspective of cultural translation, one can examine translations through morphological and communicative aspects. However, difficulty arises in terms of accuracy and consistency when translating vocabulary and sentences related to cultural elements such as culture-specific words, idioms, folk customs, and historical culture. The following focuses primarily on the representative traditional Korean food "*ttok*" (rice cake), which embodies social, historical culture and ethnic characteristics as a Korean cultural element. The study compares linguistic equivalents and idiomatic expressions of "*ttok*" in Korean with their Russian counterparts. The author presented to learner's central Korean cultural vocabulary related to "*ttok*" alongside diverse linguistic equivalents and idiomatic expressions that capture these words' meanings. This approach not only helps learners acquire extended expressions with various meanings from the central vocabulary but also improves their communicative competence.

During class sessions, multiple translated texts related to "*ttok*" were discussed, and "ttok" as a cultural element was expanded from idiomatic expressions in Korean culture to common cultural concepts. These were then compared with Russian idiomatic expressions for a deeper understanding.

The following table examines the meaning of "*ttok*" (rice cake) within Korean cultural elements, proverbs, and idioms, categorizing idiomatic expressions containing the word into positive and negative meanings. Within proverbs and idioms, the word "*ttok*" carries many positive connotations, such as profit, wealth, good fortune, favor, affection, kindness, abundance, goodwill, good opportunity, and benefit. There are two theories regarding the origin of rice cakes. According to data from the National Heritage Administration, many scholars believe that "*ttok*" has existed since the Dangun era. The etymology of "*ttok*" originates from "Dok" [2] (德), a Chinese character that signifies the proper mindset, behavior, and conduct that a person must uphold, as well as an attitude of performing good deeds. In other words, it carries the meaning of benefiting many people through benevolent actions, which is said to be connected to "Hongik Ingan", the fundamental spirit of Dangun Wanggeom's rule over Joseon. It can be observed from the meaning of "ttok" analyzed by the author below that Korean ancestors practiced "dok덕" (good deeds, uprightness) by making and sharing "*ttok*" with their neighbors.

Table1: Analysis of Proverb Sandidioms Containing the Word «Ttok» (Rice Cake).

Korean Proverb/Idiom	The meaning of the word "*ttok*"	The general meaning of the proverb/idiom
어른 말을 들으면 자다가도 떡이 생긴다 (If you listen to elders, you'll even get rice cakes while sleeping)	Profit, wealth, good fortune	Positive:Suggests that listening to wise advice brings unexpected benefits.
굿이나 보고 떡이나 먹자 (Let's look at the goods and eat rice cakes)	Personal profit	Positive:Focuses on one's own interests or benefits.
미운 놈(아이) 떡 하나 더 준다 (Give an extra rice cake to the unlucky one)	Kindness, self-control, generosity	Positive:Encourages showing kindness to those less fortunate.
떡을 친다 (be more than enough, be sufficient, do the trick)	Abundance, satisfaction	Positive:Symbolizes abundance and contentment. This much money will **be more than enough**
가는 떡이 커야 오는 떡이 크다 (If the outgoing rice cake is big, the incoming one will be big too)	Goodwill, affection, kindness (principle of reciprocity)	Positive:Highlights the idea of reciprocity — kindness begets kindness.
누워서 떡 먹기 (Eating rice cakes while lying down)	Easy and quick task	Positive:Describes something that is very easy to do.
떡 주고 뺨 맞는다 (Giving a rice cake and getting hit in the face)	Benevolent action	Negative:Illustrates how good intentions can lead to unexpected negative outcomes.
떡을 달라는데 돌을 준다 (Asking for a rice cake but getting a stone)	Needed/desired thing	Negative:Describes receiving something completely different and undesirable from what was asked for — a form of deception.
그림의 떡 (Rice cake in a picture)	Unrealistic expectation without real benefit	Negative:Refers to illusory hopes or dreams that don't bring actual profit.
떡 본 도깨비 (The ogre who saw the rice cake)	Greed and covetousness; a good opportunity (ogre coveting the rice cake)	Negative:Describes someone overly eager or greedy for an opportunity.
떡국이 농간한다 / 떡국 값이나 해라 (Rice cake soup makes one cunning / behave in a manner appropriate to one's age)	Age	Positive/Negative:Can imply maturity and wisdom with age (positive), or cunningness (negative).

[2] 直(jík, «straight», «upright») — symbolizes straightness, uprightness, or being honest/direct.

술이 떡이 되다 (Dead drunk, shitfaced, plasterred, smashed, wasted)	Complete mess, utterly ruined state	Negative: he got absolutely **wasted** last night
떡 줄 사람은 생각도 않는데 김치국부터 마신다 (Not even thinking about getting rice cakes, but drinking kimchi soup first)	Expected benefits, rewards, or outcomes	Negative:Suggests getting ahead of oneself or expecting rewards before they are earned.
떡값 (Price of rice cake)	Bribe, backhand money (modern meaning)	Negative:Refers to a bribe or illicit payment.

1. "'**그림의 떡**The rice cake in the picture'" is an idiomatic expression embodying a Korean cultural element, referring metaphorically to an object that one desires but cannot have or use despite wanting it deeply—like rice cake one wants to eat but cannot. a) *Нарисованные пирожок (лепешка) не насытит* (The drawn pie or flatbread will not satisfy hunger.) This means that a painted or drawn pie cannot fill one's hunger. b) *Глазами не наешься* (You cannot eat with your eyes.) Both Russian expressions convey that a pie in a picture cannot be eaten and therefore cannot satisfy hunger. They metaphorically express a situation where seeing something is not enough to satisfy a need, describing something that looks good but cannot be physically obtained.Historically, this expression traces back to the Chinese historical textWei Shu위서(魏書) where the term '화중지병' (畫中之餠, "rice cake in a painting") originated. The Ming dynasty official Xu Jie warned, "Do not flatter someone simply because they are famous. Their reputation is like rice cakes painted on the ground—you cannot eat them." This phrase thus signifies something attractive but unattainable.

2. The expression "**누워서 떡 먹기**eating rice cake while lying down" signifies a simple task that can be accomplished easily and quickly. There are also proverbs with similar meanings, such as "eating cold porridge," "swimming while standing on dry land," and "stabbing a pumpkin." Koreans often shorten this expression to "it's gum" when communicating. As a cultural element embodying the Korean people's food and seated lifestyle, it is difficult to find an idiomatic expression that is semantically equivalent. A Russian expression meaning "a very easy task" is "проще простого"(proshche prostovo).

3. The proverb "Drinking kimchi soup before the person giving the rice cakes even thinks of it**떡** 줄 사람은 생각도 않는데 **김칫국**부터 마신다" carries a negative connotation and metaphorically describes a situation where one anticipates and expects something even though the other person has no intention of doing it, or acts rashly as if the task is already complete. This proverb originates from an old Korean cultural custom of preparing kimchi soup (dongchimi broth) out of concern that one might choke while eating rice cakes; it expresses the foolishness of acting in anticipation of rice cakes that will not actually be given. The proverb conveys meanings regarding premature judgment and preparation, vain hopes harbored alone regarding impossible tasks, and rash behavior of judging the outcome and acting rashly before the task is even accomplished. a) Еще не сняли с курицы пера, а он уже щи варит. (*Yisho ne snyalli s kuritsy pera, a on uze sh varit*.): He hasn't even plucked the chicken feathers yet, but he is already boiling borscht (Russian soup). b) Еще не добыл, а уже делит: He has not even obtained it yet, but he is already sharing it. Just as one shares profits before the harvest, this refers to the act of getting ahead of oneself before the fruits of one's labor have even arrived. c) Еще не купил корову, а уже продал телят (*Ishō ne kupil korovu, a uze prodal tseryat):* Meaning "thinking of selling a calf before even buying a cow, this is a Russian proverb that metaphorically describes premature expectations regarding things that have not yet been accomplished. Like the Korean proverb, it is used in the context of criticizing the foolishness of making plans for impossible tasks as if the work is already done, when the other party has not even considered it. Both the Korean and Russian proverbs share the common meaning of expressing "premature expectations" or "impatience".

4. The proverb "떡 본 김에 제사 지낸다" carries a positive meaning, expressing the idea of seizing an opportunity to accomplish what one intends when the occasion arises. This phrase is deeply rooted in traditional Korean rites and food culture. In Korean life-cycle ceremonies—rituals prescribed from birth to death—food is an essential element, and among the most representative is "*ttok*" (rice cake). As a cultural symbol, tteok is shared during both joyful and sorrowful occasions, reflecting communal life and tradition. The Russian equivalent idiomatic expressions include'взять быка за рога'("to take

the bull by the horns") and'Лови момент'("Seize the moment"), both emphasizing actively grasping an opportunity without hesitation, and utilizing it for one's benefit. In this sense, they correspond in meaning to "떡 본 김에 제사 지낸다". Additionally, the proverb carries ritual significance in Korean culture; for instance, during a baby's 100-day celebration 백일, rice cakes called baekseolgi are elevated on a special table and shared with guests, symbolizing wishes for the child's long life. Red-colored tteok, resembling auspicious prayer beads, serves as a protective charm against misfortune. Historically, the color red was also significant in funerary rituals, such as red rice cakes used in ancestral rites to ward off evil spirits. These traditions show influences from Eastern cosmology and yin-yang philosophy, where red represents yang (陽), symbolizing life and positive energy.

5. The phrase "술이 떡이 되다" is an idiomatic expression with a negative connotation. For example, in the sentence "술이 떡이 되도록 마셨다", it means drinking so much alcohol that one becomes extremely drunk to the point of losing control over their body. Here, ""*ttok* 떡", literally means rice cake, a food made by pounding or steaming grain flour, and the idiom figuratively describes a state of being disheveled and in a mess. Without understanding this idiomatic meaning, the sentence could be mistakenly translated into Russian as "Алкоголь превращается в рисовый пирог" ("Alcohol turns into rice cake"). Thus, the correct translation conveys becoming heavily intoxicated rather than a literal transformation.

6."떡을 치다 *Ttok-eul chida*" (literally "to pound rice cakes") is used as an idiomatic expression with a positive meaning, signifying that the quantity or degree of something is sufficient and even abundant. Historically and socially, this phrase metaphorically describes a situation of ample abundance, referencing a time when food was scarce: people would cook rice and make rice cakes with leftover grains, symbolizing overflowing plenty. The meaning embedded in "떡을 치다" literally involves "making rice cakes," but in common usage it signifies that something is very plentiful or more than enough. For example, in the sentence "한 시간이면 떡을 친다" it means "one hour is more than enough time" or "one hour is sufficiently ample." If this phrase is misunderstood literally, learners might translate it into Russian as 'Приготовьте рисовые лепешки за час' ("Prepare rice cakes in one hour"), which reflects the physical act of making rice cakes rather than its idiomatic meaning. However, the idiomatic sense conveys that the time taken for a certain task is more than sufficient and even generous. For instance, expressions like "이 정도면 우리 식구 모두 다 먹고도 떡을 치겠다"("This amount is enough not only for my family to eat but still more") or "이 돈이면 떡을 치고도 남을 거야"("This money will be more than enough, even after 'pounding rice cakes ") can be used to emphasize abundance. Thus, the phrase "떡을 치다" metaphorically expresses a positive, ample, or sufficient quantity, which must be carefully interpreted beyond its literal meaning to avoid mistranslation or confusion.

7. The Korean proverb "남의 떡이 더 커 보인다 the other *ttok* is bigger then my ttok. The grass is always greener on the other side" figuratively expresses the psychological tendency, reflecting a sense of envy or longing for what others have rather than what one owns. It parallels similar Russian proverbs in meaning. а) В чужих руках ломоть велик — "The piece of bread in someone else's hands is bigger." в) чужая жена мягче, чужая еда слаще. — "Someone else's wife is softer; someone else's food is sweeter."

8. The proverb "보기 좋은 **떡**이 먹기도 좋다A good-looking rice cake tastes good/A rice cake that looks good is also good to eat" carries a positive meaning, implying that if the content is substantial and substantial, the appearance is excellent, and that if something looks good on the outside, the content is likely to be good as well. It applies not only to food but also to people's words and actions, as well as the design of objects, emphasizing the importance of cultivating one's outward appearance. It describes the psychological tendency to find beautifully plated food tastes better and to prefer a product with a pretty design even if the performance is identical. While there is no direct one-to-one translation in Russian, a similar expression in this context emphasizes the importance of both appearance and substance, or implies that beauty leads to a positive experience: "Встречают по одежке, провожают по уму". Meaning "We greet by the clothes, but see off by the wisdom," this signifies that while appearance seen at first glance is important, the heart and inner self are ultimately more significant. Both appearance and content It can be said to be similar to Korean proverbs in that it places

importance on it.he Russian proverb “Хорошо приготовленное — уже наполовину съедено.” literally means “Well-prepared food is already half eaten”. It signifies that good preparation and sincerity already create more than half of the value. This idea is similar to a Korean proverb in that external preparation leads to inner satisfaction. It reflects a life aesthetic that sees eating not just as consumption but as an experience deeply influenced by the visual and tactile qualities of food, which affect taste and satisfaction. In Korean tradition, there is a pursuit of harmonious beauty (美) not only in color, shape, and texture of food but also socially extended to people’s outward appearances and first impressions. This proverb has been broadened into a teaching that inner quality and harmony must accompany outward appearances. In communal events, the process of making ‘visually appealing rice cakes’ symbolizes participation and sincerity, revealing how food transcends mere survival to become a form of art and a bond within the community. Thus, the proverb communicates the importance of preparation, care, and harmony between surface and substance as core values of aesthetic and social connection.

9. The proverb “미운 놈(아이) 떡 하나 더 준다They give an extra rice cake to the one they dislike” conveys wisdom about handling resentment without expressing anger, instead responding with kindness to prevent regret or future harm. It means one should treat those who cause irritation or hurt with even greater care and kindness, including one’s enemies, so as not to later regret harsh actions. A similar Russian proverb with close meaning is И собака старое добро помнит “A dog remembers old kindness”, which is often used like the Korean saying. Another related phrase is Помирись с врагом и легче жить потом “Make peace with your enemy, and life will be easier”, emphasizing that reconciliation and forgiveness lead to greater ease in life. While Russian proverbs stress prudence and practicality in dealing with enemies or disliked people, the Korean proverb highlights kindness as a moral ideal. Using food metaphors like 떡 in Korean culture to express this kindness marks a unique cultural nuance not commonly found in Russian sayings.

10. The proverb “어른 말을 들으면 자다가도 떡이 생긴다 If you listen to your elders, you will get something good even while sleeping.”conveys the wisdom that following the advice of experienced and wise elders not only helps one avoid mistakes but can also bring unexpected great benefits or positive outcomes. In Korean culture, rice cakes 떡 are considered precious food often eaten at celebrations or special occasions, and the phrase “떡이 생긴다Rice cakes are made” metaphorically represents receiving a windfall or significant benefit. A similar Russian proverb is “Послушание – лучше волшебства, а непослушание – хуже всего зла”, which means “Obedience is better than magic, and disobedience is worse than all evils.” This expression underscores the importance of respecting elders and following their teachings. A similar Russian proverb is “Послушание – лучше волшебства, а непослушание – хуже всего зла”, which means “Obedience is better than magic, and disobedience is worse than all evils.” This expression underscores the importance of respecting elders and following their teachings. Another related Russian saying is “Старый конь борозды не портит”, which translates as “An old horse does not spoil the furrow,” emphasizing the value of the wisdom and experience of elders who do not falter in their guidance. These proverbs stress the significance of heeding the counsel of elders, valuing their experience, and understanding that such respect leads to successful and harmonious outcomes.

11. “Don’t meddle in others’ affairs but watch and wait for your own gain” is the meaning of the proverb “굿이나 보고 떡이나 먹자.” It advises against unnecessary involvement in other people’s matters and suggests observing the situation patiently until a benefit returns to oneself. The phrase “gut 굿” refers to a shamanistic ritual held to honor spirits in Korean culture, symbolizing other people’s affairs, while “*ttok* 떡” (rice cake) represents one’s own profit or gain. The proverb means it is better not to intervene or cause trouble but to remain calm and seize the opportunity for personal benefit. A Russian proverb with a similar meaning is “Не лезь в чужие дела, жди своего”, which means “Don’t interfere in others’ affairs, wait for your own”. This expression advises sometimes waiting for the right moment to benefit rather than rushing into situations.

12. The proverb “가는 떡이 커야 오는 떡이 크다” means that if I am generous to others first, the other party will also be generous to me in return. It carries a positive meaning: if you show broad-mindedness and do good deeds, you will receive

corresponding reciprocation. In Korean culture, "떡 ttok" (rice cake) symbolizes happiness, health, and longevity. In this context, it represents generosity and good deeds. The Russian proverb "Одной рукой собирай, другою раздавай"("With one hand collect, with the other hand give away") translates to "한 손으로 모으고 다른 손으로 나누어라" («Collect with one hand and share with the other»). This proverb emphasizes that sharing with others is just as important as accumulating for oneself. It underscores the values ofgenerosity, good deeds, and mutual cooperation.

Rice cakes (*ttok*) originated as a traditional Korean food deeply intertwined with the agricultural culture and the daily life of the Korean people. Second, according to data from the Cultural Heritage Administration, remnants of early pottery and stone tools from the Neolithic Age have been unearthed, indicating that rice cakes existed even before the establishment of the Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla kingdoms. During the era of the Three Kingdoms and the unified Silla period, the advent of full-scale agricultural society led to a significant increase in grain production centered on rice. This development subsequently contributed to the diverse evolution of rice cakes that made extensive use of rice and grain ingredients.

2.3. The Historical and Social Significance of Rice Cakes "Ttok"

"*Ttok*" is a traditional Korean food that originated with agricultural culture and can be viewed as a cultural element embodying the lives of the Korean people. According to data from the National Heritage Administration, steamers were excavated from the Bronze Age site of the Najin Chodo Shell Mound and ancient tombs of the Three Kingdoms period, suggesting that tteok was made before the establishment of the Three Kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla. As a full-scale agricultural era unfolded during the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods, grain production centered on rice increased, leading to the diverse development of tteok made from rice and other grains.

During the Goryeo Dynasty, rice cakes "*ttok*" flourished further, becoming widely available not only as ceremonial foods or offerings in ancestral rites for the upper class but also as delicacies enjoyed by the general public at private banquets. In the Joseon Dynasty, tteok became an essential dish for wedding ceremonies, funeral rites, ancestral memorial services, and various state banquets. As Confucianism deeply rooted itself in society, traditional rites of passage such as marriage, funerals, and ancestral ceremonies became firmly established, giving rise alongside hangwa (traditional Korean sweets) to a diverse array of tteok varieties as part of Korean tradition. Centered around the royal court and aristocratic households, historical culinary records from the Joseon period document as many as 198 types of ttok, alongside records of their ingredients and preparation methods, revealing that the Joseon era marked the most splendid zenith in the history of "*ttok*" (Cultural Heritage Administration[1]). Furthermore, these traditions and customs have been passed down to the present day, with Korean dietary culture evolving and expanding globally. To assist Korean language learners in understanding the cultural significance and special meanings of representative tteok associated with seasonal festivals and traditional rites, this study organizes, analyzes, and presents these types and customs in tabular form. Such explanations are expected not only to provide essential background knowledge for comprehending the Korean cultural element of "*ttok*" and related proverbs but also to offer learners valuable opportunities to reflect on their own cultural customs, seasonal traditions, and food practices.

Table 2: Types Of Ttok (Korean Rice Cakes) And Their Meanings (Reference: Ritual Food).

Occasion / Type	Meaning
Seollal (New Year) – Garaetteok	symbolizes starting the new year with a pure heart and wishing for health and longevity.
Dano – Surichwitteok	A rice cake with a wagon wheel-shaped pattern, used to ward off evil spirits.
Jeongwol Daeboreum (the first full moon of the lunar year) – Yakshik, yakbap.	Significant meaning of warding off disease and bad luck. A crow legend about yakshik appears in the 'Sigeumgapjo' section of the Samguk Yusa. Significant meaning of offering food to elderly parents.
Chuseok – Songpyeon	A prayer for marital harmony and a bountiful harvest. Filling the Songpyeon with filling symbolizes a broad heart capable of embracing everyone.
100th Day, First Birthday, Birthday – Baekseolgi	Signifies imbuing purity and blessings. Something pure, with nothing mixed in
Chaekrye (Chaekgeori) – Five-Colored Songpyeon, Plum Blossom Songpyeon	• Chaekrye is a ritual performed when a child finishes reading a book at a Seodang (traditional Korean school). During this ceremony, students eat songpyeon to express gratitude to their teacher and celebrate with friends. • These rice cakes are filled with sesame seeds, red beans, and soybeans,

	symbolizing the wish for one's academic pursuits to be fully enriched. • Five-Colored Songpyeon is based on the primordial energy and the Five Elements that form the universe; the colors—Schisandra berries (red), gardenia (yellow), mugwort (blue), and pine bark (brown)—represent the harmony of all things. • Empty Plum Blossom Songpyeon – This symbolizes a wish for the student to cultivate upright character by broadening their mind and will, alongside the advancement of their studies.
Weddings, Ibaji - Injeolmi	• During the reign of King Injo of the Joseon Dynasty, when Yi Gwal staged a rebellion and Hanyang was occupied by rebel forces, causing King Injo to flee to Gongju Fortress, a farmer named Im made glutinous rice cakes and presented them to the King. Because the cakes were made by Mr. Im, they were originally called "Imjeolmi," which later changed to "Injeolmi." • A folk custom reflecting a sense of homogenization in male-female relationships, utilizing the sticky nature of glutinous rice used for these cakes. • Whenever a married daughter visited her parents' home and returned, she was sometimes sent off with a large Injeolmi, known as "Ipmagae-tteok." This cake was considered a form of bribery, asking the in-laws to eat it and be lenient even if the daughter had done something wrong. It was also regarded as a symbolic adhesive that bound the relationship between the groom and the in-laws.

This study aimed to deepen the understanding of proverbs related to "*ttok*", which emerged alongside the beginning of agricultural culture on the Korean Peninsula, by referencing the "Seonggu Dictionary of Proverbs," an educational book published in Pyongyang in 1965 after the division of North and South Korea. Although North and South Koreans share the same language and ethnicity, proverbs serve as indirect means of communication during negotiations or conversations. Considering the ongoing economic, political, and military cooperation between Russia and the Korean Peninsula, it seems necessary that Russian learners of Korean should also study the cultural meanings of proverbs shared by both North and South Korea. Among the proverbs related to "*ttok*" examined above from North Korea, those that do not exist in South Korea or whose meanings differ were compared with Russian proverbs alongside their cultural and social significance.

Table 3: Analysis Of North Korean Proverbs Related to Ttok.

Korean Proverb	Russian Proverb	Meaning	Positive/Negative Aspect
떡 다 건지는 며느리 없다	Каждый за себя шубу тянет:	It illustrates that everyone tends to act in their own self-interest.	Negative
떡은 치고 국수는 만들다	В каждой избушке свои погремушки	It means that everywhere has its own customs and principles; things should be handled according to circumstances	Positive
떡 해 먹을 집안	Дом скандальный (A quarrelsome household)	A house where peace is not maintained; constant quarreling occurs.	Negative
떡 쥐고 쓰레기 통으로 들어간다	Держать зайца за уши / Быть не по зубам	Acting in a way inappropriate to one's position, leading oneself into a disadvantageous situation.	Negative
떡 먹은 입 쓸어지듯	Водить за нос / Делать вид, что ничего не произошло	Resembling the expression of pulling one's nose; pretending as if nothing happened.	Negative
떡 먹듯이 말한다	Говорить как по маслу / У него на языке слова, как на льду коньки	Speaking effortlessly and smoothly, as if eating rice cake comfortably.	Negative
떡도 떡이려니와 합이 더 좋다	Встречают по одёжке, провожают по уму	Emphasizes the importance of both outward appearance and inner qualities.	Positive
떡보 메고 배 부르다	Не дели шкуру неубитого медведя	Advising caution and avoiding premature expectations before completion or certainty	Negative

Examining the cultural and social background of the proverb "**떡 해 먹을 집안** A household that makes and eats rice cakes", we find that in traditional Korean society, rice cakes held symbolic significance beyond mere food. Indispensable for holidays and important feasts, rice cakes symbolize the harmony and abundance of the entire family and community. However, the expression "a household that makes

and eats rice cakes" originated from a situation where, angered by spirits, misfortune befell the family, leading them to make rice cakes and summon a shaman. Thus, it serves as a metaphor for a "household plagued by deep discord and hardship", rather than simple abundance. If learners are unaware that the cultural element of "rice cake" carries a negative connotation in this proverb, they might misinterpret and translate it as "a happy household that makes and eats rice cakes." Contrary to the outward appearance of preparing something good like rice cakes, the proverb carries the paradoxical meaning that the household is unharmonious and unstable. It can also be understood within a cultural context that aligns with traditional Korean values, which place great importance on family harmony and regard a lack of harmony as a serious problem within the community.

In Korea,"*ttok*" (rice cakes) has long been a precious and meaningful dish that is always present during holidays or special days. It holds not only symbolic value beyond being a simple food item but also signifiesharmony among the community and familythrough the act of eating ttok.

However, in the proverb«eating ttok and rinsing one's mouth as if brushing teeth» ("떡 먹은 입 쓸어치듯"), the phrase "as if brushing one's teeth" implies pretending not to have eaten *ttok* — it metaphorically describes acunning attitude of hiding something. This proverbsatirically captures everyday behaviorwhere someone feigns indifference or innocence. It serves as a figurative expression that reflectssocial emotions. Essentially, it embodiesKorean sensitivity towards issues of trust between people, morality, and sense of responsibility. By connecting to the cultural symbol of "*ttok*", this proverb underscores thesocial context emphasizing the importance of trust and moral responsibility within the community.

When we examine the cultural context of the proverb "떡보 메고 배 부르다" (*Ttok*-bo mego bae budeuda), in traditional Korean society, *ttok* (rice cakes) were a precious and valuable festive food. The phrase "떡을 쌀 보자기" (ttok-ul ssul bojagi), meaning "rice cake wrapped in cloth," implies that one has obtained or prepared tteok. The expression "떡보 메고" (*ttok*-bo mego), or "carrying a wrapped rice cake", symbolizes someone showing off as if they have fully prepared everything (with tteok as a symbol of readiness), but in reality, this is not the case. This notion is closely connected to Korean culture, which places great emphasis on humility and substance within the community. In essence, this proverb satirizes a careless attitude — boasting or putting on a front when one is not actually prepared. It aligns with the Korean cultural sentiment that values humility and substance (inner worth over outward appearance). Ultimately, this proverb serves as a social lesson, pointing out behavior that is considered undesirable in interactions with others and within the community — namely, pretending to be ready or capable when one is not.

3. CONCLUSION

Food culture can be considered an indispensable element representing a nation's culture. Korean foods are becoming known to the world through the Korean Wave. Within the "cultural element" of "*ttok*", which has evolved over thousands of years of history, not only are the joys and sorrows of the Korean people contained, but the culture, sentiments, and the life philosophy of our ancestors are also reflected. An indispensable element of a nation's representative culture is its food culture. Through the Korean Wave, Korean cuisine has become known worldwide. The cultural artifact known as "*ttok*" (rice cake), which has developed over thousands of years of history, embodies not only the joys, sorrows, and emotions of the Korean people but also reflects the culture, sentiments, and the life philosophy of their ancestors. Through idiomatic expressions containing the cultural element of "*ttok*" (rice cake), we have examined the lifestyles and values of Koreans in both South and North Korea. Although "*ttok*-bokki" has become known to foreign learners alongside the Korean Wave, the meaning of "*ttok*" must be extended beyond the simple food itself to encompass the cultural and social context of the Korean philosophy of Hongik Ingan" (benefiting all mankind). This broader understanding should be incorporated when teaching idiomatic expressions to foreign learners.

It is a cultural symbol embodying blessing, good fortune, and a sense of community; I believe it can serve as a cultural code for integration, fostering closer ties between South and North Korea.

Such cultural interpretation significantly helps foreign learners gain a deeper understanding of Korean idiomatic expressions while reflecting the historical and social background of Koreans as an educational asset. In the era of AI where many things are translated by machines, it is nonetheless considered difficult to provide translations that fully reflect the profound meanings embedded in socially and culturally significant idiomatic expressions. In response to this, it is essential to begin with the language rooted in each cultural element, carefully

select the appropriate equivalent expressions, and undertake the meticulous processes of revision and review to convey the intended meaning accurately.

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