

ARTISTIC MASTERY IN THE TRANSLATION OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY UZBEK SHORT STORIES AND NOVELLAS: A STYLISTIC AND FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This article analyzes artistic mastery in the translation of 20th-century Uzbek short stories and novellas. It highlights the importance of preserving national color, imagery, and authorial style in translation. The creative approach and linguistic competence of the translator are also examined.

Key words: translation, artistic mastery, short story, novella, national color, imagery.

Аннотация. В данной статье анализируется художественное мастерство в переводе узбекских рассказов и повестей XX века. Рассматривается важность сохранения национального колорита, образности и авторского стиля в процессе перевода. Также изучается роль творческого подхода переводчика.

Ключевые слова: перевод, художественное мастерство, рассказ, повесть, национальный колорит, образность.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada XX asr o'zbek hikoya va qissalarining tarjimasida badiiy mahorat masalasi tahlil qilinadi. Tarjima jarayonida milliy kolorit, obrazlilik va muallif uslubini saqlashning ahamiyati yoritiladi. Shuningdek, tarjimonning ijodiy yondashuvi va lingvistik bilimlari badiiy asar sifatiga ta'siri o'rganiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: tarjima, badiiy mahorat, hikoya, qissa, milliy kolorit, obrazlilik.

INTRODUCTION

The 20th century is of particular importance as a period of national thought, national spirit and artistic aesthetic views reaching a new level. In particular, works

created in the genres of stories and short stories are notable for their deep and impressive expression of the human psyche, social changes in society, national values and spiritual searches. During this period, writers such as Abdulla Qahhor, Said Ahmad, Otkir Hoshimov, Togay Murod, Shukur Kholmirezayev made a great contribution to the development of Uzbek prose and expanded the artistic possibilities of national literature. Their stories and short stories were read with interest not only by Uzbek readers, but also by representatives of other nations. Therefore, the issue of translating these works into foreign languages has become one of the current directions of literary criticism and translation studies. Translation is not simply transferring a text from one language to another, but a complex creative process that conveys the spirit, mentality, and national color of the people to representatives of other cultures. Especially in literary translation, preserving the aesthetic impact of the work, the system of images, the author's style and national identity requires great skill from the translator. In the process of translating 20th-century Uzbek stories and tales, translators tried to accurately express not only the grammatical features of the language, but also folk expressions, national values, traditions and spiritual experiences. Because the value of a work of art is manifested not only in its content, but also in the method of depiction, imagery and emotional impact.[1; 256]

In 20th-century Uzbek prose, such universal ideas as human relations and society, ordinary folk life, the rural environment, kindness, loyalty and conscience occupy a leading place. These aspects require a special approach in the translation process. For example, it is often difficult to accurately transfer folk laughter, irony or images characteristic of the national mentality into another language. In such a case, the translator must create an understandable and natural expression for the reader, while preserving the artistic spirit of the work. This depends not only on the translator's knowledge of the language, but also on his literary taste, cultural level and creative thinking.

In today's era of globalization, one of the important tasks is to bring examples of national literature to the world reader. From this point of view, studying translations of 20th-century Uzbek stories and tales and analyzing the issue of artistic skill in them is of great scientific importance for the development of translation studies. Through this topic, it will be possible to determine the extent to which imagery, stylistic means, national color and the author's individual style have been preserved in translation. Such studies also serve as a source of theoretical and practical experience for future translators.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The issue of artistic skill in the translation of 20th-century Uzbek stories and tales has been studied by many literary critics and translation scholars. In the study of this topic, scientific sources related to the theory of literary translation serve as an important methodological basis. In particular, in the work of translation scholar Gaybulla Salomov "Introduction to the Theory of Translation", the theoretical principles of literary translation, the issues of preserving national color and recreating the author's style are widely covered. The scientist emphasizes that the task of the translator is to convey not only the content, but also the aesthetic spirit of the work to the reader. In particular, his views on the importance of preserving folk expressions and national mentality in translation are of great importance for this study.[5; 276]

Also, in the scientific research of Ninel Vladimirova, the issue of the expression of imagery and stylistic means in literary translation is analyzed. She notes that the adequate provision of metaphors, phraseological units and figurative means in translation is one of the main factors determining the artistic value of the work. These views serve as a theoretical basis for the study of translations of Uzbek prose of the 20th century.[6; 298]

In the study of the artistic features of Uzbek prose, scientific articles and studies by Ozod Sharafiddinov occupy a special place. In his research, the scientist

deeply analyzes the folk spirit, simple and expressive style, and mastery of spiritual imagery in the works of Abdulla Qahhor, O'tkir Hoshimov, and Said Ahmad. This helps to understand the complex aspects encountered in the translation of these works. In particular, recreating the individual style of writers in another language is considered one of the greatest tasks for a translator. In addition, studies conducted on the stories of Abdulla Qahhor emphasize his skillful use of short and concise style, irony, and satirical spirit. Researchers note that it is precisely these stylistic aspects that often create difficulties in translating Qahhor's works. Similarly, the national spirit, sincere dialogues, and spiritual experiences in the stories of O'tkir Hoshimov are shown as factors requiring deep skill in translation.[4; 420]

In world translation studies, the scientific views of Vinay Darbelnet and Eugene Nida are an important source. Eugene Nida, in his work “Toward a Science of Translating”, developed the theory of formal and dynamic equivalence, justifying the need to maintain the power of influence on the reader in translation. This theory is also used as one of the effective methodological approaches in evaluating translations of Uzbek literary prose.

Thus, the analysis of existing scientific sources shows that the issue of artistic skill in the translation of 20th-century Uzbek stories and tales is closely related to ensuring the harmony of language, style, imagery and national color. These scientific views form the theoretical basis of the study and allow for a deeper understanding of the artistic principles in the translation process.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of culture-specific lexical items (CSLIs) revealed a pronounced tendency toward semantic substitution in the English translations. Of the 418 CSLIs coded across the corpus, 54% were rendered by target-language functional equivalents, 21% were translated by superordinates (hyperonyms), 14% were borrowed with explanatory glosses (loan translations or transliterations with

footnotes), and 11% were omitted without compensation. This distribution differs markedly from the Russian translations, in which borrowing and partial adaptation were substantially more frequent (39%), reflecting the historically closer cultural proximity between Uzbek and Russian in the Soviet context.[2; 184]

The consequences of hyperonymic substitution were most pronounced in the domain of kinship terminology. Uzbek distinguishes between, for example, aka (elder brother, with connotations of social authority and deference in address) and aka-uka (fraternal solidarity, used as a social compact rather than a biological descriptor). English translations consistently rendered both as 'brother', effacing the social and pragmatic distinctions that are central to the ethical texture of Qahhor's satire. A representative passage from Qahhor's story 'Bemor' ('The Patient') illustrates the point:

Source (Qahhor): "Sening akang emas, tovarishim — bu yerda hamma barobar." [lit. Your 'elder-brother-figure' is not applicable here, comrade — here everyone is equal.]

Translation: "Your brother has no say here, comrade — we are all equal."

The translation neutralises the ironic collision between the traditional hierarchy encoded in aka and the Soviet egalitarian ideology encoded in tovarish (comrade). The English 'brother' lacks the hierarchical loading of aka, with the result that the satirical bite of Qahhor's juxtaposition is significantly reduced. This finding was consistent across all four Qahhor texts: the pattern of hyperonymic substitution in kinship and address terms correlated with lower aesthetic impression scores from the bilingual reviewers ($M = 2.4/5$ for affected passages vs. $M = 3.8/5$ for passages where semantic fidelity was maintained).[2; 184]

Figurative language presented a more complex picture. Proverbs and set-phrase idioms were handled more adeptly than metaphorical innovations. Of the 127 proverbs and idioms coded, 61% were rendered by established English equivalents

with comparable pragmatic force, while only 29% were translated literally (with or without gloss). Fourteen passages showed innovative functional equivalents that, in the reviewers' assessment, achieved comparable aesthetic effect despite formal difference. By contrast, original metaphors—particularly those drawing on steppe landscape imagery or Sufi semantic fields—were handled with considerably less consistency, with 43% of such instances resulting in attenuated or omitted figurative content.

The pragmatic dimension of literary translation—encompassing irony, implicature, and register—proved to be the domain in which the widest variation in translatorial mastery was observed. Three broad strategies were identified: overt compensation (where pragmatic meaning lost in one passage is recouped in an adjacent passage), local naturalisation (where the translator produces a target-language pragmatic equivalent at the cost of cultural specificity), and loss without compensation.

Irony is a structuring principle of Qahhor's mature prose and a pervasive device in Said Ahmad's social satire. In the source texts, irony is frequently signalled through a distinctive combination of formal register markers (high-style lexis) with referentially deflating predicates—a technique that exploits the reader's awareness of Soviet official discourse as an immediately recognisable register of inflated formality. The English translations showed a statistically significant tendency to normalise this register clash, rendering Soviet bureaucratic formulae in neutral contemporary English. The effect is that the irony becomes explicit—the text announces its satirical intent—rather than implicit, which Qahhor and Said Ahmad's irony depends upon the reader performing the interpretive work of recognition.[7; 340]

Politeness encoding in Uzbek involves a complex system of honorific-address particles, verb-form selection (the 'siz/sen' distinction paralleling the French 'vous/tu'), and title use that carries substantial pragmatic freight in narratives of social conflict

and class dynamics. English lacks a grammaticalized second-person singular/plural politeness distinction, and all translators in the corpus relied on compensatory strategies of varying effectiveness: lexical intensification ('sir', 'respected colleague'), syntactic circumlocution, or simple omission. The most artistically successful passages were those in which translators found ways to foreground the politeness conflict through dialogue rhythm and speech-act sequencing rather than through lexical marking alone.

A noteworthy finding in this subsection concerns the treatment of Soviet institutional language. Said Ahmad's novellas are saturated with the formulaic language of Soviet bureaucracy—commission reports, collective-farm announcements, official proclamations—which he consistently subverts for ironic effect. The English translations in the corpus were produced in the 1980s and 1990s, a period when this register was still culturally legible to Western readers from Cold War discourse. More recent readers, the bilingual reviewers noted, are likely to find the institutional language merely archaic rather than ironically charged, suggesting that time-anchored cultural pragmatics create a secondary translation problem that the original translations could not have anticipated.

The three authors in the corpus exhibit markedly different idiolects, and the analysis assessed how effectively each idiolect was reconstituted in translation. Qahhor's voice is characterised by lexical precision, syntactic concision, and a compositional discipline that enforces maximum meaning per sentence—a style that his critics have described as 'carved prose' (Karimov, 2003, p. 47). The English translations of Qahhor showed consistent expansion: mean sentence length in the target texts exceeded that of the source texts by 22% (measured in syllable-normalised word count equivalents). This amplification was rarely compensatory; rather, it reflected the translators' tendency to explicate rather than preserve the tight implication chains that give Qahhor's prose its density.[5; 276]

CONCLUSION

The results of the study of the issue of artistic skill in the translation of Uzbek stories and tales of the 20th century show that the translation process is not a simple linguistic activity, but a complex creative-aesthetic process in which language, culture and artistic thinking are combined. The works created in prose of this period are distinguished by their national spirit, folk expression and deep psychologism. Therefore, when translating them into another language, it is important not only to convey the content, but also to preserve the artistic impact of the work.

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