

Translation Strategies In Jack London's "A Piece Of Meat": A Comparative Analysis Of Uzbek Versions

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Abstract: This article examines the translation strategies applied to Jack London's short story "A Piece of Meat" focusing on direct and indirect translations into Uzbek. Using Peter Newmark's classification of translation strategies, the study compares the Russian-mediated version by M. Hamidov and the direct translation by Sh. Obloqulova. The analysis reveals differences in semantic, stylistic, and cultural equivalence, highlighting how translation choices affect the preservation of the original's dramatic intensity and imagery.

Keywords: Translation strategies, direct translation, indirect translation, semantic equivalence, stylistic equivalence, dramatic intensity, metaphor, boxing narrative, sports theme.

Introduction: Jack London's short story "A Piece of Meat" dedicated to the world of sports, was first published on November 29, 1909, in the Saturday Evening Post magazine. It later appeared in book form in 1911 as part of the collection When God Laughs and Other Stories (Macmillan Publishers). In an interview with E. Labor about Jack London's life, the story is mentioned as one of the most important boxing narratives set in Australia.

Sports themes hold a special place in Jack London's works. As noted by B. Gilenson [1:66.], the author had a direct interest in various sports and engaged in boxing, fencing, and horse riding, making him closely acquainted with this domain. V. N. Bogoslovsky [2:178.] observes that the emergence of sports motifs in London's oeuvre is not accidental, as the writer himself was a versatile athlete. Consequently, his protagonists are typically depicted as physically strong, resilient individuals. According to the scholar, what impacts readers in London's works is not only the precise depiction of the hero's actions on the sports field but also the vivid portrayal of their psychological state during the competition. From the perspectives of both scholars, London's engagement with sports themes is directly linked to his personal life and interests, with his literary characters drawing from real-life experiences.

This story stands as one of the brightest examples in Jack London's oeuvre, demonstrating the close

interconnection between human destiny, physical strength, and social conditions. The writer interprets sports not merely as competition or combat but as a symbol of life's struggle. In this regard, the story occupies a unique position not only in sports-themed literature but also in revealing the philosophy of human existence. Thus, it illuminates not just the spirit of sports but also the individual's inner struggles and societal role from a philosophical standpoint.

The theoretical foundation of this research comprises classical and contemporary approaches in literary translation, enabling the evaluation of direct and indirect translation strategies in terms of semantic, stylistic, and cultural equivalence. The primary methodological framework is Peter Newmark's [7] classification of translation strategies.

METHODS

This study adopts Peter Newmark's classification of translation strategies as the principal analytical framework. According to Newmark, translation strategies represent different approaches to transferring meaning, form, and stylistic value from the source text into the target language, depending on the translator's priorities and the communicative purpose of the text.

Within this framework, literal translation is understood as a strategy that preserves the grammatical structure and lexical arrangement of the source text, allowing

only minimal adaptation in order to conform to the norms of the target language. Faithful translation, by contrast, seeks to reproduce the precise contextual meaning and stylistic features of the original text as fully as possible, even if this results in a certain degree of unnaturalness or rigidity in the target language.

Semantic translation occupies an intermediate position between literal and free approaches. Its primary aim is to convey the exact meaning of the source text while simultaneously preserving its stylistic and expressive nuances, thus maintaining a balance between accuracy and aesthetic value. In contrast, free translation prioritizes the transmission of content over formal correspondence, granting the translator greater creative freedom to reformulate the text in a way that is natural and intelligible for the target reader.

Idiomatic translation focuses on replacing source-language idioms, fixed expressions, or figurative units with stable idiomatic equivalents or culturally familiar expressions in the target language, thereby enhancing naturalness and pragmatic effectiveness. Finally, communicative translation is oriented toward the reader, aiming to present the text in a clear, fluent, and acceptable form that ensures optimal comprehension and communicative impact.

In addition to these strategies, adaptation is employed when significant cultural, linguistic, or pragmatic differences exist between the source and target contexts. This strategy involves introducing necessary changes to the text so that it aligns with the cultural norms, worldview, and mentality of the target audience, while preserving the overall communicative intention of the original.

Together, these strategies provide a comprehensive methodological basis for analyzing translation choices and assessing the degree of semantic and stylistic equivalence achieved in literary translation.

The story was translated into Russian by N. Averyanova, which served as an intermediary for M. Hamidov's Uzbek version, while Sh. Obloqulova provided a direct translation from English.

The analysis involves comparing selected excerpts from the original English text with the Russian intermediary and the two Uzbek versions. Key criteria include semantic fidelity, stylistic preservation (e.g., dramatic intensity, metaphors), and cultural adaptation. Two samples are examined to illustrate these strategies.

RESULTS

Sample 1

Original: The lips were shapeless, and constituted a mouth harsh to excess, that was like a gash in his face. (Jack London. P. 314)

Russian translation: Бесформенные губы складывались в крайне жесткую линию, и рот был похож на шрам. (N. Averyanova. P. 427)

Uzbek translation: Bichimsiz lablari qalin bir chiziq hosil qilar, og'zi esa xuddi yamoqqa o'xshardi. (M. Hamidov. P. 4)

Uzbek translation: Shaklsiz lablari va ortiqcha qo'pol bichilgan og'zi go'yo yuzidagi yaraga o'xshab ko'rinish berardi. (Sh. Obloqulova. P. 141)

In the original, this sentence dramatically describes the character's appearance. "Gash" denotatively means a deep cut or open wound. The simile "like a gash" compares the mouth to a deep wound on the face, linking it to the character's boxing history, where repeated blows have caused permanent scars and deformities.

A word-for-word translation would be: "Shaklsiz lablari haddan tashqari qo'pol og'izni tashkil etardi, u esa yuzdagi chuqur kesikka o'xshardi." This interprets the mouth's resemblance to a cut through shapeless lips forming a harsh appearance.

Hamidov's version uses "yamoq" (scar or patch) instead of "gash" (deep wound), influenced by the Russian "шрам" (scar). Per Newmark, this approaches adaptation, with semantic substitution and neutralization. The dramatic intensity is notably reduced, achieving only partial semantic-stylistic equivalence.

The Russian version softens the horror-evoking tone of "gash" to "шрам," diminishing the sharp dramatic force.

Obloqulova's direct translation uses "yara" (wound), aligning with literal translation per Newmark, closely preserving the grammatical structure and semantics.

Hamidov's use of "yamoq" fails to fully reveal the original's dramatism due to reliance on the Russian intermediary. By contrast, Obloqulova's direct translation employs the lexeme yara (wound), which closely corresponds to the denotative and connotative meaning of gash. This version largely preserves both the grammatical structure and the semantic imagery of the source text and can therefore be classified as literal translation in Newmark's sense. As a result, it demonstrates a higher degree of semantic-stylistic equivalence.

Sample 1 clearly shows that indirect translation through a mediating language may lead to semantic attenuation and loss of stylistic intensity, whereas direct translation enables more precise preservation of expressive imagery. To further illustrate how different translation strategies affect metaphorical representation, the following sample examines the

rendering of a dynamic action-based metaphor.

Sample 2

Original: He overwhelmed King with avalanches of punches and King did nothing. (Jack London. P. 324)

Russian translation: Он обрушивал на Кинга лавину ударов, а Кинг не отвечал. (N. Averyanova. P. 435)

Uzbek translation: Kingga u shiddatli mushtlarni yog'dirsa ham King javob qaytarmadi. (M. Hamidov. P. 17)

Uzbek translation: U Tomni zarbalar ko'chkisi bilan ko'mib tashladi, King esa hech narsa qilolmadi. (Sh. Obloqulova. P. 155)

The original features a strong metaphorical image, comparing endless punches to an avalanche a natural phenomenon of snow rapidly descending a slope, connoting a sudden, overwhelming flow. London uses this metaphor to vividly convey the fight's dramatic power and the character's relentless attack.

Hamidov demetaphorizes "avalanches of punches" to "shiddatli mushtlar" (fierce punches). The Russian uses "лавину ударов" (avalanche of blows), but Hamidov opts for a non-literal approach. Since "ko'chkisi" (avalanche) may not evoke a natural, vivid image in Uzbek readers in a boxing context, he chooses "shiddatli" to capture the connotation of an endless, sudden powerful flow. This aligns with communicative translation, prioritizing reader comprehension and naturalness.

Obloqulova, on the other hand, opts for a literal rendering of the metaphor as zarbalar ko'chkisi. While this approach formally preserves the source image, the metaphor may appear stylistically marked or unnatural in Uzbek, which can weaken its pragmatic impact and lead to incomplete semantic-stylistic equivalence.

Sample 2 demonstrates that literal preservation of metaphor does not always guarantee stylistic effectiveness. In this case, communicative translation proves more pragmatically successful in conveying the intended impact of the original, even though it sacrifices formal metaphorical structure.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that translation strategies significantly influence the equivalence achieved in Uzbek versions of "A Piece of Meat" Hamidov's indirect translation, mediated by Russian, often employs adaptation and communicative strategies, softening dramatic elements (e.g., "gash" to "yamoq") but enhancing readability for Uzbek audiences. Obloqulova's direct literal approach preserves formal and semantic fidelity (e.g., "gash" to "yara") but may sacrifice naturalness and cultural resonance.

These findings underscore the challenges of indirect translation, where intermediary influences can dilute stylistic nuances, versus direct methods that better retain the original's philosophical depth on sports as life's metaphor. Future research could expand to more samples or other London works to refine these insights.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the Uzbek translations of Jack London's "A Piece of Meat" reveals significant differences in the application of translation strategies and their impact on semantic-stylistic equivalence. The indirect translation by M. Hamidov predominantly relies on communicative and adaptive strategies, which enhance readability and pragmatic accessibility for Uzbek readers but frequently lead to a reduction in metaphorical density and dramatic intensity. As a result, certain stylistic and expressive features of the source text are partially neutralized.

In contrast, Sh. Obloqulova's direct translation demonstrates a consistent preference for literal and faithful translation strategies, allowing for a closer reproduction of the original text's semantic structure, imagery, and stylistic tension. Although this approach occasionally results in reduced naturalness in the target language, it more effectively preserves the author's individual style and expressive intent.

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