

Linguocultural And Functional Equivalence In The Literary Translation Of Similes

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Abstract: This article examines the process of translating similes in English and Uzbek literary texts from linguocultural, cognitive, and pragmatic perspectives. Special attention is paid to the aesthetic and stylistic functions of similes, their role in reflecting the author's worldview, and their deep connection with national cultural representations. The study analyzes various translation strategies applied to similes, including literal translation, substitution with an equivalent simile, descriptive paraphrasing, omission, and functional equivalence. Through illustrative examples, the effectiveness of these strategies is evaluated. The article emphasizes the translator's role as an intercultural mediator and concludes that the translation of similes is not merely a linguistic operation but a complex process of cultural and cognitive adaptation.

Keywords: Simile, literary translation, linguoculture, translation strategies, functional equivalence, pragmatic adequacy, cognitive model.

Introduction: One of the most problematic aspects of translation theory is the translation of stylistic devices. Even today, this issue continues to attract the attention of researchers, theorists, and practicing linguists and translators. The necessity of effectively conveying the figurative expression of a literary work makes the study of figurative devices an essential aspect of translation studies, as restoring the stylistic impact of the original text is considered a fundamental requirement of translation.

It should be noted that simile is one of the most widely used means of achieving imagery in literary discourse. Similes are extensively employed in both prose and poetic discourse. Scholars also resort to similes when explaining various phenomena in an accessible manner. In addition, similes are often used by publicists as a means of expressing vivid and expressive speech.

Simile represents the simplest form of figurative expression. Almost any figurative meaning can be conveyed through simile. For example: *sap-sariq barglar* — the leaves turned yellow like gold. Unlike other stylistic devices, simile always involves dual

nomination, as it explicitly names both of the compared objects (phenomena, qualities, or actions).

By examining the definitions given to simile, its distinctive features can be clearly understood. According to Viktor Vinogradov, simile is a logical device through which similarities and differences between objects and phenomena of the objective world are identified. Simile is an artistic expressive device in which imagery is created by comparing one object with another. Unlike other figurative devices, such as metaphor, simile is always characterized by explicit formal markers (in English: *as, as if, like, as...as*; in Uzbek: *go'yo, bamisoli, xuddi*).

Thus, simile is considered one of the most commonly used stylistic devices in literary discourse, as it serves to vividly express certain qualities and features of one object through comparison with another.

The translation of simile-based constructions used in literary texts into a foreign language gives rise to a number of specific challenges. Contemporary translation practice is directly connected with source texts belonging to different functional styles. Modern

translation studies presuppose that translation practice should be preceded by a comprehensive analysis of the stylistic and genre features of the source text, as well as its linguistic and extralinguistic characteristics. Reproducing the author's emotions, psychological state, and inner experiences in another language is considered one of the most complex aspects of the translation process. For this purpose, a translator's lexical competence alone is not sufficient; rather, the ability to incorporate figurative expression into the target text is of paramount importance.

In our view, the main difficulty in translating simile as a stylistic device lies not in the formal incompatibility of linguistic units, but in the differences between the cultural representations, cognitive models, and evaluative criteria underlying the simile. In literary texts, similes serve as an important means of expressing the author's perception of the world, national mentality, and aesthetic views through a concise image. Therefore, in the process of translating similes, the translator acts as a mediator not only between linguistic systems, but also within the sphere of intercultural cognition.

In translation studies, the issue of simile translation is often interpreted within the framework of literal or free translation. However, in the author's opinion, such an approach fails to fully reveal the artistic-aesthetic and linguocultural essence of similes. This is because the primary function of a simile is not merely to compare objects, but to evoke a specific mental image and evaluative response in the reader's consciousness. For this reason, this section analyzes the translation of similes based on the principles of functional, linguocultural, and pragmatic equivalence.

Rendering similes from one language into another compels translators to approach their work with exceptional caution. The problem of translating simile-based expressions often confuses not only amateur translators, but professional translators as well.

In order to ensure vividness and expressiveness in the translated text, professional translators employ various methods of rendering stylistic devices used in the source text. Translators have always faced dilemmas in the process of decision-making: whether to attempt to preserve the stylistic device of the original text, or—if this proves impossible—to create a stylistic device in

the target language that produces a similar emotional and artistic effect. Early approaches to the translation of similes were largely based on this dual choice or the preference for one of these options. Translating stylistic devices that embody the figurative value of a literary work often poses difficulties due to the national characteristics of stylistic systems in different languages. Linguists generally emphasize the necessity of preserving the overall image of the source text in translation, arguing that the translator should strive not to replicate the stylistic device itself, but rather to reproduce its function.

When translating similes into a foreign language, the translator must each time decide whether it is necessary to preserve the original image or replace it with another in the target text. The substitution of a simile with an equivalent one in another language may be motivated by the specific features of lexical usage in the target language, semantic compatibility, and other related factors.

The stylistic aspect of translation is essential for a translator, as it is impossible to achieve a refined and high-quality translation without it. The stylistic dimension of language is connected not only with transferring a particular linguistic unit from the source language into the target language, but also with the translator's individual approach and professional skill. Indeed, the quality of translation depends on how effectively the translator is able to convey the meaning of stylistic units. One of the most difficult tasks for a translator is the rendering of expressive means. A translator may ignore them during the translation process; however, this may result in a low-quality translation lacking aesthetic coloring and artistic value.

In order to avoid such situations and prevent stylistic awkwardness in literary translation, it is necessary to skillfully apply strategies for translating similes used in literary texts. In his research, Ulug'bek Yo'ldoshev presents the following conclusion regarding translation strategy: "A translation strategy is a plan developed before and during the translation process, which involves studying such factors as the reader's purpose, status, level of knowledge, and the style of the source text, and on this basis selecting appropriate methods for translating the text as well as transformations for its smaller units." According to the author, the methods and techniques used to translate stylistic devices found

in the source text are interpreted in translation studies under the term translation strategies. Furthermore, in his scholarly research, Ulug'bek Yo'ldoshev proposes translation strategies for rendering such stylistic devices as metaphor, metonymy, irony, personification, hyperbole, and allusion.

Jääskeläinen defines strategy as “a set of skills, actions, or processes that facilitate the acquisition, storage, and use of information.” This definition implies that translation strategies represent a set of actions undertaken by translators in order to solve problems that arise during the translation of a source text. Such stages of translation are employed until the translator achieves the desired result and produces a complete and adequate translation of the source text.

Pierini proposes a translation model that includes six translation methods related to simile translation. This model encompasses various stages involved in the translation of similes.

The first strategy is the literal translation of similes. As noted by Peter Newmark, if similes exist in both the source and target languages and possess a universal character, they may be translated literally. He also emphasizes that literal translation may be applied if the simile is correctly interpreted by the reader of the target text. For example: The clothes she wore were as white as snow — Qiz kiyib olgan kiyimlar qordek oppoq edi. In this case, literal translation preserves stylistic expressiveness, as the comparison of clean, white clothes with snow exists in both English and Uzbek.

The second strategy involves replacing the simile of the source language with a different simile in the target language. Within this strategy, the translator substitutes the figurative image of the source language with an image that conveys the same meaning in the target language, since similes in the source and target languages do not always reflect identical imagery. In addition, Larson notes that a simile in the source text may be replaced by a simile expressing the same meaning in the target language. For example: This man is strong as a horse — Bu kishi filday baquvvat. Through this simile, qualities such as strength, power, and robustness are emphasized. While in English such qualities are associated with a horse, in Uzbek a person is often compared to an elephant. This difference is directly explained by the national mentality of the

English and Uzbek peoples and by distinctions in their linguistic worldviews.

The literal translation of the phraseological unit “busy as a bee” is “asalaridek band” (“busy like a bee”). In English, this unit is commonly used to describe a person who is constantly occupied with numerous tasks and is so busy that they hardly have time even to “scratch their head.” According to this phraseological unit, English speakers typically liken a very busy person to a bee. For example: She is always as busy as a bee — U har doim juda band bo'ladi.

The literal Uzbek translation of the phraseological unit “to eat like a horse” is “otdek yemoq.” This phraseological unit is usually applied to a person who eats a large amount of food. For example: My daughter is super skinny but you'd never believe she eats like a horse — Mening qizim juda ozg'in, ammo u juda ham ko'p taom yeyishiga sen ishonmaysan. In English culture, people who eat a lot are commonly compared to a horse and its manner of eating.

The literal Uzbek translation of the phraseological unit “It's like banging your head against a brick wall” is “g'ishtli devorga boshini urishga o'xshamoq.” In English, this unit is generally used when a person attempts to do something that is impossible to accomplish. For example: I keep asking her not to park there but it's like banging your head against a brick wall — Men undan u yerda to'xtamaslikni so'rayman, lekin bu befoyda.

At first glance, translating the English simile “as strong as a horse” into Uzbek as “filday baquvvat” may appear to be a semantic substitution. However, this translation decision is based on the principle of cultural adaptation. In English culture, the horse symbolizes strength and endurance, whereas in Uzbek culture, the elephant represents absolute power and physical strength. Thus, in this case, the translator preserves not the external form of the simile, but its evaluative and emotional core.

Similarly, translating “as clean as a whistle” as “yog' tushsa yalagudek” is a clear example of pragmatic equivalence. The image of a “whistle” in English does not evoke a strong association with cleanliness for Uzbek readers. Therefore, the translator employs a conventional simile in Uzbek culture that expresses cleanliness to the highest degree. According to Mona

Baker, such cases demonstrate the priority of cultural connotation in translation.

Thus, these examples show that while the general cognitive model of simile translation—understanding an abstract quality through a concrete image—is preserved, its cultural realization changes. From this perspective, simile translation can be interpreted as a process of conceptual adaptation within the framework of cognitive linguistics.

Another example is the phraseological unit “as good as gold,” whose literal Uzbek translation is “tilladek yaxshi.” This unit is usually used to describe a baby or a domestic animal when it behaves politely and well. For example: She’s been as good as gold all morning — U ertalabdan beri o’zini juda esli tutdi. In English culture, well-behaved and harmless beings are commonly compared to gold.

The literal Uzbek translation of the phraseological unit “as white as a sheet” is “choyshabdek oq.” This phraseological unit is typically used when someone turns pale due to illness, fear, or another reason. For example: She went as white as a sheet when she heard the news — U yangilikni eshitib dokaday oqarib ketdi.

Thus, in the formation of simile-based phraseological units in English, the external appearance of the compared objects serves as the primary basis for comparison. Human qualities, states, or actions are likened to other objects. Simile-based phraseological units form distinctive semantic meanings and enhance the expressiveness and impact of information in speech.

When translating individual or free similes created by an author, it is advisable to pay close attention to the author’s intention in using the simile in the text and to the presupposition underlying it.

In the English sentence “I was like the Christ child lifted out of the straw manger, crying with holy indignity,” which contains a simile, it is first necessary to focus on the object of comparison, the image of the simile, and the intended meaning of the simile. In this sentence, these elements are manifested as follows:

Object: I

Image: the Christ child

Meaning: holiness, majesty, indignity

When translating this sentence containing a simile into

Uzbek, it is crucial to be able to convey both the simile image and the meaning expressed through it in the target language. A literal Uzbek translation of this sentence would be: “Men somon oxurdan ko’tarilib, Masih bolaga o’xshab, muqaddas tahqir bilan yig’layotgan edim.” However, such a translation may not possess sufficient communicative function for the Uzbek reader. Considering that the reader of the translated text may be an ordinary reader, the image of the Christ child may remain unclear or alien to them.

In this case, the meanings underlying the simile serve as a key interpretive aid. The presuppositional meanings conveyed in the sentence—holy (muqaddas), majesty (ulug’vorlik), and indignity (xokisorlik, nomukammallik)—help recreate the simile image in Uzbek. Accordingly, the sentence can be translated into Uzbek as: “Men somon oxurdan ko’tarilib, mo’min bola singari o’zgacha bir xokisorlik bilan yig’lar edim.” Here, functional equivalence as a translation transformation is actively applied, since the expression “Christ child” corresponds functionally to “mo’min bola” in Uzbek.

The issue of translating individual similes is considered even more complex than that of translating conventional similes. This is because individual similes are directly linked to the author’s personal worldview and religious or cultural experience. For instance, the literal translation of the image “Christ child” into Uzbek may lead to pragmatic failure. While this image symbolizes holiness and purity in Christian culture, it evokes foreign religious associations in the Uzbek cultural context.

Therefore, by choosing the variant “mo’min bola,” the translator preserves not the external religious form of the simile, but its moral and evaluative content. This demonstrates that cultural adaptation in the translation of individual similes is not only possible, but necessary. In our view, such an approach does not constitute semantic loss in translation; rather, it serves as a means of maintaining intercultural balance.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the process of translating simile as a stylistic device is not limited to linguistic equivalence alone, but requires consideration of cultural knowledge and cognitive models. Since similes in literary texts represent expressions of national mentality and aesthetic perception, the principles of functional,

linguocultural, and pragmatic equivalence acquire primary importance in their translation. The examples and strategies discussed in this section demonstrate that successful translation is based not on reproducing the external form of a simile, but on recreating its artistic and aesthetic effect on the reader.

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