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DIFFERENT TRANSLATION VERSIONS OF A SHORT STORY: THE PROBLEM OF FIDELITY TO THE ORIGINAL AND ADEQUACY

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Abstract:

This article explores different translation versions of a short story with a focus on the problem of fidelity to the original text and adequacy in translation. The study examines how translators balance the preservation of the source text's semantic, stylistic, and cultural features with the need to produce a coherent and natural target text. By comparing multiple translations of the same short story, the research identifies variations in lexical choices, syntactic structures, and stylistic strategies.

Particular attention is paid to the concepts of fidelity and adequacy, which often function in tension: while fidelity emphasizes closeness to the original, adequacy prioritizes the communicative effectiveness and readability of the translation in the target language. The analysis demonstrates that different translation approaches—ranging from literal to more adaptive strategies—result in diverse interpretative outcomes.

Keywords: translation, fidelity, adequacy, short story translation, translation strategies, equivalence, comparative analysis, literary translation, interpretation, source text, target text

In the history of translation, there are numerous cases where a single literary work has been rendered into several translation versions. For instance, prominent representatives of modern American literature such as Ernest Hemingway—



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through his short stories “*The Cat in the Rain*” and “*Old Man at the Bridge*”—and Mark Twain with “*Mistaken Identity*”, have been translated into Uzbek by both earlier and contemporary generations of translators. The older generation (Olim Otakhon, Shoir Usmonxo‘jayev) often relied on indirect translation through intermediary languages, while the younger generation (Qulmon Ochil, Q. Yusupova, Umid Ali, O‘roq Ravshanov) translated directly from the original texts.

Researcher K. Yusupova has previously conducted a partial monographic analysis of two Uzbek translations of Hemingway’s “*Old Man at the Bridge*” by O‘roq Ravshanov and Qulmon Ochil. In this section, the focus is on analyzing the quality and degree of adequacy in multiple translation versions of short stories by Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway.

A comparative analysis can be effectively illustrated through two translations of Hemingway’s “*Old Man at the Bridge*”: an indirect translation by Qulmon Ochilov (1938) based on a Russian version, and a direct translation from English by O‘roq Ravshanov (1991). Hemingway wrote this story in 1938, drawing inspiration from his experiences as a journalist covering the Spanish Civil War. His observations of war devastation and displaced individuals deeply influenced the narrative, which is also reflected in his other works such as “*A Farewell to Arms*” and “*Fiesta*”.

The story itself is characterized by a minimal plot and a strong focus on psychological depth. It depicts an unnamed old man sitting on a bridge, worrying about his animals (two goats, a cat, and four pairs of pigeons) while fleeing from war. Hemingway’s signature style—brevity, precision, and the so-called “telegraphic style”—is evident throughout. Symbolically, the old man’s concern for his animals represents attachment to homeland and personal loss.



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A comparison of translation versions reveals significant differences in translation strategies. The Russian translator T. Ozerskoy aimed to preserve the original meaning through a combination of literal and free translation methods. Qulmon Ochilov, despite relying on the Russian version, managed to recreate the artistic spirit of the original text in Uzbek, adapting it to the national linguistic and cultural context. For example, the term “*pontoon bridge*” is translated literally in Russian (*понтонный мост*) and by Ravshanov (*ponton ko‘prik*), whereas Ochilov renders it as “*muvaqqat ko‘prik*” (temporary bridge), demonstrating a culturally adaptive approach.

Similarly, lexical transformations are evident in the rendering of the word “*dust*”. While Ozerskoy and Ravshanov translate it directly as “*dust*” or “*chang*”, Ochilov uses “*turpoq*”, reflecting phonetic variation and colloquial usage. This choice enhances the expressive and stylistic richness of the translation, contributing to its readability and cultural resonance.

Asliyat: “*I was watching the bridge and the African looking country of the Ebro Delta and wondering how long now it would be before we would see the enemy, and listening all the while for the first noises that would signal that ever mysterious event called contact.*”

Ruscha tarjima nusxa (tarjimon T.Ozerskoy):

“*Я смотрел на мост и на местность вокруг устья Эбро, напоминавшую мне Африку, и соображал, как скоро может показаться неприятель, и все время прислушивался, поджидая тех первых звуков, которые возвещают о вечно таинственном явлении, именуемом соприкосновением фронтов, а старик все еще сидел там.*”

O‘zbekchada birinchi nusxa (tarjimon Qulmon Ochilov):

“*Afrikani yodimga solgan Ebro daryosi etaklariga va ko‘prikka dam-badam ko‘z yugurtirib, muhoraba deb atalmish mangu sinoatdan dalolat beruvchi ilk*



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shovqinlardan dog‘da qolmay deb atrofga sergak quloq solar ekanman, dushman nechog‘li tez paydo bo‘lishini tahmin qilar edim. Chol esa hamon o‘sha yerda o‘tirardi”

O‘zbekchada ikkinchi nusxa (tarjimon O‘roq Ravshanov):

“Men ko‘prikka qarab turardim. Amriqolik esa Ebro Dalta qishlog‘i tomon termulardi. U dushmanni o‘ylardi, tiq etgan tovush eshitilsa, vujudi quloqqa aylanardi.”

However, certain translation losses are also observed. For instance, the phrase “*trucks ground up and away*” is partially omitted or transformed in some translations, resulting in semantic reduction and weakening of the original imagery. This indicates the occurrence of semantic segmentation, where parts of the source text are not fully represented in the target text.

Further analysis of other excerpts demonstrates that Qulmon Ochilov’s translation often achieves a higher level of adequacy and artistic expressiveness compared to both Ozerskoy and Ravshanov. His rendering “*the old man remained just as he was*” effectively conveys both the psychological state of the character and the narrative atmosphere in a culturally accessible manner.

In contrast, Ravshanov’s direct translation, despite being closer to the original language, occasionally deviates from the source text due to omissions, additions, or misinterpretations. For example, the introduction of the word “*American*” in a context where it does not appear in the original text reflects a departure from fidelity. Additionally, structural changes such as splitting complex sentences into simpler ones, while permissible, sometimes disrupt the narrative coherence and stylistic integrity of the original.

Overall, the comparative analysis demonstrates that translation adequacy is not solely determined by direct access to the source text. Rather, it depends on the translator’s ability to interpret the artistic intent, preserve stylistic features, and



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adapt the text to the target language and culture. The study highlights the importance of balancing fidelity and creative adaptation in literary translation.

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