

TRANSLATION CHALLENGES: ADEQUATE TRANSLATION AND SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES IN UZBEK, RUSSIAN, AND TURKISH PROVERBS

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Abstract: This article addresses the challenges related to translating Uzbek, Russian, and Turkish proverbs. Special attention is paid to semantic differences, cultural context, and the problem of translation adequacy. Examples with linguocultural analysis and translation strategies are provided.

Keywords: translation, proverbs, semantics, adequacy, Uzbek language, Russian language, Turkish language

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are an essential element of a nation's folklore and cultural heritage. They reflect the worldview, moral values, behavioral norms, and mentality of an ethnic group. When translating proverbs from one language to another, the translator faces difficulties not only in lexical equivalence but also in conveying cultural, pragmatic, and semantic meanings. The translation of proverbs from different cultural and linguistic systems—such as Uzbek, Russian, and Turkish—is particularly complex.

This article aims to study the peculiarities of translating proverbs between the three mentioned languages. According to Y. Komissarov's theory of translation equivalence, it is important to distinguish between translation adequacy and accuracy, especially when working with culturally loaded units.

The purpose of the study is to identify translation difficulties, analyze the adequacy of translations, and suggest methodological approaches to preserving the meaning, imagery, and cultural color of the original.

The relevance of the topic lies in the necessity for effective intercultural communication and preserving the integrity of folk wisdom in a multilingual environment. Translating proverbs is not merely text conversion, but an interpretation of meanings deeply tied to the mentality, traditions, and historical experience of a people.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Proverb translation is a specific type of cross-linguistic transformation involving linguistic, cultural, and cognitive aspects. According to Komissarov, an adequate translation is one that is as close as possible in meaning, function, and style to the original. In the case of proverbs, this means preserving not only lexical meaning but also imagery, metaphor, and cultural specificity.

J. Vinay and J. Darbelnet identify seven translation methods, among which modulation, equivalence, and adaptation are most relevant for proverbs. Equivalence is especially important when the target language already has a proverb conveying the same meaning.

E. Nida proposes the concept of “dynamic equivalence,” where the goal of translation is to evoke the same feelings and associations in the recipient as in the native speaker of the source language. This is particularly relevant for proverbs, which are deeply rooted in national consciousness.

Methodological approaches used in the study:

- Comparative analysis of proverbs to identify matches and differences between equivalents in Uzbek, Russian, and Turkish.
- Cultural analysis considering the mentality, lifestyle, history, and religious traditions reflected in the proverbs.
- Contextual analysis examining how proverbs function in speech and literary texts.
- Transformational analysis to determine changes in structure and semantics during translation.

Proverbs were sourced from Uzbek, Russian, and Turkish folklore collections and idiomatic dictionaries. The primary goal was to identify translation principles that preserve both semantic and pragmatic functions of the proverbs.

DISCUSSION

This section presents specific Uzbek, Russian, and Turkish proverbs subjected to linguistic and cultural analysis. A comparative approach reveals the peculiarities of translation and the adequacy of conveying the original meaning.

1. Semantic and Pragmatic Differences

- Uzbek: “Bo‘ri qiyomatgacha bo‘ri, qo‘y qiyomatgacha qo‘y.”
Literal translation: “A wolf is a wolf till Judgment Day, a sheep is a sheep till Judgment Day.”
- Russian equivalent: “A wolf will always remain a wolf.”
- Turkish equivalent: “Can çıkar, huy çıkmaz.” (The soul may leave the body, but the character does not change.)
- Comment: All three convey the idea of unchanging nature but use different metaphors.

2. Literal and Figurative Translation

- Russian: “Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth.”
- Uzbek: “Sovg‘a otning tishiga qaramaydilar.”

- Turkish: “Bedava sirke baldan tatlıdır.” (Free vinegar is sweeter than honey.)
- Comment: The Uzbek version is almost literal. The Turkish one uses different imagery but conveys the same idea.
- 3. **Lack of Equivalents and Cultural Translation**
 - Uzbek: “Ko‘z qo‘rqan, qo‘l — botir.” (The eye fears, the hand is brave.)
 - No Russian or Turkish equivalents.
 - Comment: Conveys courage through action. Requires commentary or a functional equivalent.
- 4. **Full Equivalents**
 - Russian: “What you sow, so shall you reap.”
 - Uzbek: “Nima eksang — shuni o‘rasan.”
 - Turkish: “Ne ekersen, onu biçersin.”
 - Comment: Full equivalents. Important to retain aphoristic style and rhythm.
- 5. **Proverbs Losing Meaning in Literal Translation**
 - Turkish: “Taş yerinde ağırdır.” (A stone is heavy in its place.)
 - No Uzbek or Russian equivalents.
 - Comment: Expresses the importance of one’s place in their homeland. Requires adaptation.

Conclusion from discussion: The process of translating proverbs involves not only transferring lexical elements but also preserving pragmatic functions, cultural codes, and emotional impact. Methods like adaptation, functional equivalence, and dynamic equivalence help maintain cultural identity and authenticity.

CONCLUSION

Translating proverbs, especially between linguistically and culturally distinct languages like Uzbek, Russian, and Turkish, remains a significant challenge in translation studies and intercultural communication. Proverbs are an integral part of each nation's linguistic heritage, reflecting values, traditions, and collective experience.

Key findings:

- Many proverbs have full or partial equivalents, which facilitate adequate translation.
- Some proverbs lose meaning when translated literally and require adaptation.
- Cultural differences affect the interpretation and perception of proverbs, demanding awareness of context and background knowledge.
- In certain cases, adequate translation is impossible without annotations or commentary.

Thus, proverb translation is a complex process beyond linguistic equivalence. It demands linguistic skill, cultural erudition, and interpretive creativity. Understanding the principles of interlingual and intercultural transmission of proverbs contributes to translation theory and fosters deeper intercultural dialogue.

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