

PROBLEMS OF CLASSICAL TEXT TRANSLATION

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Ключевые слова: Махтумкули, классический текст, поэзия, художественная литература, проблемы перевода, форма и содержание, оригинал, языковые средства, узбекский, каракалпакский и азербайджанский языки, аруз и силлабическая (бармак) метрика, Коран и исламская культура.

Аннотация. В данной статье всесторонне анализируются теоретические и практические проблемы перевода классических литературных текстов на примере переводов произведений Махтумкули Фраги на узбекский, каракалпакский и азербайджанский языки. В процессе перевода классических поэтических текстов особого научного внимания требует проблема передачи строк, написанных поэтом на оригинальном туркменском языке, на родственные тюркские языки. Несмотря на генетическую и типологическую близость этих языков, переводческий процесс сопровождается рядом сложностей на семантическом, стилистическом и поэтическом уровнях. При переводе творчества Махтумкули на узбекский, каракалпакский и азербайджанский языки нередко наблюдаются неполная передача отдельных лексических единиц, системы образов, символических выражений и поэтической интонации. В результате в переводных текстах в ряде случаев возникают смысловые неопределённости или частичное искажение исходного содержания. В статье системно рассматриваются данные проблемы и выдвигаются научно обоснованные предложения и выводы, направленные на их преодоление.

Keywords: Maxtumquli, classical text, poem, literary art, translation issues, form and content, originality, linguistic means, Uzbek, Karakalpak, and Azerbaijani languages, aruz and syllabic (barmaq) meters, the Qur'an and Islamic culture.

Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and practical issues of translating classical literary texts, using the translations of Maxtumquli Firog'i's works into Uzbek, Karakalpak, and Azerbaijani as examples. In the process of translating classical poetic texts, particular scholarly attention is required for the transfer of verses originally composed in Turkmen into related Turkic languages. Despite the genetic and typological closeness of these languages, the translation process entails several difficulties at the semantic, stylistic, and poetic levels. In translating Maxtumquli's works into Uzbek, Karakalpak, and Azerbaijani, incomplete rendering of certain lexical units, imagery systems, symbolic expressions, and poetic intonation is often observed. Consequently, in some cases, the translated texts contain semantic ambiguities or partial distortions of the original meaning. This article systematically examines these issues and offers scholarly suggestions and conclusions aimed at overcoming them.

It is well-known that the formation and evolution of classical texts in Turkic literatures have been influenced for centuries by the Arabic and Persian languages and their rich literary

heritage. Consequently, as observed in the works of classical figures such as Navoi, Fuzuli, Magtymguly, Omar Khayyam, Ogahi, and Berdak, the frequent occurrence of Arabic and Persian words and phrases in Turkic literary creation is a natural phenomenon. These linguistic layers serve as crucial components not only of the vocabulary but also as stylistic, spiritual, and ideological frameworks.

However, while a significant number of contemporary translators possess a certain level of proficiency in Turkish, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Karakalpak languages, they often fail to fully grasp the semantic and stylistic nuances of Arabic and Persian lexemes found in classical texts. This leads to inaccuracies and speculative interpretations during the translation process, specifically causing translators to fall into the trap of “false equivalents” or “conjectural equivalents”. As a result, such translations frequently exhibit distortions of meaning, misinterpretations, and annotations that are inconsistent with the context.

Unfortunately, these shortcomings appear to be a near-universal issue among translators working with closely related Turkic languages. An analysis of various translations of works by the renowned Turkmen poet and thinker Magtymguly, major figures of Azerbaijani literature such as Nasimi and Vaqif, and the founder of Karakalpak written literature, Berdaq, further confirms the presence of such semantic errors and interpretive flaws.

It is precisely this situation – the prevalence of interpretive errors resulting from a misunderstanding of Arabic and Persian lexis in Turkic classical texts, the requirements for re-translation of classical works, defects related to the translation of false equivalents, the challenges of reflecting the specific style of classical texts, the complexities of translating culture-specific words (realia), and the issues regarding the accurate representation of religious and Sufi terminology – that has prompted us to address this problem on a scientific basis.

In the research of translation scholar E.Ochilov regarding this issue, it is stated: “In the translation of Arabic and Persian words from closely related languages, we observe four scenarios: first, the incorrect interpretation of a word unknown to the translator; second, leaving words exactly as they are without any commentary or explanation, regardless of whether they are understandable to the reader; third, the translator retaining words they do not understand and attempting to provide explanations for them; and fourth, misleading the reader by leaving words that have narrowed, expanded, or even completely changed their meaning over centuries unchanged” (E. Ochilov, 1).

Almost all of these observations are evident in the translations of Magtymguly’s poetic heritage into kindred languages. In this sense, the issues related to the translation of classical texts serve as an important methodological basis for identifying the potential semantic shifts that the Arabic and Persian linguistic layers in the poet’s works may undergo during the translation process.

Due to the fact that the laws and principles of translating classical texts from closely related languages have not been sufficiently developed and the underlying problems remain unresolved, translations from the literatures of kindred peoples – such as Turkish, Azerbaijani, Tatar, Bashkir, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Karakalpak – are sometimes referred to as “adaptation” (tabdil) and sometimes as “translation”. In particular, the language of classical poetry has been profoundly refined and polished over centuries; the majority of the ancient Turkic, Arabic, and Persian words found within them are present across all Turkic languages.

“A vast majority of poetic works written in kindred languages possess such a characteristic that nearly all words in the source text are also found in the target language. Consequently, it is possible to achieve adequacy by replacing only those specific words that do not exist in the translation language. However, this “replacement” is not a mechanical task; on the contrary, in most cases, it is a demanding creative pursuit that tests the translator’s skill as an artist” (Isomiddinov Z., 2).

The second aspect of the matter is that while a translator who does not know the language would not attempt a translation from distant languages, in translations from closely related

languages, the language factor is often pushed to the background. However, is it not true that “knowledge of the language is the first condition of translation, the very alphabet of this art?” (Isomiddinov Z., 2, 162).

As a result, translators who fall into the trap of culture-specific words and false equivalents commit numerous errors and flaws. Translation scholars who argue that translating from closely related languages is more difficult than from distant languages – claiming that interlinguistic similarities deceive the translator – often fail to account for the fact that all these shortcomings stem from the translator’s lack of linguistic proficiency.

For example, J.Sharipov translates Magtymguly’s line “Табахатдыр йүзлерим” (MSE, 1, 221) as “Қабоҳатдир юзларим” (ТА, 467); however, the word “қабоҳат” is not used in relation to the face in the Uzbek language. In the Turkmen language, besides the meanings of “ba” or “wicked”, this word also carries meanings such as “shameful”, “disgrace”, or “shame” (TKES, 76; TRS, 664). In this context, that specific meaning is more appropriate as a characteristic word for the Uzbek literary process:

“Уятлидир юзларим”.

For some reason, E. Ochilov also incorrectly translates it as “Ёқимсиздир юзларим” (BN, 471).

In the Turkmen language, the word atmak also carries the meanings of “етишмоқ” (to reach/attain) and “эришмоқ” (to achieve) (TRS, 57). Therefore, the line: “Кимлер бу дүньаде ыкбал атмышдыр” (MSE, 2, 83) can be understood as: “Кимлар бу дунёда бахтга эришгандир”.

However, in J.Sharipov’s translation, the line “Кимлар бу дунёда иқбол отмишдир” (ТА, 469) contains a stylistic awkwardness. This is because the phrase “iqbol otmoq” does not exist in the Uzbek language and remains unintelligible.

Translators sometimes use words that are erroneous from the perspective of the Uzbek literary language, which obscure or abstract the intended meaning. For instance:

Original text: Гара гарганың перзенди

Гөзүне сурат гөрүнер (MSH, 1, 247).

J. Sharipov’s translation:

Қора қарғанинг фарзанди

Кўзига сурат кўринар (ТА, 292).

In this context, the poet is expressing the idea that “Even the offspring of a black crow appears white (i.e., beautiful) to its own eyes”. In the Uzbek translation, however, this meaning does not shine through clearly because the phrase surat ko‘rinar does not convey such a sentiment. Had the translator approached the text creatively and translated the second line as “Кўзга хушсурат кўринар”, the objective would have been achieved. In this regard, E. Ochilov’s translation can be approved:

Қора қарғага фарзанди

Гўзал, хушсурат кўринар (BN, 332).

In this research, an attempt is made to resolve long-standing problems in the translation of closely related languages, specifically using translations from the Turkmen language as a case study. This is achieved through a comparative analysis of several translations of Magtymguly’s poems into the Uzbek, Karakalpak, and Azerbaijani languages. The strong critical tone of the study is justified by the fact that translations of classical literary texts have not yet reached the required standard of quality.

We encounter similar flaws frequently in translations from the literatures of other kindred peoples; therefore, preventing such deficiencies is among the most urgent and unavoidable issues on the agenda of Uzbek translation studies. The relevance of this research topic is determined by this very necessity.

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