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STYLISTIC PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION: PRESERVING STYLE, TONE AND EXPRESSIVENESS

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Abstract:
Stylistic translation is a complex process because translators must convey not only the meaning of a text but also its tone, emotional effect, imagery, and individual voice. This article examines the main challenges of preserving stylistic features when translating between English and Uzbek, with particular attention to metaphors, idioms, irony, register, and culturally specific expressions. Using a descriptive and comparative approach, it presents illustrative examples to demonstrate how literal translation can weaken expressiveness or change the intended message. The discussion considers strategies such as stylistic substitution, cultural adaptation, compensation, and contextual interpretation. It also highlights the importance of understanding the author's purpose, the target audience, and the conventions of the text's genre. The article argues that successful stylistic translation requires a balance between faithfulness to the original and natural expression in the target language.
Keywords: stylistic translation, tone, expressiveness, literary translation, stylistic equivalence, metaphor, irony, idioms, cultural adaptation, translation strategies.

Introduction:

Translation is often described as the transfer of meaning from one language into another. However, meaning is not limited to the information expressed by words. A text also communicates feelings, attitudes, humour, social relationships, and the author's individual way of presenting the world. These features are created through style, and they can be difficult to preserve when the text enters another language and culture. These problems are particularly relevant to English–Uzbek translation. Although both languages can express similar ideas, their idioms, cultural associations, politeness conventions, and literary traditions do not always match. A phrase that sounds natural and emotional in English may sound exaggerated or confusing if translated word for word into Uzbek. The reverse is also true: Uzbek expressions with strong cultural or emotional associations may need creative solutions when translated into English. This article explores the main stylistic challenges in translation and examines practical ways to preserve style, tone, and expressiveness. Its central argument is that a successful translation should reproduce the communicative and artistic effect of the original as naturally as possible, rather than simply copying its linguistic form.

Understanding Style, Tone, and Expressiveness:

Style refers to the distinctive way a writer or speaker uses language. It can be recognised through vocabulary, sentence structure, imagery, repetition, rhythm, figurative language, and other linguistic choices. Leech and Short (2007) show how stylistic analysis can help readers understand the relationship between linguistic form and literary meaning. Tone is the attitude conveyed by the speaker or writer. A text may sound humorous, serious, affectionate, critical, sarcastic, formal, or uncertain. Tone is not always stated directly; it may depend on context, word choice, punctuation, and the relationship between speakers. Expressiveness, meanwhile, concerns the emotional or rhetorical force of language and its ability to make an impression on the reader. These three concepts are connected, but they are not identical. A sentence can have a simple style and still communicate a strong emotional tone. Similarly, a metaphor can make a sentence expressive without necessarily making it humorous or informal. Translators must identify which features are essential to the passage before deciding how to reproduce them.

Translating Metaphors and Figurative Language:

Metaphors and similes are among the most noticeable stylistic challenges because they communicate ideas through images rather than direct description. Some images are shared across languages, while others depend on cultural associations. Newmark (1988) argues that figurative expressions require careful attention to meaning and context, rather than automatic word-for-word transfer.

English: He is the backbone of the family.

Possible Uzbek translation: U oilaning tayanchi.

The English metaphor compares a person to the backbone, suggesting that the family depends on that person for strength and support. The Uzbek expression oilaning tayanchi communicates a similar idea through the image of a support or pillar. Although the physical image changes, the central meaning remains intact. This is a useful example of stylistic substitution: the translator selects an expression that performs the same communicative function in the target language. A literal translation involving the family's anatomical backbone would sound strange unless the context deliberately used that image.

Idioms and Culturally Specific Expressions:

Idioms often create difficulties because their meanings cannot be understood simply by combining the meanings of their individual words. Their use may also depend on social context, cultural knowledge, and conventional patterns of expression. Baker (2018) discusses the problems of equivalence at word and phrase level, including cases where an expression has no direct equivalent in another language.

English: She spilled the beans.

Uzbek equivalent: U sirni oshkor qildi.

The English idiom means that someone revealed information that was meant to remain secret. The Uzbek expression communicates the same meaning directly without reproducing the original image of spilling beans. This is often preferable to a literal translation, which would suggest a physical action rather than the disclosure of information. The idiomatic equivalent is appropriate when the main purpose is to preserve meaning and naturalness. However, if a story deliberately

uses the image of beans for humour or wordplay, the translator may need to retain or recreate that image in another way.

Preserving Tone and Irony:

Tone can be especially difficult to translate because it often depends on subtle clues. Irony is a good example: the literal words may express praise while the speaker actually intends criticism. If the translator ignores the situation or the speaker's attitude, the translated sentence may communicate the opposite of what was intended. De Wilde (2021) highlights the methodological complexity of analysing translated literary irony, including the importance of context and the choices made when comparing source and target texts.

English, spoken sarcastically after a serious mistake: Oh, brilliant!

Possible Uzbek translation: Qoyil, juda "zo'r" bo'libdi!

The literal meaning of brilliant is positive, but the situation changes its interpretation. The speaker is expressing annoyance rather than genuine admiration. The Uzbek version uses an apparently positive evaluation to communicate the same sarcastic attitude. The quotation marks can help signal irony in written language, although they would not necessarily be appropriate in every text. Depending on the dialogue and the characters' usual speech, a shorter or more direct Uzbek expression might sound more natural. The translator should preserve the relationship between the words and the situation, not simply the dictionary meaning.

Register, Politeness, and the Author's Voice:

Register refers to the level and type of language used in a particular situation. Academic writing, business correspondence, everyday conversation, and literary dialogue all have different expectations. A translation may convey the right information but still fail if it makes a character sound too formal, too familiar, or unlike the person presented in the original.

English: Could you possibly give me a hand?

Possible Uzbek translation: Iltimos, menga yordam bera olasizmi?

The English request is indirect and polite. Its wording allows the speaker to ask for assistance without sounding overly demanding. The Uzbek translation conveys the same respectful intention through a conventional polite question. A direct version such as Menga yordam ber would change the interpersonal tone by making the request sound more like an instruction. This difference matters in dialogue because forms of address and politeness can reveal the relationship between characters. The translator should therefore consider not only the requested action but also the degree of distance, respect, or familiarity conveyed by the sentence.

Expressiveness, Rhythm, and Repetition

Expressiveness is not created by figurative language alone. Rhythm, sound patterns, repetition, sentence length, and punctuation can shape the reader's experience. These features are especially important in poetry, emotional dialogue, speeches, and passages that build suspense. Preserving every formal feature may be impossible, but ignoring all of them can make a translation less effective.

English: Never again. Never.

Possible Uzbek translation: Boshqa hech qachon. Hech qachon.

The repetition reinforces the speaker's determination or emotional distress. A translation that reduces the passage to Boshqa bunday bo'lmaydi may convey the general idea but loses the original's abrupt rhythm and emphasis. Retaining repetition allows the Uzbek reader to experience a similar sense of insistence. The exact choice would depend on the wider passage: if the speaker is angry, frightened, or grieving, the translator should make sure the rhythm supports that emotional state. The example shows that repetition may be meaningful even when it adds no new factual information.

Strategies for Solving Stylistic Problems:

Several practical strategies can help translators preserve stylistic meaning. First, **contextual analysis** is essential. Before translating a metaphor, idiom, or ironic remark, the translator should identify the speaker's intention, the situation, and the likely effect on the reader. Second, **stylistic substitution** can be used when the original expression has no natural equivalent but its function can be recreated through a different image or phrase. Third, **compensation** may help when a stylistic feature cannot be preserved in its original location. A pun, rhythm, or emotional emphasis may be recreated elsewhere, provided that the overall text remains coherent. Fourth, **cultural adaptation** can help readers understand unfamiliar references, but it should not erase cultural details that are important to the text. Sometimes retaining a culturally specific term with a brief explanation is more appropriate than replacing it with a target-culture equivalent.

Conclusion:

Preserving style, tone, and expressiveness is one of the most demanding aspects of translation because these features are closely connected to language, culture, and context. Metaphors, idioms, irony, politeness, rhythm, and repetition may not have direct equivalents between English and Uzbek, but their communicative functions can often be reproduced through careful choices. The examples demonstrate that literal translation may preserve individual words while weakening the emotional or artistic effect of the original. At the same time, free adaptation can distort the author's intention if it changes the tone, cultural meaning, or intensity of an expression. Effective stylistic translation therefore requires a balance between accuracy, naturalness, and creativity. Ultimately, the translator's task is not simply to transfer what a text says, but to consider how it says it—and to help readers in another language experience the message as fully as possible.

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