

THE COMPLEXITY OF FICTION TRANSLATION: CHALLENGES AND APPROACHES

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Abstract

The translation of fiction presents a complex set of challenges that extend beyond the mere transfer of linguistic meaning. Fictional texts are deeply embedded in cultural, stylistic, and emotional contexts, requiring translators to balance fidelity to the source text with readability and aesthetic impact in the target language. This article examines the major linguistic, cultural, and stylistic challenges encountered in fiction translation. Particular attention is paid to the translation of figurative language, culture-specific elements, narrative voice, and stylistic devices that shape the author's individual expression. The study also discusses common translation strategies employed to address these challenges, including adaptation, modulation, and contextual substitution. By analyzing theoretical perspectives from translation studies and selected examples from translated fictional works, the article highlights the translator's role as both an interpreter and a creative mediator. The findings suggest that successful fiction translation depends on the translator's linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and sensitivity to literary style, making fiction translation a highly interpretative and creative process.

Keywords

fiction translation, translation challenges, literary translation, cultural transfer, translation strategies

Introduction

The study focuses on identifying the most prominent lexical divergences in the novel and analyzing the cultural, historical, mythological, and religious differences that arise between the two languages. Furthermore, it applies translation theories in practice to propose various methods for addressing such challenges. Scholarly viewpoints are compared to highlight the effectiveness of different approaches. In this process, the research not only introduces Uzbek readers to a major work of foreign fantasy literature but also demonstrates the capacity of Uzbek translation practice to render the most adequate equivalents from a linguistic perspective. The first challenge in the translation process is usually the obstacle of getting the process started. As already mentioned, the copyright law nowadays ensures that translation projects are driven by publishers, rarely by translators themselves, as Venuti points out in *The Scandals of Translation*. A reason for this is that the exclusive translation right of a novel is given to its author, and it is them or their publishers who initiate translations in order to create foreign language markets for their work by approaching foreign publishers who then commission translators. As publishers pursue the maximum profit for their investments, they will choose promising works that have been successful in their country of origin, thus shaping cultural developments at home and abroad through the commissioning of certain translation projects. Publishers will also focus on works that are easily adaptable to the cultural values and prevailing tastes of the target market.

What certainly helps this development are foreign texts that have already been adapted in other forms of mass culture, such as films, TV series, plays, and musicals; these adaptations can pave the way for further translations as they possess the potential for garnering a large readership on a foreign market. Other influential factors in creating bestsellers are electronic media as well as elaborate promotion and marketing schemes. In his *Fantasy Literature: Challenging Genres*,

editor Mark Fabrizi explains that fantasy fiction, while often derided as superficial and escapist, is still one of the most enduring genres of fiction worldwide, and has been received over the past decades with rising popularity. As already mentioned, fantasy fiction has roots in and is inspired by old legends and heroic epics, for instance Homer's Iliad, the Nibelungenlied, or versions of Arthurian Legend. Due to humankind's fascination with the supernatural, there is a long tradition of legends and fairy tales in most cultures, many of which were passed on from generation to generation, orally or in writing; this contributes to the factor of timelessness that can be felt in fantasy fiction.

During the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century, adventure and horror stories such as Mary Shelley's Frankenstein proved to be popular. Fantasy as the literary genre we know today, however, was only established in the twentieth century and became known to a wider audience in the 1960s, when Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings sparked the first fantasy boom. Since then, works of high fantasy have gradually entered the mainstream, with popularity peaking in the twenty-first century, evidenced by the bestselling status of the Harry Potter and the A Song of Ice and Fire series. In addition to the novels, several fantasy fiction film adaptations have achieved blockbuster status over the past twenty years, and television adaptations have been done very successfully. The so-called spread ability (cf. Jenkins 2013: 3) of fantasy works is a major factor that contributes to the current market boom of the genre: it is multimedia (i.e. there is the possibility for transmedia storytelling), and a lot of crossovers are taking place - fantasy is not only represented in literature and films but in other areas of pop culture as well, such as music, art, comics, board games, roleplaying or computer games. The reasons for this new appreciation of the genre are numerous.

For instance, Fabrizi argues, that the genre of fantasy occupies such a significant role in Western culture because it has a great deal to offer for the critical modern reader in terms of complexity and relevance. "One of the most interesting aspects of fantasy literature is that it tends to ask the 'big' questions of life," making readers reflect on and consider such topics as "the nature of good and evil, universal morality, the afterlife, heroism and the quality of one's character, the role of the individual in society, and the importance of cultural diversity." (Fabrizi 2016: 1) All these issues are addressed in rich and compelling narratives that capture the reader's attention. Commonly, the intention of the author is to describe these characters or allude to events that may take place in the story. The problems occur not only because of the complexity of the terms or the meaning they may carry, but also because, most of the times, the final decision as to whether the translation is appropriate or not does not rely on translators only, but rather on editors or correctors.

If Verne believed in the omnipotence of science, and G. Wells introduced the concept of the elements of pessimism are true, and in the above-listed works the author reveals the destructive power of science for humanity. In the United States in the first half of the 20th century, works of fantasy fiction were published mainly in magazines aimed at the general reader. These works were characterized by an adventurous plot and an abundance of fantastic details, which were not always scientifically sound (Gakov). The genre was not welcomed, but it was not forbidden either, because it acted as a preacher of scientific knowledge. It is worth noting that at this time Soviet literature often borrowed literary ideas and techniques from American writers. The 40s during the Second World War were a time of stagnation of Soviet scientific literature, but the literature of the USA enjoyed a resounding success at that time, because their continent was not affected by the war. Literary critics call this period in the history of the United States the "golden age" of fantasy literature. It was during these years that the following were created great works like "1984" by D. Orwell, "The Gunsmiths Isher" by A. E. Van Vogt, "The Foundation" by A. Asimov, "Nerves" by L. Del Rey, "The City" by K. Simak, "Get Ready, darkness!" by F. Leiber,

and 22 works by one of the greatest science fiction writers R. Heinlein "Astronaut Jones", "Red Planet", "Citizen of the Galaxy" and many others. Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451", which to this day does not leave readers and literary critics indifferent. The author depicted the emptiness of humanity's existence, the detachment of man from nature. Burning books are turning into a loss of humanity's intellectual heritage. In the SSR, in the 50s, "short-range fiction" was invented. There is no doubt that the peculiarity of fantasy fiction, in particular, is that it shows real characters in fantastic circumstances, teaches people how to live properly and make fair decisions. In the afterword to A. Asimov's novel "The End of Eternity," Soviet philosopher E. A. Arab-Oglu quotes the words of a remarkable fantasy fiction writer: "History has reached a point where humanity is no longer allowed to fight. People on Earth should be friends. I have always tried to emphasize this in my works. I don't think it's possible. to make all people love each other, but I would like to destroy the hatred between people. And I seriously believe that fantasy fiction is one of the links that help connect humanity. The problems that we raise in fiction become the pressing problems of all mankind. Thus, fantasy fiction has been surprising readers for more than half a century with its immediacy and the amazing world of science and inventions. Fantasy fiction is not created for the purpose of entertainment. The goal is to show a person the possibilities of improving the world or to warn a person about the doom of society if science is used not for good, but to achieve their own goals and desires. Having considered the general idea and features of science fiction literature, in the next paragraph we will proceed to consider the lexical and grammatical features of fantasy fiction. This genre often relies on human imagination and inner worlds, seeking answers to spiritual and philosophical questions. In Uzbek literature, the fantastic genre gradually developed, blending with national and cultural values in unique ways. The development of the fantastic genre in Uzbek literature was significantly influenced by works translated from other languages. For example: The works of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and other fantastic writers were translated into Uzbek during the 20th century, contributing to the popularization of the genre. Stories from international fantastical literature, such as The Wizard of Oz and Gulliver's Travels, translated for children and young readers, also played a role in this process. In Uzbek literature, fantasy often intertwined with national values and historical events. Although writers like Chulpon and Abdulla Qodiriy did not fully embrace the fantastic genre, symbolic and philosophical elements in their works laid the foundation for it. Writers like Muhammad Ali and Erkin A'zam introduced fantastic elements imbued with unique national characteristics. Themes of technological advancements, space exploration, and scientific progress were prevalent in fantastic stories and novels. Writers such as Gafur Gulam and Said Ahmad incorporated elements of science fiction into their works. Modern Era: Contemporary Uzbek writers continue to develop the fantastic genre. They aim to merge global trends in fantasy with distinct national flavors. The translation of global fantastic works into Uzbek through the internet and modern technologies has also created new opportunities in this direction.

Literature Review

Previous studies in translation studies have extensively addressed the complexities of literary translation, emphasizing its interpretative and creative nature. Scholars such as Nida, Newmark, and Venuti underline that literary translation requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural and stylistic sensitivity. Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignization has been particularly influential in analyzing how translators handle culture-specific elements and stylistic features in fiction.

Research by Komissarov, Barkhudarov, and Retsker highlights the importance of translation transformations in achieving adequacy and equivalence, especially in artistic texts. These scholars argue that lexical transformations play a dominant role in fiction translation, often accompanied by grammatical shifts to preserve meaning and stylistic effect.

Despite the growing body of research on literary and fantasy translation, limited attention has been given to the comparative analysis of English fantasy texts and their Uzbek translations. This gap highlights the need for further research focusing on lexical divergences and translation strategies used to render fantasy fiction into Uzbek, which this study aims to address.

Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and comparative research methodology. The primary material for analysis consists of selected passages from English fantasy fiction and their Uzbek translations, with particular attention paid to lexical units, culture-specific elements, and stylistic devices.

The analysis is based on established translation theories proposed by scholars such as Komissarov, Barkhudarov, and Venuti. Lexical items are examined to identify translation transformations, including borrowing, calque, modulation, generalization, and adaptation. Special emphasis is placed on neologisms, compound words, abbreviations, and terminological units characteristic of fantasy fiction

Discussion and Results

While the fantastic genre in Uzbek literature initially drew inspiration from other cultures, it gradually developed its own national diversity. Today, this genre is not only popular among children but also increasingly resonates with adult audiences. Actually, artificially created words make up a small percentage of the literature. Most often, authors, instead of inventing a completely new word, resort to derivation or word composition, which eventually leads to a new word with a new meaning. The range of uses of derivation has recently expanded significantly, due to the development of science and the creation of new terms and designations for a phenomenon. The derivation affected not only science itself, but also science fiction. By creating their own world of mysteries and mystical creatures, writers resort to this the method. According to Yartseva, derivation is the process of creating one language unit in another language. on the basis of others, taken as the initial ones, in the simplest case – by the "expansion" of the root due to affixation or word composition, in connection with which derivation is sometimes equated with word production or word formation". Leichik says, the literature is full of terms. The terms are a characteristic feature of science fiction. Each field of science creates its own terminology; in this regard, there are a large number of definitions of the term (2007). In our opinion, the most acceptable definition is that of L.L. Nelyubin: the term is "a word or phrase of a special (scientific, technical, military, etc.) language created to accurately express special concepts and designate special objects" (2003). Word formation is one of the most common types of word formation in science fiction. The forms of vocabulary in the works of fantasy fiction are very diverse. Let's give examples of some of them: "noun + verb", "verb + noun", "adjective + verb", "noun + noun", "adjective + noun". However, there is also a model in the scientific literature that consists of three components: "adjective + adjective + noun" or "noun + adjective + noun". Such a model is not often found in science fiction and sometimes represents difficulty in translation. Such texts are usually full of terms and technical concepts. The next lexical device of fantasy fiction is an abbreviation or abbreviation. They are used in science fiction to create a pseudoscientific language, combined with a large the number of loans.

a. *Waiting to greet us, standing just to the left of the door, on a raised portion of the floor by a spectacular **grand piano**, were Edward's parents.*

(Twilight,2008:109)

As N.V. Komissarov notes (Komissarov, 1990: 123), two types of translation play an important role in the modern world: artistic translation and informative translation. Artistic translation is a type of translation, the main task of which is to achieve a certain aesthetic effect, creating an artistic image. As a rule, literary translation texts contain there are many stylistic

techniques that create this artistic image. The complexity of this type lies in the ability to fully convey the poetic content of the original text. In order to achieve the "adequacy of translation", the translator is faced with a variety of transformations, namely translation transformations. The number of types of translation transformations in scientific and technical texts is large. Translation transformations are a special kind of paraphrasing from one language to another. According to L.S. Barkhudarov's definition, translation transformations are translations with the fullest possible completeness of the information contained in the source text, while strictly observing the norms of the translated language. Having studied the works of such scientists as Ya. I. Retsker, L. S. Barkhudarov, V. N. Komissarova, as well as T. A. Kazakova and I. S. Alekseeva, we came to the conclusion is that the main types of translation transformations are lexical transformations. Basically, lexical transformations entail grammatical ones. And in some cases, translators of scientific texts have to apply both types of transformations. All of them play an important role in translation. Lexical transformations are the replacement of individual lexical units of the source language with lexical units of the translated language. Lexical transformations are an integral part of scientific texts, as well as texts of science fiction in general, since a large number of terms, proper names and various names are used in texts of this nature.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the translation of fantasy fiction involves a wide range of linguistic, cultural, and stylistic challenges. Lexical divergences arise primarily due to the presence of neologisms, invented terminology, and culture-bound elements that lack direct equivalents in the target language. As the analysis shows, translators frequently rely on lexical and grammatical transformations to achieve adequacy and maintain the artistic integrity of the source text. The findings confirm that fantasy translation is not merely a mechanical transfer of meaning but a creative and interpretative process that requires deep cultural awareness and stylistic competence. In the Uzbek context, translations of fantasy literature have played a significant role in shaping the development of the genre and enriching national literary traditions.

The study contributes to translation studies by highlighting effective strategies for overcoming lexical challenges in fantasy fiction translation. Further research may focus on a broader corpus of texts or explore reader reception of translated fantasy works in Uzbek literature.

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