

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL AND STYLISTIC PRESERVATION IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF CHO'LPON'S "KECHA VA KUNDUZ"

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Abstract

This article examines the stylistic and cultural challenges involved in translating Kecha va Kunduz by Cho'lpon into English, focusing on its translated version "Night and Day" by Christopher Fort. As a literary work deeply rooted in Uzbek cultural context, the novel presents significant difficulties in conveying metaphor, tone, and stylistic nuances. Using a qualitative comparative approach, this study analyzes selected excerpts from the original and translated texts, focusing on metaphor, personification, cultural expressions, and sentence structure. The findings reveal that although the translation generally preserves semantic meaning, it frequently reduces stylistic richness and emotional depth. The research identifies tendencies such as metaphor simplification, cultural generalization, and tone neutralization. It concludes that a more balanced approach-combining readability with stylistic loyalty-is essential for maintaining the artistic and cultural integrity of Uzbek literature in translation.

Keywords: Uzbek literature, translation studies, stylistics, metaphor, personification, cultural loss, Cho'lpon, comparative linguistics.

Introduction

Cho'lpon is widely regarded as one of the most significant figures in Uzbek literature of the early 20th century. His novel Kecha va Kunduz stands as a powerful reflection of social realities, human emotions, and cultural transformations during a critical historical period.

The novel is characterized by its poetic prose, rich metaphors, and deep psychological insight. Cho'lpon skillfully blends literary narration with elements of spoken language, creating a unique stylistic voice that is both expressive and culturally grounded. One of the defining features of the text is its extensive use of personification, emotional imagery, and culturally embedded expressions.

The English translation "Night and Day" by Christopher Fort attempts to introduce this important work to an international audience. However, translating such a

stylistically complex text involves more than transferring meaning-it requires preserving tone, rhythm, and cultural depth.

This study aims to analyze how effectively these stylistic features are preserved in translation. In particular, it focuses on the transformation of metaphor, tone, and cultural expressions, examining the extent to which the original artistic effect is maintained or altered.

Methods

To explore the stylistic and cultural shifts between the source and target texts, this study employs a qualitative comparative method. This approach involves a detailed, side-by-side analysis of selected excerpts from the Uzbek original and its English translation.

The analysis focuses on the following categories: Metaphor and personification, cultural expressions and proverbs, tone and stylistic register, sentence structure and naturalness.

Each example is examined to determine: the degree of semantic accuracy, the preservation or loss of stylistic features, possible alternative translations that better reflect the original tone, the selected excerpts represent moments where the author's stylistic choices are particularly prominent, allowing for a deeper understanding of translation challenges.

Results

The comparative analysis reveals a consistent tension between maintaining readability in English and preserving the stylistic richness of the original Uzbek text.

1. Metaphor and Personification

In the Uzbek text: "Har yil bir keladigan bahor sevinchi yana ko'ngillarni qitiqlay boshladi."

The sentence uses vivid personification, presenting "spring joy" as an active force that "tickles" the human heart. This creates a sense of emotional awakening and seasonal renewal.

In the English version: "Every year the coming of spring joy tickles hearts." (Fort Christopher. (2019). Night and Day.) While the metaphor is preserved, the phrase may seem slightly unnatural and a bit rigid in structure, which somewhat reduces the poetic smoothness of the original.

Recommended version: "The joy of spring that comes once every year begins to stir the soul."

2. Cultural Expressions

The proverb: "Hamal keldi, amal keldi." is deeply rooted in Uzbek cultural and agricultural life, where the arrival of spring signals the beginning of work.

The translation: "When spring comes, the work begins." (Fort Christopher. (2019). Night and Day.) successfully conveys the general meaning; however, it appears to

slightly reduce the cultural specificity of “Hamal” as a traditional seasonal marker. As a result, some ethnographic nuance may be lost.

Recommended version: “Spring arrives, and so does work.”

3. Tone and Stylistic Register

In the original: “ko‘rgazmaga qo‘yilaturgan maxluqlardan edi” the tone is lightly ironic and humorous. In the English translation: “was one of those ancient monsters put out for display” (Fort Christopher. (2019). Night and Day.) the tone seems somewhat stronger and more negative than intended. The word “monster” may introduce a harsher emotional coloring, which slightly shifts the author’s original ironic tone.

Recommended version: “was one of those odd creatures you’d put on display”

4. Cultural Identity and Social Roles

The phrase: “Hamro ena” refers to a culturally specific figure—a traditional midwife.

In translation: this identity is generalized, which may reduce the cultural and social depth of the character. Such simplifications can lead to a form of “cultural thinning.”

Recommended version: “a midwife named Hamro ena”

5. Emotional Expression

The sentence: “Uning ko‘zlarida cheksiz dard bor edi.” is highly poetic and emotionally charged.

Its translation: “There was endless pain in her eyes.” (Fort Christopher. (2019). Night and Day.) accurately conveys the meaning; however, it may feel slightly neutral compared to the original, which carries deeper lyrical intensity.

Recommended version: “Her eyes reflected an endless depth of sorrow.”

6. Sentence Structure

In the phrase: “uni ona qornidan sihat-salomat tushirtirgan”—the Uzbek version uses a natural and culturally appropriate expression.

The English version: “that shot him from her womb perfectly healthy” (Fort Christopher. (2019). Night and Day.) may seem a bit awkward and slightly too strong in tone, possibly creating an unintended impression. This highlights the challenges of overly literal translation.

Recommended version: “who safely delivered him”

Discussion

The findings highlight several recurring translation patterns:

First, there is a tendency toward semantic accuracy at the expense of stylistic richness. While the core meaning of sentences is preserved, the expressive and poetic elements are often simplified.

Second, the study reveals a process of cultural generalization, where specific cultural terms are replaced with broader, more familiar English equivalents. While this improves readability, it reduces the authenticity of the text.

Third, there is noticeable tone neutralization. Emotional intensity, humor, and irony present in the original are frequently softened or altered.

Finally, the analysis shows that metaphorical language is often flattened, transforming vivid imagery into plain description.

These patterns suggest that the translation prioritizes accessibility for the target audience, but at the cost of losing the unique stylistic identity of the original work.

Conclusion

The translation of “Kecha va Kunduz” (Day and Night) demonstrates the complexity of preserving both meaning and style across languages. While the English version successfully communicates the narrative, it often fails to fully capture the poetic and cultural richness of the original text.

To improve future translations, it is essential to adopt strategies that balance clarity with stylistic fidelity. This includes preserving metaphors where possible, maintaining cultural references, and carefully reproducing tone and emotional nuance.

Ultimately, translation should serve not only as a linguistic transfer but also as a cultural bridge, allowing readers to experience the artistic depth of the original work.

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