

THE TRANSLATION OF PROVERBS

Ulbo'sin Abdug'aniyeva

E'zoza Baxshilloeva

*2nd year of bachelor degree students of
Uzbekistan state world languages university*

Abstract: *This thesis will explore complexities of translating proverbs, challenges in translation process, and along with the ways of translation used to translate proverbs from source language to another keeping the original meaning. Moreover, in this thesis some examples that reflect Uzbek translation of English proverbs are given.*

Key words: *Proverb, literal translation, substitution, adaptation, equivalence*

A proverb (from Latin: proverbium) is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. Proverbs are special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings. (Ghazala, 1995: 138) They are often metaphorical. They represent the history and culture, an important component of the nation's color. (Mieder, 2004: 3) The translation of proverbs is complex, full of difficulties and in the meantime, interesting process. Nida (1985) notes that “Proverbs are special metaphoric expressions and the translator should know the proverbial concepts in both source language (SL) and target language (TL)” which means to bear in mind their similarities and differences. Rowland (1926), on the other hand, states that proverbs stick in mind, build up vocabulary and illustrate admirably the phraseology and idiomatic expressions of the foreign tongue.

The challenges of translating proverbs:

1. Cultural context: Proverbs are deeply rooted in a culture's history, traditions, and beliefs. What might be a common saying in one culture could be completely alien or even offensive in another. Translating a proverb without considering its cultural context can lead to misinterpretations and misunderstandings. (Rome wasn't built in a day)

2. Idioms and Figurative language: Proverbs often rely on figurative language, metaphors, and idioms that are specific to a particular language. Translating these expressions literally can result in awkward or nonsensical phrases. Translators need to find equivalent expressions in the target language that convey the intended meaning and evoke similar feelings. (Actions speak louder than words)

3. Linguistic structure and rhythm: Proverbs often have a specific linguistic structure and rhythm, contributing to their memorability. Translating the proverb while maintaining its original structure and rhythm is a challenging task. (Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise)

The ways of translating proverbs:

There are number of the types of translation which translators use when they are translating proverbs:



1. Literal translation: This approach seeks to translate the proverb word-for-word, preserving its literal meaning. The goal of a literal translation is to reproduce the form of the source text as much as possible into the target text since no translation is ‘ever too literal or too close to the original’ (Newmark, 1988: 137) However, it often results in awkward or incomprehensible phrases, particularly when dealing with idioms or cultural references. Example: Love and cough cannot be hidden – Muhabbat va yo’talni yashirib bo’lmaydi.

2. Adaptation: This approach aims to convey the meaning of the proverb while adapting it to the target culture’s norms and language. This often involves using similar idioms or expressions, or finding a proverb in the target language that conveys a comparable message. Example: When in Rome, do as the Romans do origin – Oqimga qarshi suzma.

3. Equivalence: It is the adapting the proverbs to the target readership like adaptation. Equivalence is often used for the translation of idioms, but translators use it also to translate proverbs as much as idioms. Example: No smoke without fire – Shamol bo’lmasa, daraxtning uchi qimirlamaydi.

4. Substitution: This approach replaces the source proverb with a completely different proverb in the target language that carries similar meaning or moral. This strategy can be effective in conveying the intended message, but it may lose some of the cultural significance of the original proverb. Example: When pigs fly – Tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda.

Uzbek translation of English proverbs:

No pleasure without pain – Gul tikansiz bo’lmas.

All bread is not baked in one oven – Besh qo’l baravar emas.

Every dog is a lion at home – Har kim o’z uyida bek.

First think, then speak – Avval o’yla, keyin so’yla.

The rotten apple injures it’s neighbour’s – Bitta tirraqi buzoq podani bulg’aydi.

Conclusion:

Translating proverbs is a complex art that requires careful consideration of cultural context, linguistic features, and intended meaning. Rainer Schulte mentioned that “Through the act of translation we break out of linguistic confinement and reach many other communities”. Indeed, people managed to know and learn another community, another culture by the development of translation, and it is obvious that proverbs are the main part of a nation or a culture. That’s why the treatment of rendering proverbs must be careful, precise, and not to be expected literally. Choosing right way of translation is the first success and being aware of culture of target is next achievement in translating proverbs.

References:

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