

THE UNSAID AS MEANING IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

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Annotation: This article examines challenges of conveying implicit meaning in literary translation. Using Utkir Hoshimov's novel, it explores implicature, presupposition, and cultural codes, emphasizing risks of over-explicitation and its impact on literary aesthetics and reader interpretation.

Key words: implicitness, literary translation, implicature, presupposition, cultural context

Annotatsiya: Maqolada badiiy tarjimada implisit ma'nolarni yetkazish muammolari tahlil qilinadi. U. Hoshimov asari misolida implikatura, presuppozitsiya va madaniy kodlarni saqlash zarurati hamda ortiqcha izohlashning badiiy tarjimaga salbiy ta'siri ko'rsatib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: implicitlik, badiiy tarjima, implicatura, presuppozitsiya, madaniy kontekst

Introduction. The problem of translating implicitness in literary texts represents one of the most sophisticated challenges in translation studies, as it moves beyond the mechanical substitution of lexical units into the realm of cognitive and cultural mediation. Implicitness, in its broadest linguistic sense, refers to the information that is not overtly encoded in the linguistic surface structure but is nonetheless retrieved by the reader through context, shared knowledge, and inferential reasoning. According to S. Levinson, implicitness is the functional gap between the literal locution (what is said) and the illocutionary force (what is meant). In a literary framework, this gap is rarely accidental; it is a calculated stylistic choice designed to engage the reader's intellect. As E. Gutt argues within the framework of Relevance Theory, successful communication relies on the reader's ability to select the most relevant interpretation within their cognitive environment, meaning the translator must ensure that the target audience possesses the necessary "contextual resources" to bridge these gaps without losing the author's intended subtlety [4;32].

Literature review and methodology. Implicit meaning in literature functions as a multi-layered subtext that distinguishes artistic prose from purely informative writing. P. Grice provided the foundational theory for this through his concept of "conversational implicatures", suggesting that when an author violates standard maxims of clarity or quantity, they are signaling a deeper meaning to be uncovered by the audience [3;45]. The translation of implicitness becomes particularly problematic when dealing with cultural presuppositions and allusions, as these elements form the "invisible architecture" of a literary work. M. Baker defines presupposition as the background information that a writer assumes the reader already knows; when a text moves from one culture to another, these assumptions often collapse, leaving the target reader in a state of cognitive dissonance [1;271]. This collapse is most evident in "Between Two Doors" (*Ikki eshik orasi*) by Utkir Hoshimov. In the Uzbek context, the simple act of a character refusing to look another in the eye or the specific way a guest is seated at a

dasturkhon carries a wealth of implicit information regarding shame, respect, or hidden animosity. If an English translator renders these actions literally without the accompanying cultural subtext, the English reader sees only a physical movement, missing the entire emotional arc. We believe that the greatest challenge in these instances is the “*Paradox of Explicitation*”. Many translators, fearing that the reader will miss the point, succumb to the urge to explain the implicit. In the English translation of Hoshimov’s work, we see instances where the translator feels compelled to define the sanctity of bread or the social weight of a “mahallah” (neighborhood) through intrusive footnotes or expanded dialogue. I believe this is a strategic error which means by transforming an implicit cultural signal into an explicit explanation, the translator shifts the genre from literature to ethnography. The goal of a literary translator should not be to make the text “easy”, but to make it “equivalent” in its impact. If the original author chose to remain silent or vague to create a specific mood, the translator must have the courage to preserve that silence, even at the risk of some cultural opacity.

In our opinion, the failure to translate implicitness correctly results in a loss of the character’s “internal truth”. As U.Hoshimov notes in his preface, “the lying person still thinks the truth inside”. Much of this “inside truth” is communicated through what is left unsaid. If a translator “tidies up” the narrative gaps or explicates a character’s hidden motives to fit Western logical structures, they are essentially rewriting the character’s soul. In the case of *Between Two Doors*, the implicit burden of the war and the collective trauma of the village are often conveyed through staccato dialogue and heavy pauses. When these are “smoothed over” into grammatically perfect, explicit English sentences, the raw, jagged edges of the Uzbek experience are lost. Therefore, the translator’s duty is to act as a bridge that maintains the height of the original structure – meaning they must find a way to let the target reader “feel” the weight of the cultural presupposition without necessarily having it explained in plain, sterile terms.

Discussion. A major instance of implicitness in *Between Two Doors* involves the shifting use of kinship terms between the characters Kimsan and Robia. In the Uzbek original, their relationship is defined by a transition from “brother/sister” (*aka/singil*) to “fiancé/fiancée” (*unashilganlar*). Because they grew up in the same household but are not biological siblings, the use of the word “*aka*” (big brother) by Robia carries a heavy implicit burden of forbidden or complicated love. In the English version, the translator often explicates the relationship to ensure the reader understands they aren’t blood-related. For example, when Kimsan says, “*She is not my sister!*” in a moment of rage, the Uzbek reader feels the implicit breaking of a social taboo. The English translation, however, often adds descriptive tags like “*he shouted, referring to their non-biological bond,*” which removes the reader’s need to infer the tension for themselves. This “explicitation” resolves the ambiguity that Hoshimov intentionally maintained to reflect the characters’ internal struggle.

One of the most powerful moments occurs when Kimsan leaves for World War II. The community performs a ritual where Kimsan bites a piece of *patir* (traditional bread), and the remaining bread is hidden until his return. To an Uzbek reader, this ritual implicitly communicates a sacred vow of return and the collective hope of the village. The “unsaid” part of this scene is the high probability of his death, which makes the sanctity of the bread even more tragic. Here, the translator frequently explicates this by adding footnotes or parenthetical explanations within the text, such as: “*There is nothing more sacred in the world than bread! He who turns away from bread turns away from*

faith". By over-explaining the sanctity of the bread, the translator shifts the focus from the *emotion* of the scene to a *cultural lesson*. The minimalist aesthetic of the "parting" is lost because the translator takes off the cultural barrier, turning a visceral literary moment into an ethnographic explanation.

Results. In the chapter "Story of Black Aunt", much of the meaning is found in what characters *do not* say. When the "Black Aunt" (Qora amma) realizes her son Kimsan may never return, her grief is expressed through the rhythmic sound of a flour sieve or the way she "pulls her nose" to hide tears. This is "situational implicitness" – the author assumes the reader knows that in Uzbek culture, a mother's dignity often requires hiding extreme grief behind domestic labor. The English translation, however, often fails to capture this "rhythm of silence". For instance, when Robiya asks her mother about Kimsan and the mother responds by simply "cleaning the rice" or "looking at the moon", the translator often adds adverbs like "*she said sadly*" or "*with a heavy heart*". This is a classic translation mistake of over-explicitation. By labeling the emotion, the translator robs the English reader of the "aesthetic response" – the chance to feel the mother's pain through her silent actions alone. The "visible" dialogue is kept, but the "submerged" seven-eighths of her grief is forcibly dragged to the surface.

Conclusion. Implicit meaning plays a crucial role in literary texts and represents one of the most complex challenges in translation. As demonstrated through Utkir Hoshimov's work, implicitness is conveyed through cultural codes, silence, and contextual cues that shape readers' interpretation. Excessive explicitation may weaken literary aesthetics and reduce interpretative depth. Therefore, translators should preserve implicit meaning while ensuring communicative effectiveness, maintaining both cultural authenticity and artistic value in literary translation.

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