
STRATEGIES FOR RENDERING CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN ENGLISH–UZBEK LITERARY TRANSLATION

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Abstract

This paper addresses the strategies used to render connotative meaning in English–Uzbek literary translation. Applying A. Wierzbicka’s theory of cultural scripts and P. Newmark’s classification of translation procedures, the study identifies three recurrent sources of connotative loss — deletion of untranslated imagery, evaluative shift (amelioration/pejoration) and culture-specific lacunae — and the compensatory strategies (compensation, contextual adaptation, equivalence, modification, explanatory translation, functional substitution, cultural adaptation) available to counter them. The analysis draws on parallel English–Uzbek examples from K. Hosseini’s “A Thousand Splendid Suns”, O. Wilde’s “The Picture of Dorian Gray” and J. Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice”.

Keywords: connotative meaning, literary translation, cultural script, compensation, amelioration, pejoration, lacuna, equivalence.

While the denotative meaning of a lexical unit can, as a rule, be transferred from one language into another with relative accuracy, its emotional-expressive, evaluative and national-cultural connotative layer resists straightforward translation. As a result, the translation process is regularly accompanied by semantic shift, weakening of cultural association, loss of emotional-evaluative tone, simplification of imagery, or a reduction in pragmatic effect. A. Wierzbicka’s theory of cultural scripts helps explain why: every speech act — a request, a compliment, a refusal, even silence — acquires additional evaluative and social meaning on the basis of implicit, culture-specific rules that insiders intuit but outsiders do not share. When such a script is absent or realized differently in the target culture, the connotation intended by the author fails to reach the reader, or is “misread”.

Analysis

The comparative material of the dissertation allows several recurrent translation problems and their corresponding compensatory strategies to be identified. First, connotative loss through deletion: in Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns", the metaphor "Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman" is omitted in the Uzbek translation ("Erkak zoti hamisha ayolni ayblab kelgan") without compensation elsewhere in the text, resulting in the loss of the image's emphatic, timeless connotation conveyed in the original through the Present Simple tense and the parcelled, isolated word "Always." According to P. Newmark's classification, such deletion of a metaphor is only justified when compensated elsewhere in the text; in this case no such compensation occurs, and the connotative-stylistic layer is consequently lost.

Second, connotative shift through amelioration or pejoration: identical denotative content may carry an opposite evaluative charge in the two languages, as in English "ambitious" (predominantly positive) versus Uzbek "shuhratparast" (predominantly negative), which forces the translator to consciously adjust lexical choice in order to preserve the intended evaluative modality whether through amelioration (upgrading), pejoration (downgrading) or neutralization of the connotative charge.

Cultural scripts are also responsible for connotative loss at the level of an entire communicative situation rather than a single lexeme. In Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice", Mrs. Bennet's exclamation "What a fine thing for our girls!" and her insistence that Mr. Bennet visit the newly arrived Mr. Bingley are fully motivated only against the unwritten Regency-era etiquette script, according to which a woman could not be introduced to a man without a prior formal visit by the head of the family; without access to this script, a target-language reader perceives the visit merely as an act of politeness, missing the connotations of "advantageous marriage", "family prosperity" and "social advancement" that saturate the phrase "a single man of large fortune" for the source-text reader. A structurally comparable phenomenon appears in Uzbek narrative prose, where the address form "bek aka", the verb "mushtoqdirilar" and the phrase "ahl kishilar" each carry a positive evaluative connotation rooted in the Uzbek cultural script of hospitality (mehmondo'stlik) and respect for elders connotations that a neutral English

rendering such as “want to talk” or “respectable people” would fail to reproduce. In both directions, therefore, the loss is not lexical but scriptural: the translator must decide whether to make the underlying cultural script explicit for the target reader or to accept a measurable reduction of the connotative charge.

Third, connotative loss through lacunae: culture-bound lexemes such as English “privacy”, “gentleman”, “home”, “cozy” have no full equivalent in Uzbek linguoculture, just as Uzbek “mahalla”, “oqsoqol”, “kelinsalom”, “beshik”, “choyxona” lose their social-emotional connotation when rendered denotatively into English. The English “home”, for instance, carries connotations of personal space, comfort and security which are distinct from the neutral “house”, while the Uzbek “uy”, covering both senses, instead carries connotations of collectivity, kinship and hospitality absent from either English word. In such cases translators resort to compensatory strategies — explanatory translation, cultural adaptation, transliteration accompanied by description, contextual adaptation, functional substitution and equivalence — although, as the analyzed material shows, no single strategy is capable of preserving the connotative charge of the source unit in its entirety.

A further complicating factor is that connotative shift is rarely confined to a single word; it frequently operates at the level of grammatical form. In the Hosseini example discussed above, the source text isolates the adverb “Always” as a separate, one-word sentence a syntactic device (parcelling) that produces a strong emphatic-emotional connotation of bitter, unconditional certainty; the Present Simple tense of the surrounding clause reinforces this by framing the statement as a timeless, law-like truth rather than a single past occurrence. The Uzbek translation folds this isolated emphasis back into a single fluent sentence (“Bundan keyin ham shunday bo‘lib qoladi”), preserving the denotative content of the assertion while measurably softening its emphatic force. Such cases show that connotative equivalence in translation cannot be assessed at the lexical level alone: syntactic choices — sentence segmentation, tense, word order — are themselves carriers of connotative and pragmatic meaning and must be accounted for within any systematic model of connotation-oriented translation strategy.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that rendering connotative meaning in English–Uzbek literary translation is not a matter of finding lexical equivalents but of reconstructing the emotional, evaluative and cultural effect of the source text through a deliberate choice of compensatory strategy compensation, contextual adaptation, equivalence, modification, explanatory translation, functional substitution or cultural adaptation. A translator concerned with connotative meaning must therefore aim not to reproduce the denotative content of a unit, but to recreate the emotional, aesthetic, evaluative and cultural impact of the source text as a whole.

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