

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Functionalist Approach to Taboo Adaptation in English-Uzbek Literary Translation

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Abstract

This study investigates the translation strategies applied to socio-cultural, religious, and physiological taboos in 20th-century English literature when translated into Uzbek. Grounded in the functionalist and pragmatic frameworks of Mona Baker and Peter Newmark.

KEY WORDS

Taboo translation, pragmatic equivalence, literal translation, euphemization, English-Uzbek translation.

INTRODUCTION

The process of translation is more than a mechanical transfer of words; it is a negotiation between different cultures with different levels of tolerance. The practice has shown that recent results of literal translation of dystopian novels into Uzbek literature have faced pragmatic failure for several reasons. This caused misunderstanding in the target audience; readers could not follow the author's true intention as they were too shocked to understand the context. Therefore, euphemization is considered to be a way of strategic manipulation, not a bad translation or a result of censorship. It is an essential tool to achieve functional equivalence in Translation.

A massive number of best-selling Western novels have started to be translated in recent years in Uzbek literature, which has caused mixed feelings among readers and a new era of changes in young readers' mindsets. It is not a secret that English literature uses heavy taboos to describe realism, character development, and political allegory. Translators and publishing houses have been handling the vocabulary part of this process very well, but they were struggling with translating socio-cultural and religious shockwaves.

METHODOLOGY

The source texts selected for this study were 1984 and Animal Farm by George Orwell, The Great Gatsby by Fitzgerald and The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger. These specific literary works were chosen due to their high density of cultural, political, and physiological taboos, making them ideal case studies for examining translation adjustments.

Thematic Categorization: The identified taboo instances were grouped into three primary classifications based on their socio-cultural nature: religious taboos, social taboos, and political taboos.

Strategy Coding: The translation choices for each taboo were identified and coded according to the functionalist and pragmatic frameworks of Mona Baker (1992) and Peter Newmark (1988). The choices were categorized into specific translation strategies: euphemization, omission, generalization, or literal translation.

Statistical and Pragmatic Evaluation: A quantitative analysis was conducted to calculate the percentage and frequency of each applied strategy across the texts. Finally, a

qualitative analysis was performed on representative pairs to evaluate whether the chosen strategy successfully preserved the original implicature or resulted in a pragmatic shift for the Uzbek reader.

RESULTS

1. Religious taboos

In data found from "The Great Gatsby" and "The Catcher in the Rye" casual exclamations involving religious words, such as "God", "Jesus", "damnit", "damn", "Goddamnit" were translated literally in most cases. The results showed that translators consistently ignored the cultural substitution.

2. Physiological and Vulgar taboos

Data from The Catcher in the Rye demonstrated the highest concentration of literal translation, ignoring the cultural tolerance towards Physiological and Vulgar Taboos. Severe swear words, physiological slang, and sexually explicit references were rarely softened into milder, socially acceptable reprimands in the Uzbek translations.

3. Political and Social Taboos

Analysis of the dystopian novels 1984 and Animal Farm revealed a different strategy pattern. Politically sensitive terms, authoritarian jargon, and social improprieties were primarily handled through literal translation, as it would not cause a big issue to the current political system of the country. Instances where characters broke state-mandated social rules or used politically offensive language in English were frequently translated using specific Uzbek political vocabulary.

The reluctance of Uzbek translators to use literal translation was expected to align directly with Mona Baker's doctrine of pragmatic equivalence. Baker argues that linguistic equivalence is ineffective if it creates pragmatic failure. English and Uzbek cultures possess drastically different thresholds for what is considered acceptable public language, largely due to Uzbekistan's synthesis of traditional Eastern values and Islamic moral frameworks. However, the above-mentioned and learnt novels were drastically different from the previously conducted research, and literal translation held the dominant position. Translators tried to achieve the equivalence by word-for-word translation and faced pragmatic failure.

Asliyat	Tarjima
He's <i>dead</i> now. He got leukemia and died when we were up in Maine, on July 18, 1946.	Hozir u yo'q. <i>O'lgan</i> . Menda ekanimizda oqqonga chalinib, 1946-yil 18-iyulda <i>vafot etgandi</i> .
What I really felt like, though, was <i>committing suicide</i> . I felt like <i>jumping out the window</i> .	O'shanda <i>jonimga qasd qilishni</i> juda xohlagandim. Shartta <i>oynadan o'zimni tashlab yuborgim kelgandi</i> .
I hope to hell when I do <i>die</i> somebody has sense enough to just dump me in the river or something.	Ishqilib, biror kun <i>o'lganimda</i> meni daryogami, biror yerga tashlab yuboradigan aqlliyoq odam topilsin-da.
He was <i>dead</i> , and his teeth, and blood, were all over the place, and nobody would even go near him.	U <i>o'lib bo'lgandi</i> . Jonsiz tanasi qonga belangan, tishlari har yoqda sochilib yotardi.

This study set out to analyze how extreme socio-cultural, religious, and physiological taboos in 20th-century English literature are negotiated when translated into Uzbek. The parallel taboo instances across five iconic novels demonstrate that current translators overwhelmingly favor literal translation rather than Baker's theory of adaptation. As a result, these novels with different types of taboos caused shock rather than following the true meaning of the masterpieces.

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