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Problems And Strategies In Translating Children's Literature From English Into Uzbek

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Abstract: Translating children's literature presents unique challenges due to its linguistic simplicity, cultural specificity, and educational purpose. This article investigates the principal problems faced when translating children's books from English into Uzbek, highlighting linguistic, cultural, and stylistic issues. It proposes practical translation strategies aimed at preserving the original meaning while making the texts culturally relevant and engaging for Uzbek young readers. The study emphasizes the delicate balance between fidelity and adaptation necessary in children's literature translation to foster literacy and cultural understanding.

Keywords: Children's literature, translation, English-Uzbek translation, cultural adaptation, linguistic challenges, translation strategies, educational texts.

Introduction: Children's literature is a fundamental genre that contributes to the linguistic development, cultural awareness, and moral education of young readers. Unlike adult literature, it is characterized by simplified language, engaging storytelling, and an often didactic tone intended to instruct and entertain simultaneously. Translating children's literature from English into Uzbek involves specific difficulties, as it requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural sensitivity and pedagogical insight.

English and Uzbek languages are typologically and culturally distant. English, an Indo-European language, possesses a complex system of tenses, articles, and modal verbs, whereas Uzbek, a Turkic language, has agglutinative morphology and different syntactic patterns. This linguistic disparity is compounded by

significant cultural differences between English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking communities. Therefore, translators must navigate these challenges to produce texts that are linguistically accurate, culturally relevant, and appealing to children.

This paper aims to analyze the main problems encountered in translating children's literature from English into Uzbek and to discuss effective strategies for overcoming them.

1. Nature of Children's Literature

Children's literature is designed for an audience in the early stages of language acquisition and cognitive development. As Nodelman [5] notes, it balances simplicity with creativity, blending narrative techniques with educational content. Translators must maintain the playfulness and clarity of language without diluting the text's pedagogical value.

2. Translation Theories Relevant to Children's Literature

Translation theories such as dynamic equivalence [4] emphasize conveying meaning and effect rather than literal word-for-word translation. Venuti [6] advocates for the translator's visibility in cultural mediation, which is particularly relevant in children's literature where cultural adaptation is often necessary.

Bassnett [2] stresses that translation is not merely linguistic transfer but also involves cultural negotiation. In the context of children's literature, this negotiation includes deciding how much to adapt cultural references and stylistic elements to suit the target audience.

3. Problems in Translating Children's Literature from English into Uzbek

English relies heavily on word order and function words (articles, prepositions) to convey meaning, whereas Uzbek uses agglutination and suffixes. For example, the definite article "the" in English has no direct Uzbek equivalent, which can affect text clarity. Tense and aspect systems also differ: English's perfect tenses may require paraphrasing in Uzbek.

Certain English words or phrases lack direct Uzbek equivalents, especially slang, idiomatic expressions, and neologisms used in children's books. For example, the English term "fairy godmother" may require explanation or substitution.

While children's texts are simple, translating them literally may lead to unnatural or awkward Uzbek sentences. The challenge is to simplify where necessary but retain the original tone and content.

Cultural References and Traditions

English children's literature often contains references

to holidays (e.g., Halloween, Thanksgiving), folklore, and social practices unfamiliar to Uzbek readers. Retaining these references without explanation can confuse children; however, over-adaptation risks losing cultural richness.

Names and Proper Nouns

Proper nouns like "Santa Claus" or "Easter Bunny" carry cultural significance. Translators must decide whether to transliterate, explain, or replace them with local equivalents.

Humor and Wordplay

Children's books frequently use puns and wordplay, which are deeply culture and language-specific. For example, the pun in "The Cat in the Hat" depends on English phonetics and rhythm, posing significant difficulties for Uzbek translation.

4. Stylistic Challenges

Many children's books use rhyme and rhythm to enhance memorability and enjoyment. Translating poetry or rhymed prose from English into Uzbek without losing meaning or flow is complex and requires creative rewriting.

Repetitive structures and sound words (e.g., "buzz," "tick-tock") are common in English children's literature to facilitate language learning. Finding Uzbek equivalents that preserve the original effect is not always straightforward.

5. Adaptation and Localization

Adapting cultural elements to the target culture is often necessary to ensure comprehension. For instance, replacing "Thanksgiving dinner" with a culturally relevant Uzbek family gathering can make the story more relatable. However, translators should maintain balance to avoid excessive domestication.

Translators may need to simplify complex sentences or add clarifying information, especially when dealing with abstract concepts or unfamiliar cultural contexts. This can be done through paraphrasing or inserting brief explanations.

Footnotes, glossaries, or endnotes can be helpful to explain cultural references, foreign concepts, or wordplay without disrupting the main narrative. This approach supports educational purposes and cultural enrichment.

6. Creative Rewriting

Preserving rhyme, rhythm, and wordplay often requires creative rewriting rather than direct translation. Translators may compose new rhymes or find Uzbek idioms with similar connotations to preserve the playful tone.

Involving specialists can help ensure that the translation is age-appropriate and pedagogically sound, enhancing the text's educational impact.

7. Translating Rhymes from "Dr. Seuss"

The challenge in translating "The Cat in the Hat" lies in maintaining the playful tone and rhythmic rhymes. Uzbek translators often replace English rhymes with culturally appropriate ones while preserving the narrative structure.

In stories involving Christmas or Halloween, Uzbek translators may substitute these with Navruz or other local festivals, thereby maintaining cultural relevance.

The decision to transliterate or localize names depends on the text's function. For educational texts, it might be preferable to keep the original names with explanatory notes, while in fictional stories, localized names can enhance relatability.

Translating children's literature from English into Uzbek is a complex task that requires linguistic skill, cultural knowledge, and creativity. The main challenges include structural linguistic differences, cultural specificity, and stylistic features such as rhyme and wordplay. Effective translation strategies combine adaptation, simplification, explanatory notes, and creative rewriting to produce texts that are accessible and enjoyable for Uzbek children while preserving the original's educational and cultural value.

Developing best practices for translating children's literature will contribute significantly to expanding literary resources for young Uzbek readers and promoting intercultural understanding.

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