

THE PROBLEM OF SELECTING EQUIVALENT UNITS IN THE TRANSLATION OF TOPOONYMS

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Abstract: *This article examines the problems of selecting equivalent units in the translation of historical toponyms in literary texts. The study is based on the Hindi translations of the novels "Starry Nights" by P. Qadirov and "Ulugh Beg's Treasure" by O. Yoqubov. Special attention is paid to the use of transliteration as a translation method, its effectiveness, and certain shortcomings arising from the omission or explanatory rendering of place names. Through a historical-comparative analysis, the article explores how the translation of toponyms affects the accuracy and historical atmosphere of the original work.*

Keywords: *translation studies, historical novel, toponym, transliteration, equivalence, literary translation, Hindi translation, historical accuracy.*

Introduction

The process of translating works written on historical subjects is rather complex. It requires knowing and studying the historical realities reflected and depicted in the work, the historical figures and the words, sentences, and expressions used in their speech, as well as, more broadly, a special scholarly preparedness and sensitivity to historical truth and echoes of the past. When we look at historical works from this perspective, the translator's mastery, uncertainties, and to some extent the shortcomings made in translation become clearly visible.

In the Hindi translations of the novels "Yulduzli tunlar" (Starry Nights) and "Ulug'bek xazinasi" (Ulubek's Treasure), we observed that the translator mainly resorted to the method of transliteration when rendering historical place names, i.e., toponyms, used by the authors. In the following discussion, based on several textual fragments, we will attempt to demonstrate—within a historical-comparative framework—the extent to which the use of transliteration is justified, and how skillfully the translator applied this method not merely by mechanically transferring sounds and letters, but through a creative and individualized approach.

In the original: Omad ham bir kelsa, qo'sha-qo'sha bo'lib kelishini Bobur endi bilmoqda edi. Samarqand uning qo'liga o'tgandan keyin bu yog'i Urgut, u yog'i Sug'd va Dabusiya qal'asi birin-ketin Shayboniyxonning ixtiyoridan chiqib, Boburning

hokimiyatini tan oldi. Mana bugun Qarshi va G‘uzordan xushxabar keldi — bu shaharlar Shayboniyxon qo‘ygan dorug‘alarni quvibdi [Y.T.:227].

In the Hindi translation: समरकन्द जीत लेने के बाद पूर्व में उर्गत और पश्चिम में सोगद व दबूसिया शैबानी खां से स्वतंत्र होकर बाबर के अधीन हो गये। आज कश्शी और गुज़ार से शुभ समाचार आये थे — बाबर की फौजों ने उन शहरों में शैबानी द्वारा रखे गये शासकों को खदेड़ भगाया था। [ब०.२९९].

When rendering the historical place names, the author in the original text simply lists Urgut, Sug‘d and Dabusiya Fortress in general terms. The translator, however, partially expands the description by indicating the approximate geographical orientation of these locations for the reader. This, in our view, should not be regarded as a shortcoming but rather as a positive aspect of the translation.

If we evaluate the translation from the perspective of translation theorist G‘. Salomov, the content expressed in only two sentences in the original is conveyed in the translation by means of about ten sentences, in a more elaborate and richly descriptive manner. In translation theory, this phenomenon is known as modulation—strengthening or expanding the meaning of a lexical unit in translation.

However, on page 236 of Yulduzli tunlar, the following explanatory note is given about Dabusiya Fortress: “Dabusiya – ‘Iron Fortress’ means. The ruins of this fortress still remain in a place called Ziyoviddin.” In the Hindi translation, the fortress name appears simply as दबूसिया किला [Y.T.:२४३], without any explanatory note. It would, of course, have been desirable for such historically significant etymological information to be preserved in translation so that the Hindi reader might gain fuller knowledge about Dabusiya Fortress. A similar omission is observed in other examples as well.

In the original: Baland tepalik ustiga qurilgan Axsi qal‘asi tun og‘ushida tog‘ qoyasiga o‘xshab qorayib ko‘rinadi [Y.T.:23].

In the Hindi translation: ऊंची पहाड़ी पर बना आखसी का किला रात में नुकीली चट्टान जैसा लगता था। [ब०.२८].

In the original: Samarcand qal‘asining tashqarisidagi bog‘ ko‘chalar, Ulug‘bek rasadxonasing atroflari, Obirahmat arig‘ining bo‘ylari behisob qo‘shinga to‘lib ketgan [Y.T.:195].

In the Hindi translation: समरकन्द की फसीलों के पहले घेरे के सामने, लम्बे-चौड़े बागों में, उलगाबेक की वेधशाला के पास की टेकरियों पर, आबे रहमत नदी के किनारों पर चारों तरफ विशाल सेना के दस्ते फैले हुए थे। [ब०.१९४].

In these excerpts, the Uzbek word qal‘a (“fortress”) is rendered in Hindi through the synonymous words किला and फसील. Both mean “fortified structure/fortress” in Hindi, and they are also synonymous with one another. This demonstrates the translator’s lexical sensitivity and ability to choose appropriate synonyms—an important feature reflecting the richness and stylistic flexibility of a language.

As noted by Doctor of Philology O. Azizov, the proper use of synonyms plays a significant role in conveying the subtlest nuances of meaning in literary works and contributes to the creation of expressive and aesthetically rich texts. While synonymy is essential in original creative writing, its importance becomes even greater in literary translation. In this regard, the translator's ability to select synonymous words appropriately is of great significance in conveying the author's style.

Now let us consider the word ko'shk ("pavilion/palace villa"):

In the original: Eshiklari nafis o'ymakorliklar bilan bezangan, ichidagi oltin-kumush buyumlar ko'zni qamashtiradigan ko'shkda hozir Boburni faqat bitta xona o'ziga tortar edi [Y.T.:38].

In the Hindi translation: शहर के बाहर स्थित कोठी अपनी सज्जा-सामग्री की भव्यता और दरवाजों पर नक़़राशी महल की याद दिलाती थी। [ब०.४४].

In Uzbek explanatory dictionaries, ko'shk is defined as "a palace or villa situated outside the city, often an elevated and airy architectural structure." The translator successfully conveys this meaning in Hindi by depicting it as a grand residence outside the city.

However, when comparing a number of examples in the original and in Hindi, we also encounter linguistic inconsistencies in the spelling of historical place names, such as:

Jannatariq → जन्नत-अरीक़

O'ratepa → ओरा-तेपा

Obirahmat → आबे-रहमत

Cho'ponota → चोपान-आता

Sirdaryo → सिर-दरिया

Ko'ksaroy → कोक-सराय (नीला महल)

Bo'stonsaroy → बोस्टान-सराय महल

In the original Uzbek text, these are written as compound words, while in the Hindi translation they are separated and treated as word combinations. This creates orthographic and, to some degree, semantic inconsistency.

Conclusion

Reproducing historical monuments, geographical areas, and place names found in historical novels in translation is a process that requires precision and scholarly responsibility. Thus, the translator must not only fully understand the source text but also possess knowledge in history, geography, ethnography, and socio-political contexts.

From the examples discussed, it becomes clear that rendering toponyms in historical novels is a delicate and demanding task. Nevertheless, despite some shortcomings, the translator has largely succeeded in conveying the original meaning and atmosphere to the target readership.

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